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The Daily Star
SECOND EDITION
DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 1, 2024
REGD. NO. DA 781 VOL. XXXIV NO. 132 JAISHTHA 18, 1431 BS www.thedailystar.net ZILQAD 23, 1445 HIJRI 16 PAGES: TK 15.00

KSRM
শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

A promising solution to mosquito menace
WR1

Bangladesh lose first match under new coach
P11

Untold story of a discriminated and excluded community
P9

S Africa heads for coalition as ANC support plunges
P5

A councillor and his illicit tobacco trade

MOHAMMAD SUMAN *and* **MARTIN SWAPAN PANDEY**

ABDUS SABUR LITON

A significant share of Bangladesh's illegal cigarette market is controlled by two companies where Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) Councillor Abdus Sabur Liton and his brother have the majority stakes, an investigation by The Daily Star has found.

These two companies – Bijoy International Tobacco and Tara International Tobacco – may have long been placing counterfeit banderoles on their cigarette packs and distributing them in different parts of the country, an ongoing investigation by NBR's Central Intelligence Cell (CIC) indicates.

Additionally, these two companies have been producing and selling various cigarette brands, including fake versions of foreign brands like Oris and Esse Lights in big cities such as Dhaka and Chattogram, multiple officials say on condition of anonymity to candidly discuss the ongoing probe involving powerful people.

On May 21, CIC and customs intelligence busted Bijoy International's office in Chakaria upazila in Cox's Bazar and recovered documents that point to the tobacco company's link with manufacturing cigarettes with illegally imported raw materials, according to documents and customs officials.

Earlier on May 9, customs intelligence raided another tobacco factory, Tara International Tobacco, where Liton has the majority share, documents show.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

The councillor's companies making "fake versions" of foreign brand cigarettes

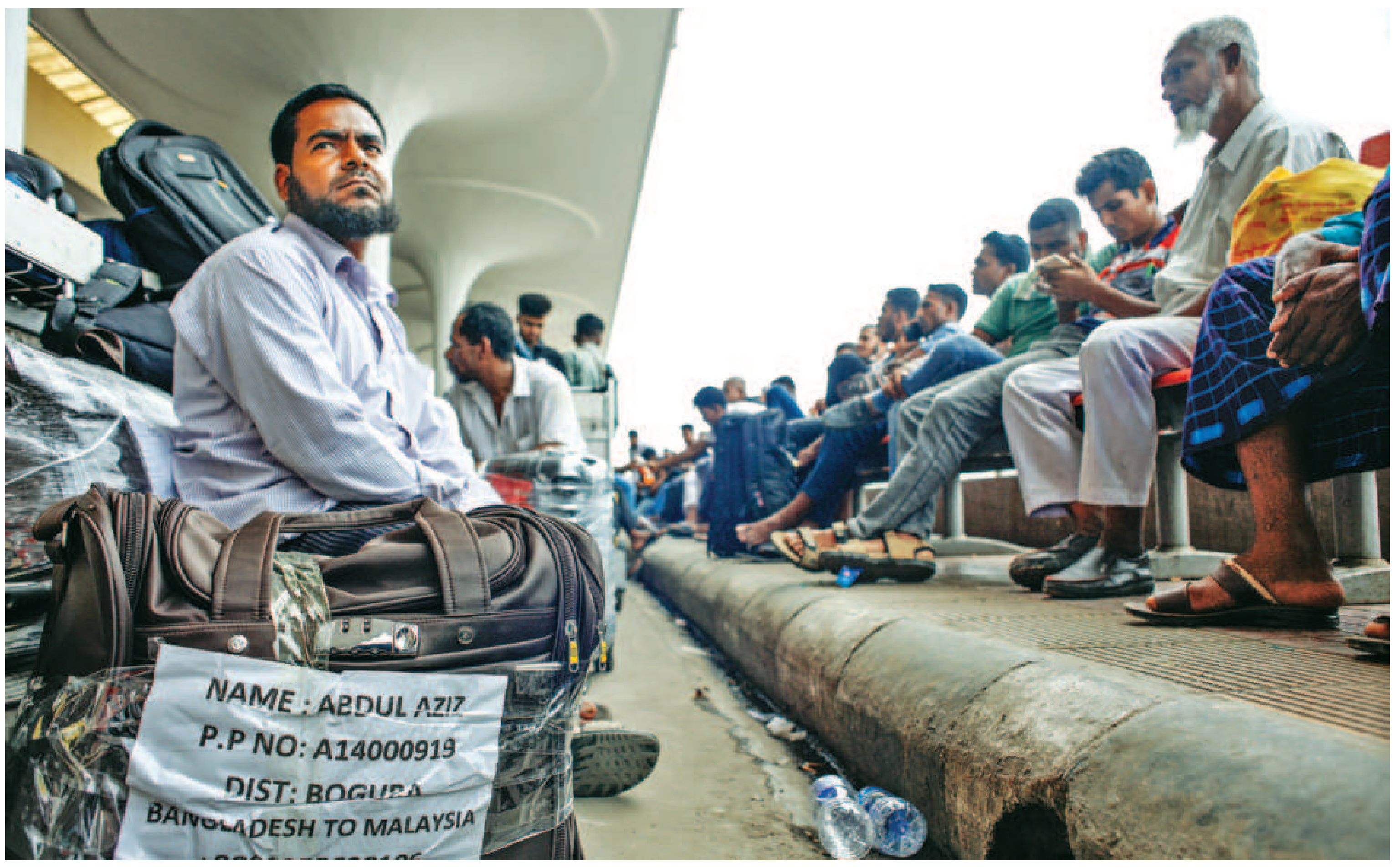
Customs' raid finds evidence of large-scale illegal cigarette production

Trading companies supply illegally imported raw materials to his factories

7.56 tonnes of cigarette box paper meant for his company are currently held by port authorities

The councillor says all his business operations are legal

THE DAILY STAR
INVESTIGATION

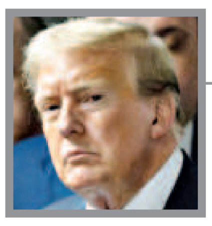


Jobseekers throng Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to catch flights for Malaysia. Many of them waited at the airport for about 10 hours after receiving assurances from manpower brokers that they would be flown to the Southeast Asian country before the expiration of the deadline for new Bangladeshi expatriates to enter the country at midnight last night. The photo was taken around 3:00pm yesterday. PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

HUSH MONEY TRIAL

Trump 'guilty on all 34 counts'

Verdict won't bar him from contesting US presidential polls



- Judge sets sentencing for July 11
- Trump says real verdict will be delivered on polling day

AGENCIES

Donald Trump on Thursday became the first former US president ever convicted of a crime after a New York jury found him guilty on all charges in his hush money case, months before an election that could see him yet return to the White House.

The jury found him guilty on each of the 34 counts of falsifying business records to hide a payment meant to silence porn star Stormy Daniels. He could in theory be sentenced to four years behind bars for each count but is more likely to receive probation.

The 77-year-old Republican, who was released without bail, is now a felon -- a historic and startling first in a country where presidents are frequently described as the most powerful man in the world.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

LAST DAY OF ENTRY TO MALAYSIA ON WORK VISA

Hundreds flock to Dhaka airport

Many of them could not fly as agencies fail to provide them with tickets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred Malaysia-bound migrant workers waited for hours at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport amid uncertainties as the deadline for workers to enter the southeast Asian country ended yesterday.

They came to the airport without plane tickets after the local recruitment agents promised that the tickets would be provided on time.

Throughout yesterday, the two international terminals remained packed and there were crowds in front of the terminals as well. Many of the workers reached the airport on Thursday night or earlier.

Some said they were losing hope of reaching Malaysia because the recruiting agents were not answering their phones.

Around 5:00pm, Muhammad Aziz, who came to the airport on Thursday night from Jamalpur, said he had been waiting for more than 12 hours and he was not sure whether the agent would give him the ticket.

He added that he received the Malaysian visa on May 21 to work at a furniture factory.

In March, Malaysian authorities said workers of Bangladesh and 13 other countries will not be allowed to enter the southeast Asian country after May 31.

Nurul Islam, who came to the airport from Jhenaidah, said he had been waiting at the airport for three days. He did not receive his ticket as of 3:15pm.

"I spent Tk 5.40 lakh for this. I will be in serious trouble if I cannot reach Malaysia on time," he said, breaking down in tears.

Many other workers at the airport were in a similar situation. Most of them spent between Tk 5 lakh and Tk 6 lakh they managed by selling their lands or borrowing from banks.

Another man said he got a ticket to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

'Benazir, his family left the country'

Say several officers of govt agencies

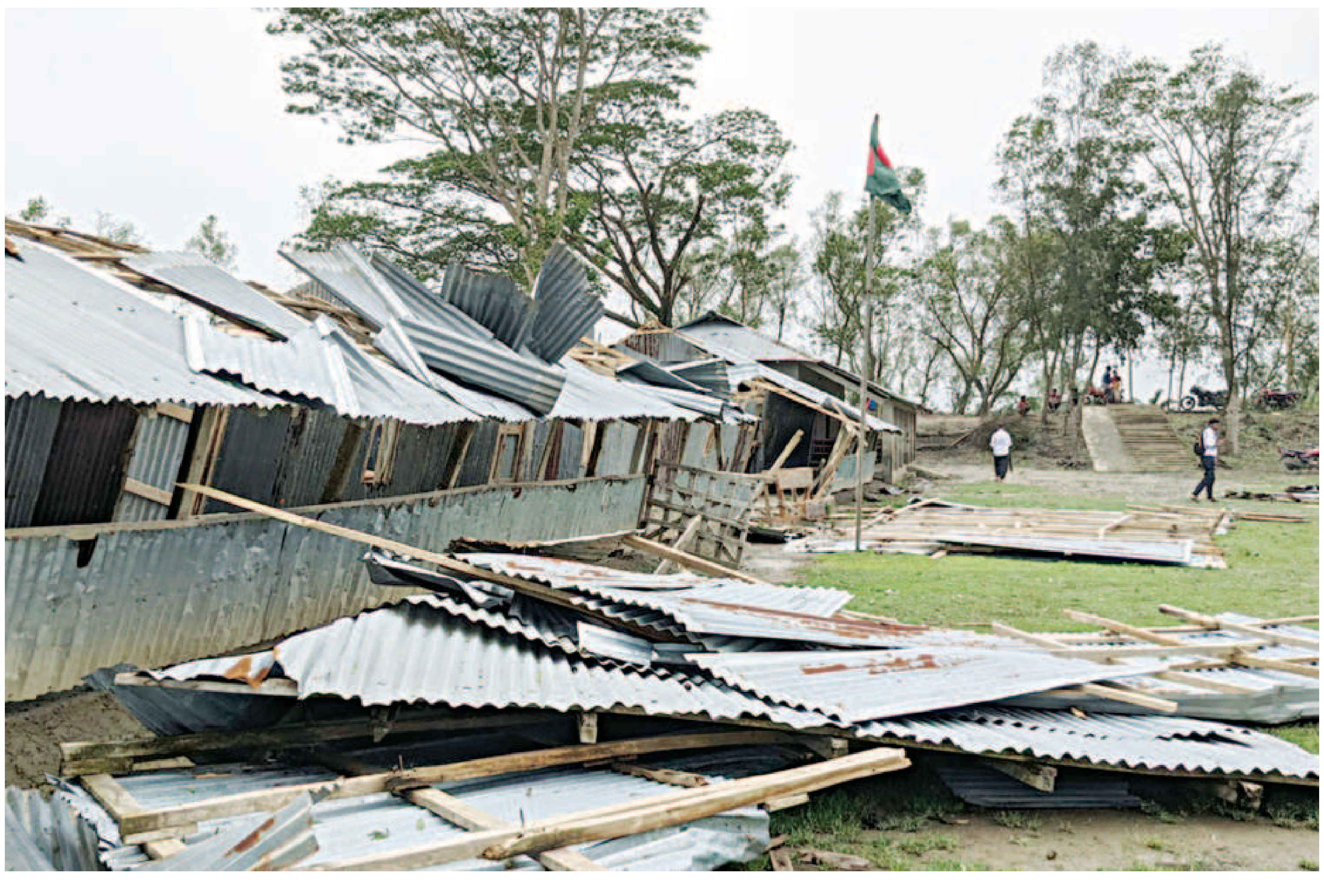
DIPAN NANDY

Though the authorities remain tightlipped about the whereabouts of former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed and his family members, several sources say they have left the country.

Benazir, his wife, and their three daughters left Dhaka on a Singapore Airlines flight on the night of May 4, said several officers of law enforcement and intelligence agencies on the condition of anonymity.

According to an officer, the former police chief, who is facing an Anti-Corruption Commission probe, went to Singapore with his family, stating on documents that his wife needed treatment. They

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Cyclone Remal has caused extensive damage to Menhazpur Hakkani Secondary School on the bank of the Nilganj river in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila. At least 474 educational institutions in the district have been affected by the cyclone that made landfall on Bangladesh coast on Sunday afternoon. The photo was taken on Wednesday. PHOTO: **SOHRAB HOSSAIN**

6 SOUTHERN DISTRICTS

Over 1,250 edn institutions hit hard by 'Remal'

STAR REPORT

At least 1,259 educational institutions in six southern districts have been affected by Cyclone Remal, according to education offices.

The institutions include primary and secondary schools, colleges, and madrasas.

Some of the schools made of tin and wood have been destroyed by the storm, while tin roofs of some others have been blown away.

Playgrounds and ground floors of many educational institutions have been damaged as floodwater entered there. Tidal surge caused flash floods during the cyclone that hit the country's coastal areas on Sunday.

Academic activities in the affected educational institutions are being hampered, said officials and teachers.

In Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila, Menhazpur Haqqani Secondary School, which was made of tin and wood, collapsed.

"We don't know when our school will be rebuilt and when our classes will resume. We want to go to school soon," said Rabiul Hossain, an eighth grader of the school.

"We are trying to build a makeshift structure to continue classes. It will take at least one week to resume our academic activities," said Ashraf Uzzaman, headmaster of the school.

Around 250 students study there, he added.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

UPAZILA ELECTION

EC summons state minister over polls code violation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday summoned State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Mohibbur Rahman, saying he violated the electoral code of conduct by campaigning for multiple upazila polls candidates in Patuakhali's Rangabali.

In a letter sent by the EC, Mohibur was asked to appear before the commission on June 2 and offer an explanation in this matter.

In the letter, the EC said the state minister sought votes for the candidates running in the Rangabali upazila polls to be held on June 5.

According to the letter, Mohibbur sought votes for upazila chairman candidate Saiduzzman Mamun, vice chairman candidate Roushan Mridha and candidate for vice chairman reserved for women Ferdousi Parveen while distributing relief aid among the flood-affected victims at Kodalia Ghat in Chhota Baishdia union and in Chalitabunia Bazar of Chalitabunia Union in Patuakhali's

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Paddy soaked by floodwater is being dried in the sun on a road in Alirgaon village of Gowainghat upazila yesterday. The flash flood has left 6.43 lakh people marooned in eight upazilas of Sylhet. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Hasan Mahmud seeks OIC's continuous support for Rohingya repatriation

BSS, *Dhaka*

Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud has sought continuous support from the member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to ensure the safe and sustainable repatriation of nearly 1.3 million forcibly displaced Rohingyas from Bangladesh to Myanmar.

He made this appeal while briefing ambassadors from OIC member countries at the United Nations headquarters in New York on Thursday, a foreign ministry press release said yesterday.

During the briefing, Hasan praised the OIC for its leading role in international efforts to alleviate the plight of the Rohingyas and updated the envoys on the current situation of the Rohingyas sheltered in Bangladesh.

The foreign minister expressed deep concern over the increasing conflict in Myanmar's Rakhine state at the briefing held in the OIC conference room at the UN headquarters.

He laid emphasis on the need for the Rohingyas' full citizenship rights upon their return to Myanmar.

Ambassadors from OIC member states, including Saudi Arabia, Gambia, Pakistan, Malaysia, Turkey, Iran, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Egypt, and Indonesia, expressed their gratitude to the Bangladesh foreign minister for the timely briefing.

A councillor and his illicit tobacco trade

FROM PAGE 1

Company filings at the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms (RJSC) show that as of December 2020, Liton and his brother Abdul Mannan Khokon hold all 20,000 shares worth Tk 100 each of Bijoy.

Before that, the two brothers held 60 percent of the shares and another company held 40 percent. The private investment company then transferred its share to the two brothers on December 10, 2020, although it is yet to be approved by the RJSC, documents show.

Under company law, transfer of share takes effect on the date of transfer, unless there are forgeries by the parties involved or incomplete documentation. However, the final completion of share transfer is subject to RJSC's approval, a company lawyer said.

Liton, also acting convener of a port city unit Awami League, owns 70 percent share in Tara International Tobacco, a partnership set up in March 2017 with a proposed initial capital of Tk 40 lakh. The rest 30 percent share of the company is held by Omar Faruk Siddiki, also from Chattogram, documents show.

THE TOBACCO RACKET

Analysing import and local purchase documents seized from Bijoy and Tara, CIC officials suspect both companies have been engaged in tax evasion through imports of raw materials for cigarette using non-existent and anonymous entities.

Tobacco Tax Policy 2021-2030 strictly prohibits imports of tobacco raw materials by any entity other than cigarette manufacturers.

In actuality, a number of trading companies have been importing various raw materials for cigarette, including the three essential components: acetate tow, unmanufactured tobacco, and cigarette paper.

Acetate tow is the soft, cotton-like material used to make cigarette filters.

NBR data show at least 5,906 tonnes of raw materials used for cigarette production, including these three key components, have been imported by 11 trading companies in the last two years since February 2022.

None of these traders are manufacturers, and at least four of them supplied their illegal imports to Bijoy and Tara, officials say.

The raw materials they imported are enough to produce at least 295 crore cigarette sticks, CIC officials tell The Daily Star, adding that the government lost at least Tk 1,500 crore in revenue from these cigarettes, as the companies did not pay any VAT and supplementary duty.

Most of these raw materials came from China, Malaysia, Germany, India, Hong Kong and Indonesia, documents show.

These companies are SB Traders, M/s Anik Enterprise, Rapid Marketing, Rapid Pack Limited, M/s Osman Trading, RH Traders, Saad International, Alam Traders, AK Enterprise, Star Impex and CR7 Trading.

CIC investigators say most of them are phantom companies, meaning they are being used as shell companies.

The Daily Star went to the physical address of three companies in Dhaka and Chattogram, but did not find them.

Between May 9 and May 21, a large quantity of equipment and raw materials used for cigarette production were seized from the warehouses of Rapid Pack Limited in Dhaka's Keraniganj and AK Enterprise in Chattogram.

Customs officials have since shut the warehouses of both companies. During the raid, CIC and customs officials found Rapid Pack Limited had cigarette manufacturing equipment, although it has no permission to make them.

The CIC officials' raid on Bijoy and Tara was based on the analysis of the import, purchase and sales records of Rapid Pack and AK Enterprise.

Documents show both Rapid Pack and AK Enterprise supplied their imported raw materials to Bijoy and Tara, which is illegal as only direct manufacturers can import such items.

In the subsequent raid on Bijoy on May 21 by a joint team of CIC and port city customs intelligence, officials found documents related to its trade with Rapid Pack, Rapid Marketing, AK Enterprise and Alam Traders.

Currently, 7.56 tonnes of paper for cigarette packets inscribed with foreign brand "Oris" imported by AK Enterprise are being held by the Chattogram Customs. AK Enterprise falsely declared them as coated paper.

During interrogation, AK Enterprise owner AKM Ziauddin told customs officials that he imported these products for Liton, who paid for the shipment in advance.

CIC and customs intelligence conducting a raid at Bijoy Tobacco's factory in Cox's Bazar on May 21.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Ziauddin told The Daily Star that the false declaration was unintentional. "I imported the Oris brand foil paper from China for Tara International."

Talking to this newspaper, Liton admitted paying for the shipment.

He denied that his factories make illegal products, but admitted buying Oris branded cigarette papers from AK Enterprise. He added that all related VAT and duties were paid during the production phase.

Based on the information provided by Ziauddin, customs officials in a raid on Tara International on May 9 confiscated a significant amount of counterfeit Oris brand cigarettes made in Tara's factory in Bhairab of Kishoreganj.

"At least four of these 11 trading companies have illegally imported raw materials of cigarettes for Bijoy International Tobacco and Tara International Tobacco," a top CIC official said.

Import data obtained from NBR show these four companies imported about 61 percent or 3,583 tonnes of the 5,906 tonnes of raw materials illegally shipped into the country in the last two years.

Given the gravity of the matter, NBR Chairman Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem on May 16 directed the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) and VAT Intelligence to collaborate with the CIC to track down the ultimate beneficiaries of the illegal imports.

Subsequently on May 19, NBR issued letters to all registered banks, asking them to provide all relevant bank documents and account information of the 11 entities as well as any associated individuals or entities.

NBR officials say none of the 11 trading companies submitted their tax and VAT returns in the last two years, which is mandatory.

ILLEGAL MARKETING

In December last year, local businessmen from different regions sent multiple letters to NBR, saying two cigarette brands named "Express" by Bijoy and "Peacock" by Tara were being distributed in rural areas of Chattogram, Khagracchari, Rangamati, Kurigram, Feni, Kushtia and Lalmonirhat with fake banderoles.

The letters, seen by this newspaper, said 10-stick packs of Express and Peacock cigarettes were being sold for Tk 15-25, much lower than the government-set retail price of Tk 45 for a 10-stick pack. Many of these packs had no banderoles, while others had fake banderoles.

Banderoles are the instrument used for controlling illicit tobacco trade and collecting tax revenue around the world. In Bangladesh, they are printed at the Government Security Printing Press in Dhaka.

Liton admitted to selling his brands at low prices sometimes.

An intelligence report sent to NBR in 2022 mentioned Bijoy, Tara and Liton by name, saying, "There are allegations against Tara International Tobacco used fake banderoles in the past."

'EXACTLY THE SAME'

Port city's Riazuddin Bazar is a prominent wholesale market for cigarettes, including illegal ones.

Three wholesale traders told The Daily Star that they have both the original and fake cigarettes of foreign brands, including Oris, Petron and Esse Lights. They said the demand for the fake ones is higher as they are cheaper.

One trader gave a demonstration on how to spot the fake ones, saying almost no one can spot the difference.

"They look exactly the same, but the quality is different.... Once you open the pack, you get a foul smell that you do not get from the original ones," he said.

Supply of some so-called foreign brands at Riazuddin Bazar drastically fell over the last two weeks after the raids at various suspicious tobacco factories, including the two owned by Liton.

About buying cigarette raw materials from trading companies, Liton said, "I don't have detailed information about their origins. I simply provide work orders, and they supply the raw materials."

The Oris brand cigarettes that the customs officials seized are of regular size, and not the slim ones like the original foreign brand, he said.

"The cigarettes produced under the brand name of Oris are popular, but I will stop producing them if the original Oris company raises any objections. The allegations of manufacturing Esse Lights, Oris and other slim cigarettes are baseless. I do not even have the equipment to make them," he said.

But CIC officials say the quality of the Oris paper seized at his factory and those used in some slim Oris cigarettes that they collected from the market is similar.

ILLICIT CIGARETTE TRADE IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh is a fairly small player in illicit tobacco trade, but the trend is rising.

Globally, illicit tobacco trade is estimated at about 10 percent of the total market size.

Latest data on counterfeit cigarettes are not available, but a 2019 study by the World Bank Group shows Bangladesh's illicit cigarette trade in 2016-17 was roughly 2% of the total cigarettes sold in the market, or about 1.5 billion sticks.

It was 50 percent for Latvia, 38 percent for Pakistan, 36 percent for Malaysia and 17 percent for India that year.

In case of Bangladesh, the 2 percent illicit tobacco market share in 2016-17 was more than a three-fold growth from 2014-15, when the illicit tobacco market share was only 0.6%, the WB report said.

About 92% of this illicit trade is in cigarettes that escape the tax net. The remaining 8% of contraband cigarettes are divided between smuggling and counterfeit products. The country loses about $100 million in revenue from the illicit cigarette trade annually, almost 4% of total tobacco revenues, the study found.

However, NBR officials say that currently 8-10 percent of the cigarettes available on the market are illegal.

And the racket involving Bijoy, Tara and some of the 11 trading companies under investigation controls a big chunk of this illegal tobacco market, they add.

Benazir

FROM PAGE 1

later travelled to Dubai.

The Daily Star could not independently verify the claims.

This correspondent called Benazir multiple times and sent him text messages, but he did not respond.

Contacted yesterday, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said, "We have no information that he left the country."

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader also said he has no idea whether the former IGP had left the country.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (Immigration) Monirul Islam said, "Since Benazir is no longer the IGP, I do not have his immigration information."

After his retirement as the IGP in September 2022, Benazir and his family lived at a flat on the Rancon Icon Tower in Gulshan. On March 5, 2023, he purchased four apartments at House no. 1 on Road-130 in Gulshan-1.

One of the security guards of the 15-storey Rancon Icon Tower said, "I haven't seen any family members enter or leave the flat in quite a long time."

The ACC summoned Benazir for questioning on June 6, and his wife and three children on June 9. A source said Benazir and his family's lawyer might request more time from the ACC.

Benazir's lawyer, Shah Monjurul Hoque, said, "I don't have information about his whereabouts."

On April 18, the ACC launched an inquiry into the allegations that the former police chief amassed illegal wealth. A three-member committee is conducting the probe.

Before becoming the IGP, Benazir was the director general of Rab.

Hundreds flock to Dhaka airport

FROM PAGE 1

Kuala Lumpur, but there would be a stopover in the UAE.

"I will reach Malaysia on June 1. I am not sure whether they will let me work as I will miss the deadline," he said.

A special flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines left for Kuala Lumpur with 271 passengers at 7:15pm yesterday. The flight was arranged at the instruction of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare, said Masud Khan, manager (public relations) at Biman.

Asked about the crowd of people, Group Capt Kamrul Islam, executive director of the airport, said additional flights were being arranged to handle the pressure.

In the last three days, 5,294 Bangladeshi migrant workers left for Malaysia in 30 scheduled and special flights of Biman, US-Bangla, Malaysian and Batik Air.

Besides, 179 migrant workers reached Kuala Lumpur on four transit flights, Kamrul said.

Biman earlier operated four special flights. The tickets sold for Tk 73,616 each.

Nearly 4.50 lakh Bangladeshi workers migrated to Malaysia between August 2022 and April this year, shows Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training data. The southeast Asian country reopened its labour market for Bangladesh in 2022 following a four-year suspension.

Last year, Malaysia was the second largest overseas job market for Bangladesh.

At an event in Dhaka on Wednesday, Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Haznah Md Hashim said the deadline will not be extended.

Over 1,250 edn institutions

FROM PAGE 1

At least 256 primary schools and 218 other educational institutions, including secondary schools, colleges, and madrasas, have been hit by the cyclone in Patuakhali, according to local education offices.

Repair of the educational institutions may cost Tk 20 crore, said officials at the district education office.

"We are preparing a list of the affected schools and will send it quickly to the higher authorities seeking funds for repair," said Molla Bakhtiar Rahman, Patuakhali district primary education officer.

In Pirojpur, 174 primary schools and 220 other educational institutions, including secondary schools, colleges, and madrasas, have been hit by Remal.

"The cyclone has damaged the tin roof of our madrasa," Martuja Billah, principal of Sapleza Nesaria Alim Madrasa in Mathbaria upazila, told The Daily Star.

"We are still collecting information about the damage. I think that the number of the affected schools may go up," said Idris Ali Azizi, the district education officer.

Besides, at least 171 primary schools have been damaged by the cyclone in Khulna, Bagerhat, and Satkhira.

Of them, 67 schools are in Satkhira, 66 in Bagerhat, and 38 in Khulna, said Md Moslem Uddin, Khulan divisional deputy director at the Directorate of Primary Education.

As per an estimation, the damage may result in a loss of over Tk 2 crore, he added.

Mohammadpur Government Primary School in Khulna's Batiaghata upazila has 1,376 students.

"We already have a shortage of classrooms. On top of that, a portion of tin roof of a classroom has been blown away," said Md Moniruzzaman, head teacher at the school.

Moslem Uddin said classes are being hampered at many affected schools.

In Jhalakathi, 50 primary schools, 95 secondary schools and colleges, as well as 75 madrasas have been damaged by the cyclone, according to local education offices.

[Our correspondents from Patuakhali, Pirojpur, and Khulna contributed to this report.]

Israel offers new Gaza ceasefire plan

FROM PAGE 12

change their minds.

" ... I ask you to take a step back, think what will happen if this moment is lost," he said. "We can't lose this moment."

An earlier hostage proposal put forward earlier this year called for the release of sick, elderly and wounded hostages in Gaza in exchange for a six-week ceasefire that could be extended to allow for more humanitarian aid to be delivered into the enclave.

The proposed deal fell apart earlier this month after Israel refused to agree to a permanent end to the war as part of the negotiations and ramped up an assault on the city of Rafah in southern Gaza.

Hamas said on Thursday it had told mediators it would not take part in more negotiations during ongoing aggression but was ready for a "complete agreement," including an exchange of hostages and prisoners if Israel stopped the war.

Yesterday, the UN said that the humanitarian aid allowed into the Gaza Strip is not getting to civilians in need, as Israeli forces struck targets across the Gaza Strip, with witnesses reporting air raids around the southern city of Rafah.

"The aid that is getting in is not getting to the people, and that's a major problem," Jens Laerke, spokesman for the UN humanitarian agency OCHA, told a media briefing in Geneva.

"We continue to insist that Israeli authorities' obligation under the law to facilitate delivery of aid does not stop at the border," said Laerke.

"We need that safe and unimpeded access to get to the drop-off point so we can pick it up and get it to people."

Meanwhile, Israeli forces have ended combat operations in the Jabalia area of north Gaza after destroying more than 10 kilometres of tunnels during days of intense fighting that included over 200 air strikes, the military said yesterday.

At the south end of Gaza, Israeli forces are pressing an offensive into Rafah. Tank-led Israeli troops aim to break up Hamas' fighting formations in the city on the border with Egypt.

At a news conference in Prague, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the humanitarian situation remains dire in Gaza, especially in terms of distributing aid to civilians, citing combat operations in the south.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 36,284 people have been killed in the territory during more than seven months of offensive. The toll includes at least 60 deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

Bangladesh a key partner of UN: Guterres

UNB, *Dhaka*

UN Secretary-General António Guterres praised Bangladesh as a vital UN partner, highlighting its contributions to international peace, sustainable development, and climate change efforts.

During a meeting with Foreign Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud in New York, Guterres expressed gratitude for Bangladesh's support to the Rohingya and voiced concern over Myanmar's forced recruitment of young Rohingya. Commending Bangladesh's climate resilience, Guterres assured support for Bangladesh's transition from a low-income country, stating, "For this, Bangladesh should be rewarded, not punished."

Foreign Minister Mahmud thanked Guterres for his leadership on global issues, including the Gaza crisis, and urged continued UN focus on the Rohingya crisis, advocating for the safe repatriation of 1.3 million refugees.

A man with a broken leg rides a rickshaw-van on the way to the hospital. He broke his leg after slipping in the waterlogged streets of his area on Monday. For more than three days, the waterlogging situation in Jurain area is yet to be solved. *Inset,* locals in a hunger strike protesting the prolonged waterlogging and low gas pressure, demanding an immediate resolution. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY

BCL factions reign with violence, univ admin silent

A CORRESPONDENT, *RU*

Bangladesh Chhatra League declared its Rajshahi University unit after seven long years on October 21 last year.

Mostafizur Rahman Babu is the president and Asadullah Hil Galib is the general secretary of RU BCL.

Since they took charge, at least 30 violent incidents involving BCL men have been reported on the campus. These incidents include factional clashes, extortion, illegal occupation of dormitory seats, and attacks on journalists, opposition, and general students.

Despite this, the university administration has largely refrained from taking disciplinary action against the accused. According to RU sources, no disciplinary committee meetings have been held this year.

The trouble began on October 22, when a group of BCL members, dissatisfied with their exclusion from the new committee, vandalised rooms in Madar Bux Hall.

On November 26, BCL leaders assaulted Rayhan Islam, the RU campus correspondent for Bangladesh Protidin.

On May 7, RU BCL general secretary Galib and others confined and tortured Nafiul Islam, a leader of the RU unit Chhatra Dal, in a room of Madar Bux Hall.

Just days later, on May 11, two BCL factions led by RU unit president Babu and Suhrawardy Hall unit president Niaz Morshed locked in a clash, resulting in at least five injuries. The factions brandished local weapons in another showdown two days later.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'Masters of corruption'

Quader on BNP leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The names of BNP leaders would top any list of corrupt individuals, said Obaidul Quader yesterday.

He said the party leaders are "masters of corruption and looting", adding they siphoned money abroad and enriched themselves at the country's expense.

He was speaking at a press conference organised at AL president's Dhanmondi office.

Addressing former IGP Benazir Ahmed's situation, Quader said the court would decide on his arrest following an Anti-Corruption Commission investigation. On reports of Benazir fleeing abroad and withdrawing money from his bank account, he said, "I don't know, it is not clear yet. "ACC says they think he [Benazir] fled the country. Let them prove it," he added.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 1

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-45	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-50	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

'DEVIL'S BREATH'

The world's 'scariest' drug

Now in hands of country's criminals

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Imagine walking down a quiet street, minding your own business, when a stranger approaches. They offer you a seemingly harmless business card, and you take it without thinking twice. Little did you know that the card was soaked in a drug, which would be absorbed by your skin within minutes.

Or someone might just blow the powdered drug directly in your face, and after inhaling that, within minutes you find yourself in a "Zombie-like state", unable to control your actions or resist their demands.

The drug leaves victims with no ability to control their actions. According to worldwide urban legends, the victims will do anything for their attackers, from giving up all their belongings to even going as far as killing someone for them.

The drug is scopolamine, derived from nightshade plants. Scopolamine, also known as hyoscine, is a natural or synthetically produced tropane alkaloid and anticholinergic drug which has a few legitimate medical uses, such as treatment for motion sickness, postoperative nausea and for the tremors of Parkinson's disease.

It is said to be one of the first "truth serums" which was used during WWII to obtain information from unwilling targets. However, it's mostly known for its darker sides.

It is popularly known as "devil's breath", and is globally recognised as "the world's most dangerous drug".

Criminals, particularly in Colombia and Ecuador, have used it to render victims helpless, robbing them blind, stealing their belongings, or even committing more heinous crimes such as murder or rape.

The scariest thing is that the drug has found its way to criminals in Bangladesh.

Fatema Begum, a resident of Chattogram, fell victim to such a crime on May 22.

While returning from a local market, two men posing as charity workers approached her, and when she turned around to talk to them, one of the individuals blew some powder in her face, leaving her disoriented.

Under the drug's influence, Fatema lost control over herself and unknowingly complied with the criminals' demands. They stole her valuables, including jewellery worth Tk 80,000, cash, her phone, and a shopping bag.

Brugmansia, from which scopolamine is extracted. PHOTO: **FREEPIK**

> **"Devil's breath" can render victims suggestible and disoriented, causing them to lose all willpower and readily give up their belongings to criminals. It takes effect within 10 minutes of inhalation, and the victim's memory and brain can't function normally.**
>
> **DR DULAL KRISHNA SAHA**
> Chief chemical examiner of DNC

The incident was captured on CCTV. Bystanders mistook the interaction for a usual encounter.

Double Mooring Police Station Officer-in-Charge Fazlul Kader Patwari said under scopolamine's influence, Fatema did what the criminals told her to do. When Fatema regained her senses after some hours, she realised she had been robbed.

"Scopolamine is made from the Borrachero plant. Known as "devil's breath" in its powdered form, this substance can render victims suggestible and disoriented, causing them to lose all willpower and readily give up their belongings to criminals," Dr Dulal Krishna Saha, chief chemical examiner of the Department of Narcotics Control, told The Daily Star.

By putting it on a visiting card, paper, cloth, or mobile phone screen, it's brought within four to six inches of the target's nose.

"It takes effect within 10 minutes of inhalation, and the victim's memory and brain can't function normally. Some take an hour to return to normal, while many fail to fully recover within three to four hours," he said.

In recent years, robberies using scopolamine have been reported in various parts of the country, including Dhaka, Jashore, Khulna, Rajbari, and Bogura.

Narayanganj Police first recovered 10 grammes of scopolamine from a gang in September 2023 while investigating the murder of a teacher of Northern University.

The gang used to sell scopolamine, potassium cyanide, and chloroform through online groups.

Police do not have exact figures for crimes related to scopolamine, but they found some Iranian nationals' involvement in them, along with local culprits.

On January 21, 2023, Jisan, an employee at a travel agency in the capital's Pallabi, fell victim to such a crime when two Iranian men visited the agency and took Tk 4.5 lakh from Jisan's cash box.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

CYCLONE REMAL

Animal death toll rises to 100 in Sundarbans

UNB, *Khulna*

The death toll of animals from the flooding in the Sundarbans has climbed to 100 after Cyclone Remal hit the world's largest mangrove forest on Sunday.

According to the Forest Department, the carcasses of 96 deer and four wild bears were recovered from the forest till Thursday evening.

The animals were found dead in several areas including Kotka, Kochikhali, Karamjal, Pakhi Char, Dimar Char, Shelar Char and Narikel Baria.

Moreover, 18 deer and one python were rescued in a critical condition. After giving first aid, they were released into the forest.

Besides, damages to various infrastructures in the forest were estimated at around Tk 6.27 crore.

Over 100 ponds in the forest were flooded with saline water, causing distress to both wildlife and the local residents.

An 11-kilometer area known as Gol Bagan was also damaged.

However, it will take more time to fully assess the extent of damages to the trees and animals, said Mihir Kumar Dey, forest conservator in the Khulna range.

He said this time the forest faced an unusual situation due to the cyclone as it experienced two high tides and two low tides within a 24-hour period, flooding parts of the forest.

AL turned country into 'bottomless basket': Abbas

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP senior leader Mirza Abbas yesterday accused the Awami League (AL) government of turning Bangladesh into a "bottomless basket" through rampant corruption. Speaking at a mass prayer event marking BNP founder Ziaur Rahman's 43rd death anniversary, Abbas claimed that Ziaur Rahman had rescued the nation from this status during his tenure. The event, organided by Dhaka South City BNP in front of the Nayapaltan central office, included prayers for Ziaur Rahman's soul and BNP chief Khaleda Zia's health. Abbas criticised the government for raising fuel prices amid skyrocketing living costs, worsening the public's hardships.

PRE-POLLS VIOLENCE

Day of joy marred by tragedy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narsingdi*

Sumon Miah and Sazia Afrin Liza from Narsingdi's Raipura endured a lengthy wait for parenthood. After 16 years, their dreams blossomed into reality with the birth of their twin daughters at a private hospital in Dhaka on Thursday.

However, this long-awaited celebration was overshadowed by sorrow, as Sumon was tragically absent.

Just eight days prior, Sumon, a candidate vying for the vice-chairman position in the Raipura Upazila Parishad election, was killed in a clash with supporters of a rival candidate.

Sumon, 40, son of Charsubuddi Union Parishad Chairman Nasir Uddin, was involved in ruling party politics. He was a former joint general secretary of Narsingdi Government College Chhatra League.

"While it was supposed to be a joyous occasion to welcome the twin babies, our happiness is marred by the brutal killing of my son," said Nasir Uddin, Sumon's father.

"These innocent babies are now fatherless," he added, tearing up.

On May 22, during an election campaign in Mirerkandi area of Paratali Union, Sumon and his followers clashed with supporters of vice chairman candidate Abid Hasan Rubel. There, Sumon was beaten during the clash.

In critical condition, he was rushed to Raipura Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared him dead.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

In the wake of Cyclone Remal, at least 16 tin-shed houses were completely destroyed and 10 damaged in Char Balaki village of Gazaria upazila, near the Meghna River in Munshiganj. Trees have fallen over, roads have been damaged and numerous livestock have been lost as well. Even four days later, locals are still repairing their damaged homes.

PHOTO: **SAJJAD HOSSAIN**

MP AZIM MURDER

3 placed on fresh remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed three accused on a five-day fresh remand in a case filed following the murder of lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar in Kolkata.

The three accused are Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan, Celesty Rahman, and Tanvir Bhuiyan.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Shanto Islam Mallik passed the order after members of Detective Branch of police produced them before the court with an eight-day remand prayer in the case, said a court staffer.

On May 24, the three accused were placed on an eight-day remand.

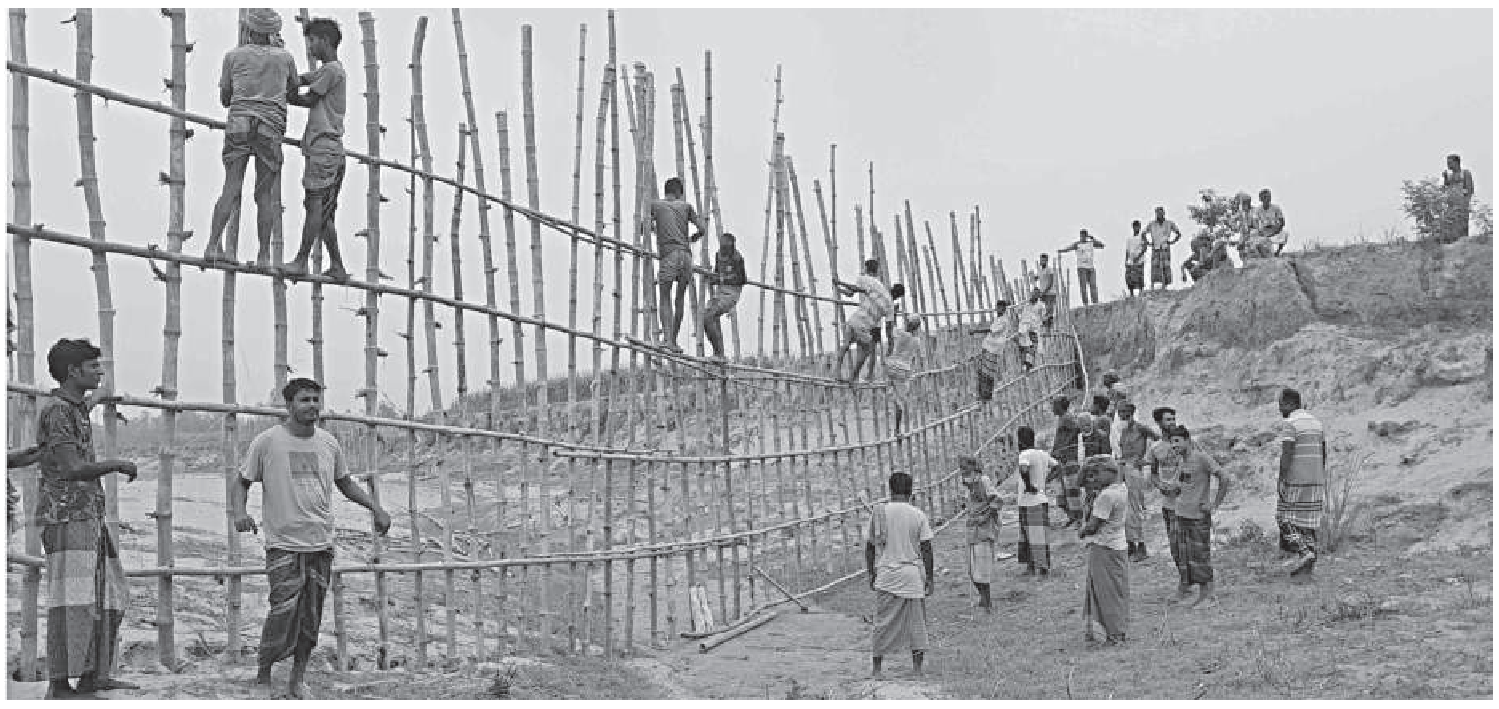
They were arrested in a case field by Azim's daughter Mumtarin Ferdoush Dorin with the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station on May 22.

Meanwhile, the West Bengal CID has formed a special team to probe the murder, our correspondent from Delhi reported.

Besides, the search for the MP's body parts continued. "Our search is on in the canal. A few more samples have been collected from the sewage lines of the building where the MP was last seen entering. We are sending them for examination," a CID officer said.

The detectives were also trying to find out more information from his mobile phone's call history.

The West Bengal CID is also examining the CCTV cameras installed along the routes suspected to have been taken by the assailants in disposing of Azim's body parts.



Around 500 residents of Bahadurabad, led by local UP member, voluntarily worked for a week to build the dam in Payolakandi area, Jamalpur recently, at a cost of Tk 1 lakh, which was also raised by the locals from the markets and villages. PHOTO: STAR

Locals build bamboo dam to prevent river erosion

Their demand for permanent embankment fell on deaf ears

SAHIDUL ISLAM NIRAB, *Jamalpur*

Locals in Bahadurabad union under Jamalpur's Dewanganj upazila have built a 300-feet bamboo cross dam -- a makeshift dam -- to prevent erosion of Brahmaputra river during monsoon.

Around 500 residents of the union, led by union parishad member Ahmed Ali, voluntarily worked for a week to build the dam in Payolakandi area at a cost of Tk 1 lakh, which was also raised by the local residents from the markets and villages in the union.

They came up with the effort after the authorities concerned failed to take any visible step in response to their demand for the construction of a concrete dam to prevent river erosion.

Brahmaputra flows through Dewanganj, Islampur, Malandah and Sadar upazilas of Jamalpur district.

"The cross dam was built on the second week of May with bamboo and wood collected by the villagers. Six more such bamboo dams will be built on the river bank this year," said Abdul Karim, a farmer of Payolakandi village.

"Every year since 1974, the Bahadurabad area has sustained erosion of Brahmaputra river. Over last 50 years, the river engulfed many villages including Payolakandi Namapara, Madhyapara, Purvapara, Farajipara, Madar-char, Madan-char and Gumer-char villages in the union," he also said.

"Last year, over 300 families in Dewanganj and Bokshiganj upazilas lost their homesteads and around 250 acres of arable lands to Brahmaputra's erosion," said Moinul Islam Butto, a local representative of Bahadurabad union.

"Around one thousand people living along two-kilometre stretch of the river banks are at risk of losing everything to erosion as monsoon looms. However, even in five decades, the government has yet to take any step to save us from the river's erosion," he added.

Local residents Ahmed Ali, Md Anwar Sheikh, and many others said they had to relocate numerous times after losing their homesteads to the river.

"The government should excavate the river and build permanent embankments to protect the union," said Shajahan Mia, chairman of Bahadurabad union parishad.

Terming the local residents' initiative as praiseworthy, Sheikh Zahid Hasan, UNO of Dewanganj upazila, said he informed the matter to local lawmaker as well as the Bangladesh Water Development Board in Jamalpur.

Contacted, Rafiqul Islam, deputy assistant engineer of BWDB in Jamalpur, said, "Cross dams made on river banks with bamboo is a traditional method that works well to prevent erosion."

"Last year, BWDB had placed 13,000 geo-bags across 160-metre stretch on the river bank, but nearly half of those were washed away, mostly in Amkhawa union in Dewanganj upazila," the official also said.

"Proposal for a permanent embankment for Bahadurabad union has already been sent to the concerned ministry," he added.

E-PASSPORTS

Foreign ministry not consulted while dropping 'except Israel': Momen

UNB, *Dhaka*

Former foreign minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not consulted while removing the words "except Israel" from the e-passport.

He, however, said Bangladesh's position regarding Israel remains unchanged.

"I was foreign minister at that time. I was not consulted, even the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not consulted," he said while responding to a question, noting that the Ministry of Home Affairs looks into the passport matters.

Bangladeshi passports now do not bear the text -- "valid for all countries of the world except Israel".

Momen, also the chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on foreign ministry, said Bangladesh does not have any commercial relations with Israel.

He was responding to questions at a public parliament debate contest at FDC, organised by Debate for Democracy with its chairman, Hassan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiron, in the chair.

The topic of the debate was "United efforts by the Muslim world can help stop Israeli aggression in Palestine".

The State University of Bangladesh and Kabi Nazrul Government College debated on the topic.

The attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was drawn to a message on X issued from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel welcoming the removal of a ban on travel to Israel on e-passports issued by Bangladesh in 2021.

Momen said they were told that the removal of the observation was done to maintain the international standard of Bangladeshi e-passports.

The MoFA at that time said it did not imply any change in Bangladesh's foreign policy towards the Middle East.

The ban on travel of Bangladeshi passport holders to Israel remains unchanged, according to the MoFA.

The government of Bangladesh has not deviated from its position on Israel and Bangladesh remains firm on its longstanding position in this regard.

The government of Bangladesh has always condemned the atrocities inflicted upon civilians by the occupation forces of Israel in the al-Aqsa mosque compound and Gaza.

The world's 'scariest'

FROM PAGE 3

Despite watching them and talking with a smile, Jisan did not realise he was being robbed until they left with the money. Later that month, police detained one of the culprits.

In April last year, law enforcement arrested five individuals -- including three Iranians, in Dhaka and Jashore -- following a robbery in Abhaynagar, where a shopkeeper handed over Tk 6 lakh to the perpetrators.

Later in August, two more Iranians were detained in Shibganj of Bogura, following a similar incident.

Contacted, Enamul Haque Sagor, assistant inspector general (media) of Police Headquarters, said, "It is a different modus operandi than regular crimes. We have already arrested several individuals. Whenever such crimes with unusual methods come to light, we take action."

Day of joy

FROM PAGE 3

Following his death, the Election Commission has halted the Raipura Upazila Parishad polls.

Besides, two cases were filed with Raipura Police Station, accusing his rival candidate Abid Hasan Rubel as the prime accused.

Safeyet Hossain Palash, officer-in-charge of Raipura Police Station, said they have already arrested four individuals in connection with the killing.

"A reward of Tk 1 lakh has been announced for the arrest of the prime accused, Abid Hasan Rubel, who was a vice-chairman candidate. Efforts are underway to apprehend the other suspects," he added.

প্লট ক্রয়
জলসিঁড়ি আবাসন এ প্লট কিনতে চাই।
যোগাযোগঃ ০১৫৭৭-০৩৮৭৩৮, ০১৯৪৭-১৩৩০০১

প্লট বিক্রয় বিজ্ঞপ্তি
উত্তরা ৩য় প্রকল্পের অন্তর্গত সেক্টর ১৬/এইচ, তিন কাঠা উত্তরমুখী কর্নার প্লট বাউন্ডারী-দেয়াল দেওয়া। প্লটের উভয় পাশে ৬০ ফিট রাস্তা। শুধুমাত্র ক্রেতাগণ যোগাযোগ করুন।
যোগাযোগ: ০১৭২০ ৯০২ ১৮৪

Invitation to submit proposals for two Request for Proposals (RFPs) issued by UNICEF Bangladesh

RFP No. LRPS-2024-9190552: Providing services for 'Preventive Maintenance and On-call maintenance of the medical equipment provided to Special Care Newborn Units in selected hospitals as part of UNICEF's Program Assistance to GoB'.

UNICEF Bangladesh is inviting interested companies with a strong track record and professional credibility of providing the above-required services under one contract. To receive the detailed scope of work and procedure to submit the bid response, please email to **supplybangladesh@unicef.org**

The pre-bid meeting schedule and bid submissions deadlines are mentioned in the respective bid document.

Please note UNICEF does not charge any fee at any stage of the solicitation process.

www.unicef.org/bangladesh

unicef | for every child

Invitation to submit proposals for two Request for Proposals (RFPs) issued by UNICEF Bangladesh

RFP No. LRPS-9190596 Support for Adolescents and Youth Empowerment in Rohingya Refugee Camps and Host Community in Cox's Bazar.

RFP No. LRPS-9190599 Support Implementation of Positive Parenting Program in Rohingya Refugee Camps in Cox's Bazar.

UNICEF-Bangladesh is inviting interested companies with a strong track record and professional credibility of providing the above-required services under one contract. To receive the detailed scope of work and procedure to submit the bid response, please email to **supplybangladesh@unicef.org**

Please note UNICEF does not charge any fee at any stage of the solicitation process.

www.unicef.org/bangladesh

unicef | for every child

'My health, my responsibility'

Speakers tell event on cardiac care

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A growing tendency of excessive commercialisation is taking place in the cardiac healthcare system in Bangladesh, which requires immediate attention, said renowned economist Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday.

He said excessive commercialisation in the health service is a global phenomenon and Bangladesh is no exception.

Zillur, also former adviser to a caretaker government, was speaking at a seminar at National Sports Council Complex in Purana Paltan of the capital. Saaol Heart Center, Bangladesh organised the event titled, "19th National Saaol Heart Lifestyle".

Speaking as the chief guest, Hossain Zillur said, "My health is my own responsibility. The state's health budget can be increased tenfold, doctors can be more attentive, but if we ourselves are not aware, then it will not be solved."

Oil is the biggest enemy to the heart, said Bimol Chhajer, a non-invasive cardiac specialist from India, adding that everything can be cooked with water instead of oil.

''This is why cooking without oil is important for everyone, especially for heart patients,'' he said.

Changing food habits and lifestyle -- eating oil free foods, doing yoga and maintaining a diet -- can prevent heart disease, he added.

Mohon Raihan, chairman of Saaol Heart Centre Bangladesh, said Saaol Heart Centre was established in 2009 as a health movement to keep citizens free from the risk of heart disease.

Heart disease accounts for 30 percent of the world's deaths, he added.

BCL factions reign

FROM PAGE 3

In response to the May clashes, the central BCL unit suspended at least five RU BCL leaders. However, the RU authorities have not taken any punitive measures against those involved.

Additionally, between May 13 and May 19, BCL activists drove out at least three general students from their dormitory seats.

The continuing unrest has left the RU campus in a state of turmoil, with many students feeling unsafe and unprotected.

Contacted, RU Proctor Prof Ashabul Haque said, "We only received a few complaints, which were settled even before we intervened. So, how can we take disciplinary action?"

RU BCL President Mostafizur Rahman Babu said action will be taken against anyone involved in the previous "stray incidents" and any other misconduct.

RU Pro Vice-Chancellor Sultan Ul Islam, however, said the university admission is "concerned" with the recent surge in violence.

"We will hold meetings with student bodies, particularly BCL, to maintain peace and stability on the campus," he added.

NOAKHALI POURA BEBSHAHI & DOKAN MALIK KALLYAN SOMOBAY SOMITY LTD
Court Road, Maijdee Court, Noakhali.

Memo No NPBSMKSSL Tender-01 2024/1134 Date: 30/05/2024

Corrigendum Notice (Amendment)-1

It is hereby notified to all concern that the following amendment have been made to the invitation of work Work of Vertical Extension of Noakhali Pourashava Approved "Noakhali Super Market" [Full Extension of 5th Floor & Partial Extension of 6th floor]: Civil & Structural Works, Electrical works, Lift & Escalator works, Central Air Conditioning System works, Fire Protection System works and works of Development of Facade Tender No.01 vide Memo No NPBSMKSSL/Tender-01/2024/1130 dated: 06/05/2024 due to unavoidable circumstances and the amendments shall be as follows.

Tender Notice field name	As Mentioned in original Tender Notice	To be Replaced
Eligibility of Tenderer	i) This Invitation for Tenders (IFT) is open to all eligible tenderers as mentioned below: ii) Tenderer shall be a Reputed Contractor/ Construction Firm who have at least 10 (ten) years of general experience in building construction works. iii) The Tenderer shall have specific experience as contractor in successful completion of at least 1 (one) number of Building Construction Works (including civil, sanitary, electrical, lift, fire protection system & related works etc.) having valuation of Tk. 15.00 (Taka fifteen) crore or more during the last 05 (five) years in a single tender in govt./ semi-govt./ autonomous organization of Bangladesh. Years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper. iv) The tenderer must have a minimum liquid asset/ cash flow capacity/Credit facility of Tk. 5 (Taka five) crore. v) Attested copy of all documents shall be submitted along with the tender.	i) This Invitation for Tenders (IFT) is open to all eligible tenderers as mentioned below: ii) Tenderer shall be a Reputed Contractor/ Construction Firm who have at least 10 (ten) years of general experience in building construction works. iii) The Tenderer shall have specific experience as contractor in successful completion of at least 1 (one) number of Building Construction Works (including civil, sanitary, electrical, lift, fire protection system & related works etc.) having valuation of Tk. 15.00 (Taka fifteen) crore or more during the last 05 (five) years in a single tender in govt./ semi-govt./ autonomous organization of Bangladesh. Years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper. iv) The Tenderer must have a minimum liquid asset/ cash flow capacity/Credit facility of Tk. 5 (five) crore. v) Attested copy of all documents shall be submitted along with the Tender. vi) The Tenderer shall have a Minimum Average Annual Construction Turnover of Tk. 20.00 Crore over the best 03(three) years in the last 05(five)years. Certificates for Contracts in Progress or Completed Under Public Sector Must be Submitted along with Tender in Support of Construction Turnover. vii) The minimum Tender capacity shall be Tk. 22.00 Crore viii) The Tenderer must be submit (a) Up to date Income Tax Clearance Certificate. b) Valid VAT Registration Certificate. c) Up to date Trade License & ABC Category Contractor ship and Supervisory License from Electricity Licensing Board of Bangladesh ix) Other Notable Terms are Pointed out at TDS.PCC.ITT and GCC Which Strictly Should be Followed.
Last date and Time for Selling of Tender Documents /Place of Selling.	02/06/2024 5:00pm	11/06/2024 5:00pm
Last date and Time for Receiving of Tender Documents/Place of receiving	03/06/2024 1:00pm	12/06/2024 1:00pm
Date & Time for Opening of Tender	03/06/2024 3:00pm	12/06/2024 3:00pm
GCC 70.1	The proportion of payments to be retained is 10 (ten) percent	The proportion of payments to be retained is 05(Five) percent
GCC 92.3(b)	The arbitration shall be conducted in the place mentioned below: Office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD Division, Noakhali.	The arbitration shall be conducted in the place mentioned below: Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Noakhali.
ITT 15.1(a)	The required average annual construction turnover shall be greater than Tk 15(fifteen) crore over the best 03(three) years in the last 05(five)years.	The required average annual construction turnover shall be greater than Tk 20(twenty) crore over the best 03(three) years in the last 05(five)years.
ITT 15.1(d)	-	The minimum Tender capacity shall be Tk. 22.00 Crore
ITT 65.1	The amount of Performance Security shall be 10(ten) percent of the Contract Price	The amount of Performance Security shall be 05(five) percent of the Contract Price

30/05/24
President
Super Market Implementation Committee
Noakhali Poura Babsayee & Dokan Malik Kollan Somobay Somity Ltd.
Court Road, Maijdee Court, Noakhali.

PARLIAMENTARY POLLS

S Africa heads for coalition as ANC support plunges

REUTERS, *Midrand*

South African parties geared up for coalition talks yesterday as the governing African National Congress (ANC) looked set to fall well short of a majority for the first time in 30 years of democracy.

While the party of the late Nelson Mandela looked likely to remain the largest political force after Wednesday's election, voters appeared to have punished the former liberation movement for years of decline.

With results in from 61.2 percent of polling stations, the ANC had 41.9 percent of votes, a precipitous drop from the 57.5 percent it secured in the last national election in 2019.

The pro-business Democratic Alliance (DA) was in second place on 23 percent. uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), a new party led by former president Jacob Zuma, was at 11.7 percent and eating into ANC support, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, Zuma's home province.

MK had overtaken the Marxist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), currently the third biggest party in parliament, which was sitting on 9.5 percent.

Political parties' share of the vote will determine the number of seats they get in the National Assembly, which then elects the next president.

That could still be the ANC's leader, incumbent President Cyril Ramaphosa. However, an embarrassing showing at the polls risks fuelling a leadership challenge -- but the ANC's Deputy Secretary-General Nomvula Mokonyane said he would not resign.

"Nobody is going to resign ... Collectively, all of us, we still are confident that he (Ramaphosa) has to remain the president of the ANC," she told reporters at the results centre.

"The leadership of the ANC will meet, structures of the ANC will be consulted. For now we are not talking to anybody," she said.

TRUMP'S CRIMINAL CONVICTION

US election stumbles into new territory

AFP, *New York*

TRUMP IS GUILTY
NOT ABOVE THE LAW
LIES HAVE CONSEQUENCES
ABOVE LAW
RESIST

Torn apart and rewired by Donald Trump's historic criminal conviction, the 2024 presidential campaign moved into uncharted territory yesterday with all eyes on how the two main protagonists navigate the dangers.

Trump wasted no time in shifting from courtroom to campaign mode.

"I am a political prisoner!" he announced immediately after the guilty verdicts landed Thursday on all 34 charges in his New York hush-money trial.

In addition to the New York case, he faces three far more serious criminal indictments over his attempts to overturn his 2020 election loss to Joe Biden and hoarding of top-secret documents at his home in Florida.

Those cases, however, are not likely to go to trial before the November election.

And Trump has in any case turned what would immediately destroy an ordinary political career into a badge of honor, comparing himself to political prisoners like Nelson Mandela and telling supporters that the scandals prove his conspiracy theory about a "deep state" taking away his freedom.

Biden, by contrast, has so far avoided making Trump's multiple legal difficulties an issue. As president, he is keen to avoid giving ammunition to Republicans who claim he is meddling in the justice system.

Now he will have to decide whether Trump's conviction changes the calculus.

Biden's campaign reacted to the verdicts by saying that "no one is above the law." It added, however, that the focus should turn to the election, because "the threat Trump poses to our democracy has never been greater."

Biden himself said nothing about the momentous events in New York.

Yesterday, he had a busy public schedule, including talks with the Belgian prime minister and a celebration for NFL Super Bowl champions the Kansas City Chiefs, which will offer frequent opportunities for him to make remarks to journalists.

Trump is now the first former US president ever convicted of a crime. He would be setting another, even more startling record if he wins on November 5 and replaces Biden in the White House.

The jury found him guilty of falsifying business records to hide a payment meant to silence porn star Stormy Daniels and prevent her from publicizing an alleged sexual encounter that could have been fatal to his 2016 presidential campaign.

Prosecutors successfully laid out a case alleging the hush money and the illegal covering up of the payment was part of a broader crime to prevent voters from knowing about Trump's behavior just as he was about to face Hillary Clinton.

Robert F Kennedy, who is running as an independent in the presidential race, predicted on X that the New York trial would "backfire."

But Keith Gaddie, a political analyst and professor at Texas Christian University, said the political impact of the shocking events has yet to be determined.

Zelensky hails US weapons green light as 'step forward'

AFP, *Stockholm*

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday hailed a US decision to partially lift restrictions on using US-donated weapons to strike inside Russia as a "step forward".

Washington gave the green light on Thursday for Ukraine to use US weapons to defend its Kharkiv region on the border with Russia, overcoming previous concerns that authorising such strikes could drag Nato into a direct conflict with Russia.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that US-made weapons "are already being used to attempt strikes on Russian territory". "This is quite eloquent evidence of the extent of US involvement in this conflict," he said. But, Nato head Jens Stoltenberg said: "Ukraine has the right for self-defence and we have the right to help Ukraine."

24 people dead in eastern India as temperatures soar

AGENCIES

At least 24 people died of suspected heatstroke in India's eastern states of Bihar and Odisha on Thursday, and the heatwave in the region is expected to continue until today, authorities said.

An Indian court has urged the government to declare a national emergency over the country's ongoing heatwave, saying that hundreds of people had died during weeks of extreme weather, reports AFP.

India has been experiencing a blisteringly hot summer and a part of capital Delhi recorded the country's highest ever temperature at 52.9 degrees Celsius this week, though that may be revised with the weather department checking the sensors of the weather station that registered the reading.

Decision

FROM PAGE 12

its laws and regulations.

"After the examination, the committee will submit a report to the commission. A decision on the investigation will then be made based on the report," he said.

On Wednesday, SC lawyer Salah Uddin Reagan filed the petition with the anti-graft watchdog seeking probe into the alleged corruption by the former army chief.

In the petition, the lawyer said the US sanctions on corruption charges and subsequent reports in national newspapers have tarnished the image of Bangladesh and its army, both nationally and internationally.

On May 21, the US imposed sanctions on Aziz and his immediate family members for what it said was his involvement in significant corruption.

The lawyer said the actions of Aziz contributed to the undermining of Bangladesh's democratic institutions and the public's faith in public institutions and processes.

Aziz had been the chief of army staff from June 2018 to June 2021. Before that, he led Border Guard Bangladesh for four years from 2012.

EC summons

FROM PAGE 2

Rangabali upazila on Thursday.

According to the electoral code of conduct of upazila polls, no MPs or ministers can take part in electioneering for any polls candidate.

The EC, in separate letters, also asked Saiduzzman Mamun, Roushan Mridha and Ferdousi Parveen to appear before the commission to offer their explanation in this matter on the same day.

57 constituencies

FROM PAGE 12

63.36 percent respectively.

Pollsters and political analysts differ on the possible outcome of the election, with lower voter turnout and urban voters' apathy seen as risks for BJP. The saffron party and its allies won 352 in the last election in 2019 with BJP alone winning 303 seats.

Cricket in uncharted territory

FROM PAGE 12

Council (ICC) event to be held in part in the United States.

While the bulk of the tournament will be played out in the Caribbean, 16 group stage games in the 20-team tournament will be played on American soil, including the highlight of the group stage -- a clash between India and Pakistan.

That match is due to be played at a 34,000-capacity temporary venue in Long Island, New York on June 9.

The rest of the tournament will be held in the West Indies, including the Super Eight stage, the semfinals and the final, which will be played at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados.

The ICC sees the tournament as a launch pad towards the sport's return to the Olympics for Los Angeles 2028, when the T20 format will be used.

Major League Cricket, a T20 tournament, was launched last year and also stands to benefit from any growth in interest in the big-hitting, spectacular shortest form.

The ICC also sees the T20 format as the perfect vehicle for growing the game and this year's edition will feature three T20 World Cup debutants in the USA, Canada and Uganda.

Nepal, Papua New Guinea and Oman are among the other nations who are relatively new to the big stage and who will be looking to make their mark and grab some attention with an upset win.

With the teams drawn in four groups of five teams, with just the top two advancing, none of the smaller nations are expected to progress beyond the group stage and there is a danger the pool stage could mainly be a 'weeding out' process.

Unrest likely

FROM PAGE 12

involved in such criminal activities, and actions are being taken against them.

On the last day of his two-day visit to the Rohingya camps, the home minister yesterday held several meetings with different stakeholders of the Rohingya camp issues. He visited camp-19 in Ukhiya around 11:00am and held a meeting with members of Armed Police Battalion (APBn).

Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun, Additional IGP Anwar Hossain, APBn chief Salim Mohammad Jahangir, and Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Mizanur Rahman accompanied the home minister during his visit to the camps.

After a law and order meeting on the Rohingya camps on Thursday night, the home minister told reporters at Cox's Bazar Circuit House that no one from Myanmar will be allowed to enter Bangladesh.

He said the government aims to secure the country's border with Myanmar and ensure safety at the Rohingya camps by preventing terrorist activities.

Asaduzzaman directed police and the APBn to stop the violence in Rohingya camps.

Trump 'guilty on all 34 counts'

FROM PAGE 1

Trump, however, is not barred from continuing his battle to unseat President Joe Biden in November -- even in the unlikely event he goes to prison.

But this guilty verdict still could sway November's presidential election. A poll from Bloomberg and Morning Consult earlier this year found that 53 percent of voters in key swing states would refuse to vote for the Republican if he were convicted.

Another poll, from Quinnipiac University this month, showed 6 percent of Trump voters would be less likely to vote for him - consequential in such a tight race.

In a press conference yesterday, Trump railed against his criminal conviction, calling his New York trial "very unfair", attacking the process as politicised and vowing to appeal.

"It was very unfair... You saw what happened to some of the witnesses that were on our side -- they were literally crucified," Trump said in a rambling speech at Trump Tower in Manhattan in which he called his adversaries "sick" and "fascists."

He vowed to challenge his conviction on 34 counts of falsifying business records, declaring "We're going to be appealing this scam... on many different things."

Earlier, immediately after the conviction, Trump himself voiced defiance.

"I'm a very innocent man," Trump told reporters, vowing that the "real verdict" would come from voters on election day. He branded the trial "rigged" and a "disgrace."

Biden's campaign issued a statement saying the trial showed "no one is above the law." It added that "the threat Trump poses to our democracy has never been greater."

Judge Juan Merchan set sentencing for July 11 -- four days before the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, where Trump is due to receive the party's formal nomination.

The 12-member jury had deliberated for more than 11 hours over two days before the foreman read out the unanimous conclusion within a matter of minutes.

Merchan thanked the jurors for completing the "difficult and stressful task."

Their identities had been kept secret throughout proceedings, a rare practice more often seen in cases involving mafia or other violent defendants.

Trump also faces federal and state charges of conspiring to overturn the results of the 2020 election won by Biden, and for hoarding secret documents after leaving the White House.

However, those trials -- on far weightier alleged crimes -- are unlikely to get underway before the presidential election.

Trump was convicted of falsifying business records to reimburse his lawyer, Michael Cohen, for a $130,000 payment to Daniels on the eve of the 2016 election, when her claim to have had sex with him could have proved fatal to his campaign against Hillary Clinton.

6.43 lakh

FROM PAGE 12

While water levels in the Surma and Kushiyara rivers dropped yesterday, they flowed above the danger marks at three points.

With the rivers still flowing above the danger levels, parts of Sylhet city's Uposohor, Taltala, and other areas were freshly inundated yesterday.

The district administration has prepared 547 centres to provide shelter to those affected. A least 3,739 people were staying at the shelters yesterday, compared to 4,802 on Thursday night.

Sylhet Deputy Commissioner Sheikh Russel Hasan said, "The rain has largely subsided, and the overall flood situation is slowly improving, with many returning home from shelters. We have allocated sufficient relief goods for the affected people. We are monitoring the situation round the clock."

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WHO WILL WIN THE FINAL SHOWDOWN?

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Turn of tide this time for Dortmund, Reus?

SAMAMA RAHMAN

As Borussia Dortmund prepare to walk into Wembley for a Champions League final against Real Madrid, it is hard to pinpoint their source of inspiration.

Any memories of the venue will certainly be tainted by their cruel loss to Bayern Munich 11 years ago, in the final of the same tournament no less.

Add to that the match-up, against the kings of Europe and a team that always seems to win the mental game, and their prospects shrink further.

There is also little encouragement to be found from their recent performances on big occasions. In fact, those performances will only reinforce the mental barrier.

At the end of last season, all Dortmund had to do was beat Mainz at home to become German champions and nothing else would matter. "We have it in our hands,"read a banner across the famed Yellow Wall.

Anticlimactically, perhaps overwhelmed by pressure, they floundered to a draw, conceding the title to Bayern.

There have been many such setbacks in recent seasons.

And one player who has lived through them all is Marco Reus. In fact, the well ran dry immediately after Reus arrived from 2012, the summer after Dortmund won a second straight league title.

Now, after 12 years at Dortmund, including five years as the team's captain, Reus has only two German Cups to his name.

The lack of silverware has often invited questions about mentality, sometimes causing tempers to flare. "You're really getting on my nerves now with your mentality crap, you really are," Reus fumed on the pitch after his team had conceded a last-minute equaliser away at Eintracht Frankfurt.

Whether it has to do with mentality or not, their mercurial form only adds to the mystery.

In the Champions League, Dortmund have been imperious. They finished top of a group with PSG, AC Milan and Newcastle, dramatically overcame Atletico Madrid in the quarters and then saw PSG off without conceding in the semis. But in the Bundesliga, they finished in fifth place.

This all-too-familiar hot and cold pattern has often led to players leaving Dortmund for greener pastures. Young players that are hungry for trophies, like Jude Bellingham, now on the opposing team, and Erling Haaland, are among such examples.

But a better representation would be one of Reus' peers like Mats Hummels, the only other remaining player from BVB's last Champions League final in 2013.

After winning two Bundesliga titles at Dortmund, and going trophyless for the next four years, Hummels moved to Bayern, where he proceeded to win the league three times in as many seasons.

His trophy cabinet also boasts the World Cup trophy, won in 2014, a prize Reus missed out on through injury.

Still, at Dortmund's home, Reus, is hailed as among the all-time greats and adored by the fans as 'one of us'.

"Marco is a living legend," coach Edin Terzic said after Reus' decision to leave. "Where else can you find that in modern football? A story where someone chooses a club for twelve years and spends almost his entire career there is extraordinary at this level."

Coming from Terzic, a Dortmund fan who attended his first game in 1991 at the Westfalenstadion aged just nine, those words carry serious weight.

Despite all the near misses and cruel twists of fate, lifting the Champions League with Dortmund would be a salve for any wound.

But while this date with destiny presents a chance, it also threatens to turn him into the tragic hero one last time. In that case, as he has for years, Reus can turn to the fans, secure in the knowledge that, just like on the last day of the last season, they will be singing his name regardless of the result.

> **It's going to be a great game. Real Madrid, their history speaks for itself. I've got a few friends over there, Vini and Jude. I actually messaged them after they won against Bayern. I said, 'I'll see you there.' It's going to be a tense game, for sure.**
>
> Borussia Dortmund forward **Jadon Sancho**

INTERESTING FACTS

COUPE DES CLUBS CHAMP
EUROPEENS

- This is set to be Real Madrid's 18th final in the European Cup/Champions League. Los Blancos have lost only in three finals, with their last defeat in the final of the competition coming back in 1981.
- Real Madrid have won five of the last 10 UEFA Champions League. They have also won their last eight finals in the competition.
- Real Madrid legend Toni Kroos will be playing his final game for the all-whites while Borussia Dortmund will be bidding goodbye to their legend Marco Reus and centre-back Mats Hummels.
- This is going to be Dortmund's third Champions League final. They have won it once, in 1997, but lost when they last played the final in 2013 in Wembley against arch-rivals Bayern Munich. Interestingly, the final of this season will also be played at the same venue.
- Dortmund's defeat by Bayern 11 years ago was the only all-German final – and the last time the match was played at Wembley.
- Real Madrid hold a slender advantage considering their head-to-head stats against Borussia Dortmund. In the five matches played in the Champions League between these two sides, Real Madrid have won twice, Dortmund won in one while two other matches ended in draws. Real, however, have won their last two encounters in 2017.
- Luka Modrić and Dani Carvajal could appear in their sixth Champions League final victory for Madrid -- matching Paco Gento's record.
- Having scored the only goal against Liverpool in 2022, Vinícius Júnior could become only the eighth player to find the net in more than one Champions League final.
- Real's triumph in Paris two years ago was the 12th Champions League win for a Spanish side -- five more than the next highest-ranked nation, England.

> According to the current situation and the squad, we are the favourites. But this a UCL final and anything can happen in a knockout game. Dortmund will win if we play badly or be overconfident.
>
> **– Sifat Jashim,**
> secretary of Pena Madridista Bangladesh

> We don't have sky-high expectations like now that we're in the final we have to win it. We have to remember that our opponents are the most successful team in the history of the competition.
>
> **– Sreezon Das Gupta,**
> admin of DER BVB Borussen's Bangladesh

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WHO WILL WIN
THE FINAL
SHOWDOWN?

Real Madrid against the world!

> **The fear, that's normal. I have experience. My team gives me confidence and hope. They look focused on the game. They're in Champions League mode. We're not on holiday yet, and the other teams are. They'll see the game on TV.**
>
> – Real Madrid coach **Carlo Ancelotti**

NABID YEASIN

Come June 1, when Real Madrid players line up for the UEFA Champions League's grand finale at the iconic Wembley Stadium, they will not only be up against the yellow army of Borussia Dortmund but against the entire footballing world -- and there are ample reasons for it.

The sheer dominance in Europe's most elite club competition, the incomparable history of the club, and most importantly, the manner in which they have managed to conquer the most sought-after title time and again means that it will only escalate the envy of almost all the clubs, managers, players and their fanbases to see Real succeed in their bid to land a record-extending 15th Champions League title.

The record 14-time winners of the tournament have made it so that it is not an exaggeration to say that the Champions League is now synonymous with Real Madrid -- a club that is touted as the greatest ever mostly because of their unfathomable pedigree in the very competition.

Just in this decade, Real lifted the coveted Champions League trophy five out of 10 times -- beginning with their mission 'La Decima', climaxed through the iconic '92:48' Sergio Ramos header in their 4-1 win in extra-time over city rivals Atletico Madrid in 2014 final.

It was as if that particular triumph had not only ended Real's 12-year drought in the competition but also opened the floodgate that next brought in an unprecedented three-peat (from 2016 to 2018) that the world could only stand, watch, admire, and aspire to replicate.

While Zinedine Zidane and his core group of Cristiano Ronaldo, Gareth Bale, Karim Benzema, Luka Modric, Casemiro, and Toni Kroos made winning three successive Champions League look almost like a walk in the park, it surely comes as a dream run for most in the business.

But what probably rubs most clubs and their fanbases the wrong way is how Real defied the odds in every knockout stage in the 2022 campaign to win their 14th -- taking their tally so far out of reach of their pack of chasers that now they actually own double of AC Milan, the next best club in terms of Champions League titles with seven in the Italian club's lot.

No one would be able to define how Benzema unleashed a 17-minute hattrick to overturn a 2-0 aggregate score of a star-studded PSG boasting Lionel Messi, Neymar, and Kylian Mbappe in the round of 16 in 2022. Experts were dumbfounded and at a loss for words trying to make sense of Modric's trivela pass to Rodrygo for the tie-winner against Chelsea in the quarters that season, or how Real players pulled off another astonishing miracle at the Santiago Bernabeu by scoring thrice between 90-95 minutes to dump out favourites Manchester City from the semifinal that season.

There was no logic in how Real, a side that rely heavily on their attacking prowess to outscore their opponents both in Spain and Europe, managed to pull off a defensive masterclass akin to the classic Italian style of play against City once again in the quarterfinal second leg this season.

Joselu's story of turning the unlikely hero with two last-ditch goals in this year's semifinal against Bayern Munich still seems like a fairytale -- one that must sting everyone who hoped for the n-th time that Real would surely not script yet another Champions League miracle.

Pundits resorted to labelling their inexplicable comebacks as 'lucky' breaks innumerable times. But Real have pulled the rabbit out of the hat so often that now it only seems logical to state that there indeed exists the intangible 'Real DNA' that kicks in just in moments of despair, spreading in whoever dons that proud white shirt, to keep stupefying the world with glimpses of pure footballing genius.

Real Madrid have dashed the hopes of so many hearts, at times in such cruel manners, that now their ascent feels like a harsh taunt to the rest so far behind.

Hence, it won't be a surprise to see the entire world join the Yellow Wall of Dortmund for the final but that could do very little to deter Real Madrid from being determined to extend their Champions League legacy. And they will have the extra motivation of turning the occasion into a fitting goodbye to one of their legends -- Kroos.

Nicknamed 'the German sniper' for his ability to pinpoint his passes and throughs to anyone at any point of the pitch from even the farthest corners of the ground, Kroos will be bringing the curtain down on a glorious trophy-galore 10-year stay at Real Madrid at Wembley.

"Real Madrid games always follow the rhythm of Toni Kroos. If he wants the team to slow down, we slow down. If he wants us to speed up, we speed up. He decides everything," Kroos'former Real teammate Casemiro had once said. Surely, the players in all-whites will hope for their final dance to the tune of maestro Kroos to be memorable and meaningful, even if it means they would need to fight it out against Dortmund, backed by the entire world.

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The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

73% rise in tobacco production!

Is the govt truly serious about its vision to be tobacco-free by 2040?

Bangladesh may aspire to be tobacco-free by 2040, but the government's commitment to implementing stricter tobacco control laws seems at odds with the consistent surge in tobacco production: a nearly 73 percent increase in per-hectare yield over the last 14 years. Tobacco farming now accounts for over 30 percent of annual deforestation, placing the country third globally in this regard. The University of Bath ranks Bangladesh as the 12th largest tobacco grower as of 2020. This growth is alarming given the well-documented health and environmental hazards associated with tobacco cultivation, to say nothing of the dangers associated with its consumption.

The introduction of high-yielding varieties by tobacco companies, coupled with aggressive promotion of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, has enticed farmers with promises of higher profits. However, numerous studies highlight that excessive use of such chemicals depletes soil fertility, contaminates water sources, and disrupts ecosystems. A 2015 study in Kushtia found alarming levels of toxic residues in soil and water samples collected near tobacco farms. This contamination not only harms aquatic life, but also poses a health risk to humans who rely on these water sources. The World Health Organization (WHO) notes that each cigarette emits about 14 grams of CO2 over its lifecycle, and producing 300 cigarettes requires one tree for paper and drying leaves. Water pollution is another grave concern, with a single cigarette requiring about 3.7 litres of water over its lifecycle. Tobacco cultivation demands up to eight times more water than crops like tomatoes or potatoes, leading to significant water usage and pollution.

Despite these grave environmental and health risks, farmers are drawn to tobacco farming due to its profitability. But the real beneficiaries of this growth are the big tobacco companies. In 2022, Euromonitor International estimated the value of Bangladeshi tobacco market at Tk 42,000 crore. British American Tobacco (BAT), with an 85 percent market share, saw its profit after tax rise nearly twofold from Tk 925 crore in 2019 to Tk 1,788 crore in 2023. Meanwhile, the tobacco industry, a top taxpayer, generated over Tk 32,502 crore in revenue from domestic cigarette sales alone last fiscal year, an eight percent increase from the previous year. We cannot help but wonder: is the government, which owns 10 percent share in BAT, truly genuine about its resolve to discourage tobacco farming?

Surely, the government recognises that public health and safeguarding the environment must be prioritised over short-term economic gains. It must strengthen its resolve to discourage tobacco farming by providing alternative crops with comparable profitability and technical support to farmers. We also need stricter regulations as well as public awareness campaigns to control the marketing of high-yielding tobacco varieties and the excessive use of harmful chemicals. The government's vision for a tobacco-free nation by 2040 must account for something.

Malaysian labour market freezes again

Why can't the govt address the recurring irregularities?

On Friday, Malaysia once again closed its doors to aspiring Bangladeshi migrants—along with workers from 13 other countries—because of anomalies in the worker recruitment process. Since the Southeast Asian country first started taking workers from Bangladesh, the labour market has been frozen several times, reportedly due to corruption and irregularities in the recruitment process at the expense of workers' exploitation and criminalisation. It is frustrating that in all these years, neither the Bangladeshi government nor its Malaysian counterpart took any effective steps to address the widely reported irregularities and bring to book the syndicates involved in the recruitment process.

The last MoU signed by the two countries in 2021 capped the cost of recruitment for each worker at $720, but in reality workers ended up paying as much as $5,000, the highest price globally, according to a report in our daily. Meanwhile, workers kept on being deceived by ghost recruiters, then jailed and detained in Malaysia for no fault of their own. In the meantime, the syndicates, including 100 Bangladeshi recruiting agencies, some of which are owned by Bangladeshi lawmakers and their families, kept on making money at the workers' expense. A portion of this money is also being laundered to Malaysia as bribes for Malaysian recruitment firms.

In a recent letter to both governments, four UN experts talked about exploitation noting that "certain high-level officials in both governments are involved in this business or condoning it." Yet, the Malaysian high commissioner to Bangladesh would have us believe that the syndicates recruiting Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia are "beyond the control of the two governments." After decades of worker exploitation right under their noses, can the two governments absolve themselves of their responsibilities, particularly when they are yet to acknowledge—much less take action against—high-level officials involved in the corrupt process?

They must bring the perpetrators to book, no matter how powerful the syndicates are. The irregularities in migrant worker recruitment need to be resolved once and for all, so that our workers do not return as dead bodies or financially and emotionally broken individuals.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Indonesian President Sukarno delivers speech on Pancasila

On this day in 1945, in a speech, Indonesian nationalist leader Sukarno articulated the Pancasila—the Five Principles—that became the founding philosophy of the independent Indonesian state.

LOW VOTER TURNOUT IN UPAZILA ELECTION

Time for some soul-searching for the Awami League

Partha Pratim Bhattacharjee *is planning editor at The Daily Star.*

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

In an ominous sign for democracy, voter turnout in Bangladesh's elections has been decreasing significantly in recent years, exhibiting voters' apathy towards this important process by staying away from casting votes. After the first phase of the ongoing upazila election, which saw 36 percent voter turnout, the ruling Awami League's General Secretary Obaidul Quader explained the poor turnout by saying that the paddy harvesting season as well as storms and rain in different districts were to blame. Nevertheless, he labelled the turnout "satisfactory."

Harvesting was over in almost all the places in the country before the second phase of election, held on May 21, and there was no rain on that day. Yet, the situation did not improve as the second phase saw only 37.57 percent voter turnout—second lowest since 2009.

Although there was not much difference in the voter turnout between the first phase and the second phase, the AL spokesperson came up with a different explanation this time, saying BNP, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and some "anti-state" intellectuals were spreading falsehoods to discourage people from casting their votes.

The AL second-in-command, however, again termed the turnout "quite satisfactory."

In the third phase of the election, which was held on Wednesday, the polls saw 36.24 percent voter turnout—lower than the second phase. This time, Quader reiterated that the voter turnout was satisfactory, despite a natural disaster in the same week.

Now, one may ask whether the Awami League, one of the oldest political parties in the country, which has always claimed to have guaranteed people's right to food and franchise, is satisfied with 36-37 percent voter turnout. AL, which has been in power since 2009, always claimed to have 40 percent of the vote bank. If that is true, then judging by the voter turnout in recent elections, one can either assume that not all pro-AL voters are exercising their franchise, or only its own voters are turning up at the polling booths.

There are several reasons behind the voters' apathy that keeps them from exercising their franchise, including the absence of major political parties in the polls, the Election Commission's failure to ensure free and impartial elections, and the ruling party establishing a trend of being elected unopposed.

If people's apathy towards casting votes gradually turns into apathy for the democratic process, it may be dangerous for all political camps in the country, including the Awami League.

It also seems that a new voting system has been developed in the country over the past decade. Winning by all means and keeping opposition parties off the ballot has become the new voting system.

Take the last three national elections in 2014, 2018 and 2024, for example. Of them, the 2014 and 2024 elections were largely one-sided with most political parties boycotting them, while the 2018 election was questionable as opposition parties alleged that ballot stuffing took place on the night before the voting day.

In the 2014 election, 153 candidates of AL got elected without a single vote being cast, which was enough to form the government.

The total number of voters in the 2014 election for all 300 seats was 9.19 crore, while the total number of voters for the 147 seats in which the election was held was 4.31 crore. A total of 4.88 crore voters, 53 percent of the total voters, were unable to cast their votes and their mandate was not required to form the government in 2014.

In such a situation, it seems the ruling camp is not taking any election—national or local government—seriously, and an attitude may have developed within the party that "whoever wins has to be one of ours."

This time, however, the ruling party changed its strategy and decided not to give party nominations and not to allow the party electoral symbol to be used in the local body polls, aiming to make the election participatory, increase voter turnout, and turn the election festive. But this strategy has so far fallen flat as it has failed to encourage voters to turn up at the polling booths.

With no voters in the vicinity, security personnel sit idle at the Dashgaon Noagaon High School polling centre in Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila during the second phase of the upazila election on May 21, 2024. FILE PHOTO: **SHEIKH NASIR**

This situation has also left voters with limited options: they can either cast their votes for the ruling party candidates or its dissidents. With the absence of major political parties in recent elections, the polls appear to be a fight between Awami League and Awami League. So, before any election, Awami League aspirants put in their best efforts to get the party ticket instead of wooing voters, seemingly believing that getting the party ticket is enough for them to get elected.

Like the electoral system, a new approach has been adopted by the Awami Leaguers, and most of them have become desperate to cling to power and get elected unopposed for that. The party men don't want any competition on their way to power. In the absence of the opposition parties, the AL candidates can't even tolerate their own party colleagues on their way to win.

Is it realistic to change the electoral culture that developed over a decade simply by changing strategy?

The time has come for the Awami League to realise why voters are turning away from casting votes. Will the ruling camp finally do some soul searching? The chances are slim.

The Awami League, which has led all democratic movements before and after the birth of Bangladesh, is now busier with government affairs than its own organisation. It is busier bashing opponents and holding programmes to counter opposition parties, than finding out organisational weaknesses in its own ranks.

As the party prepares for a grand platinum jubilee celebration next month, it is high time for the party to do some soul-searching instead of focusing on countering its political arch-rival.

How we can protect the best interests of children during divorce

Laila Khondkar *is an international development worker.*

LAILA KHONDKAR

"The worst thing for the children when their parents divorce is to do 'middle-manning.' You have to tell your mother about your father and vice versa,"shared a young university student who had to go through this experience during her parents' divorce a few years ago.

The Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics 2023 (BSVS 2023), a nationwide survey conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) on 308,032 families, revealed that out of every 10,000 individuals in the country, 11 were divorced. There is a slight decline in divorce from the previous year, when the rate had increased sharply after the Covid-19 pandemic. Overall, divorce is on the rise in society, and this trend is expected to continue.

There are many reasons why people may choose to separate from their partners, from a lack of mutual understanding to violence against women. Moreover, economic empowerment of women gives them the capacity to leave unhappy and abusive marriages. This article, however, is not about analysing the socioeconomic and cultural reasons for divorce. Rather, I would like to focus on the impact children suffer when their parents divorce.

Parental separation can affect children's lives in many ways, including changes in eating habits, behaviour, and exam results. Children may feel depressed and anxious, and there is also the risk of other mental health problems. Most studies on divorce show that the first one to three years are somewhat more difficult for children to adjust to the situation. Also, not all children are equally affected by parental separation. Those who have witnessed very high levels of conflict and bitterness between parents find some relief in separation.

> **Post-divorce complications can often become very bitter. There are disputes between parents over who will have custody of the child. A judgement is obtained if legal recourse is taken. However, the tension throughout the whole process can negatively impact the child.**

The parents of a Swedish friend of mine divorced when he was 16 years old. He said, "Since I was seven or eight years old, I have seen a dysfunctional relationship between my parents. I myself asked them to get divorced when I reached adolescence. During my school final exams, the situation at home was insufferable because of their conflicts. A social worker arranged for me to be placed with another family. So, when my parents finally got divorced, I was relieved." My friend maintained a good relationship with both parents after the divorce. He is now a university teacher and a father of two children. There are countless examples of children succeeding in education, career and life after parental divorce.

Some teenagers in Bangladesh feel like my Swedish friend because the intense strife between their parents is unbearable for them. Many have witnessed physical and emotional abuse taking place in the relationship between their parents. According to child protection experts, if children witness abuse happening in front of them, it is also a form of child abuse. Children need to protected from this form of abuse as well.

Divorce is still a taboo subject and considered unacceptable by many in Bangladesh. The attitude is changing slowly, but the dominant social tendency is to protect the institution of marriage at any cost, even when it is no longer meaningful for the couple concerned. Therefore, children are under additional mental stress when parents are separated. Many are bullied at school and are subjected to harsh comments from neighbours and relatives. These discriminatory social attitudes need to change. People should stop making judgemental remarks about matters of others' lives without having the slightest idea about their realities.

Post-divorce complications can often become very bitter. There are disputes between parents over who will have custody of the child. A judgement is obtained if legal recourse is taken. However, the tension throughout the whole process can negatively impact the child. Some parents also prevent the child from seeing another parent, which is not acceptable from a legal point of view and a violation of children's rights. Except for a few extreme cases when a parent is a risk to the child, every parent has a right to interact with the child and perform their responsibilities. Having both parents in life is positive for the child's holistic development.

Some parents involve their children in discussions about alimony, division of property, etc, or try to sway them to their side. When parents fight or blame each other in front of their children, it leads the child to believe they must take sides, which is harmful for them. A parent's responsibility is to protect the child's best interests under all circumstances, but many fail to do so post-separation. Their anger and frustration are reflected in their behaviour towards their children.

Parents should consider the situation from their children's perspectives. It is beneficial for children to grow up in a peaceful environment with their parents. But if that cannot be ensured and separation becomes inevitable, the matter should be explained to the children as clearly as possible. Parents should listen carefully if their children express their feelings about the separation. Every child is different. Their reactions will also vary. It is important to let them know that feelings of anxiety, anger, and sadness are normal.

Parents have to learn how to manage the process in a mature way so that it does not affect children negatively. They are responsible for not involving children in the bitterness following separation. It is important for children to have reassurance that despite the separation, both parents will love them unconditionally. Children should be informed that even if the relationship between their parents changes, they can still love both of them.

Relatives, neighbours, and colleagues need to be sensitive to the people going through a divorce as well as their children. Teachers should also ensure that no student is discriminated against because of their parents' divorce. These will make it relatively easier for children to cope with the situation.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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Advertisement: 01711623910
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Subscription:
01711623906

thedailystar.net
bangla.thedailystar.net/

Kaiputra: The untold story of a discriminated and excluded community

Philip Gain
is researcher and director at the Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD).

PHILIP GAIN

The government term for the community that rears pigs in the open field in Bangladesh is Kawara. The public, in general, also uses the same word but Kawara, in Bangla, is used in a derogatory way implying the community that lives with pigs. Lately, the Kawara people have adopted the term "Kaiputra," a more respectable term to identify themselves.

If you are travelling through the southwestern districts, especially Satkhira, Jashore, Khulna, Kushtia, Faridpur, Gopalganj, Barishal and Narail, you are likely to see a herd of pigs grazing along the roadside or in a *beel*. Generally, a flock has 200 to 500 black pigs, almost similar to wild boar in looks. Pigs are considered unholy and therefore unwanted in a Muslim majority country.

However, the pork that comes from the southwestern districts of Bangladesh has high demand among non-Muslims and the big hotels, particularly in Dhaka. The Christians in Dhaka cannot think of celebrating their festivals without pork from the southwestern districts of the country. In fact, black pigs, fed and reared in the open field in these low-lying districts, are routinely slaughtered in Nagori in Kaliganj close to Dhaka and brought to shops in Farmgate. The meat is also supplied to hotels.

We have been following the herds of pigs in a few districts since 2016 for our research interest on the Kaiputra, one of the most miserable and impoverished people of Bangladesh. They leave their families in villages in Satkhira, Jashore and Khulna districts and live with the pigs throughout the year. A herd of 500 pigs require a dozen strong men who are known as *rakhals*. What I admire most about the *rakhals* is that they treat the pigs like their siblings. They have particular skills to communicate with the pigs, an intelligent animal.

The *rakhals* indeed feed the pigs, live with them day and night and talk to them. The pigs also listen to them and follow their instructions. The *rakhals* and pigs in the depth of our beels have an amazing life that we hardly notice. We normally see them when they come on the road to move from one place to another or feed along the roadside.

The rakhals and their origin

The Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) has thoroughly mapped the Kaiputra community and published a book, "Kaiputra: Pig Rearing Community" in 2019. SEHD found this community in 46 villages in Jashore, Satkhira and Khulna districts. In 41 of these villages, the Kaiputra community is active in their traditional business of pig rearing in the open. Kaiputras in five of the villages do not send their men as *rakhals* in the field. In addition to these 46 villages, there are another 29 villages in these three districts, where the Kaiputra communities have taken up fishing. They are no more interested in traditional pig rearing and in identifying themselves as Kaiputra.

The guesstimated Kaiputra population is 12,000. In 2018, the number of herds of pigs reported by the community members was 102 and the number of pigs, 16,296. Some members of the Kaiputra communities also raise pigs in their homes.

Although all Kaiputra people are followers of Hinduism, they are not considered to be within the four Varnas of the caste system and are therefore untouchables. There is no other community in the southwest of Bangladesh so isolated, ostracised, broken, impoverished and socially excluded.

On April 7 and 8, I visited a Kaiputra para in Dakshin Alipur (No. 2 Ward) in Alipur Union of Satkhira Sadar Upazila. The condition of 47 Kaiputra households—39 on the western side and 8 on the eastern side—of the Satkhira-Shyamnagar highway is worse than appalling. Many of the houses are *jhupris*. The community reported that the 47 families have been living there on *khas* land for many decades.

Around 50 men (rakhals) from this Kaiputra para go out in the field with their herds. Their monthly salary ranges between Tk 3,000 and Tk 9,000 plus a daily allowance for food.

Rakhals with their herd of pigs in Gopalganj in 2016. PHOTO: **PHILIP GAIN**

The most appalling thing about the Kaiputra community of Dakshin Alipur is 25 of its female members, all widows and abandoned, beg in neighbouring areas. One of them is Kalyani Mondol (60 and above), who has been begging since her husband, a *rakhal*, died many years ago. She has a daughter, who has been married off. Kalyani lives in a *jhupri*, about 6 feet by 6 feet, made of nipa palm leaves, polythene and rusted tins. During rain, she has to sit up and stay awake. She is physically handicapped and walks with the help of a stick. What she gets in widow allowance is hardly enough. She cannot survive without begging.

"Because we beg and our men work with pigs, our neighbours look down on us," says Shefali Mondol (35), who also begs and sometimes works as a daily labourer. "In tea stalls and hotels in *bazar* areas, our cups and plates are separate. We are not socially equal to other humans."

The government reportedly has plans to expand the Satkhira-Shyamnagar Highway into four lanes and has been asking the Kaiputra community to vacate the land they inhabit. The Kaipiutra people are completely landless and have nowhere to go.

They, however, have a suggestion for their relocation. "We are landless and our houses are so flimsy that we consider ourselves homeless," says China Mondol, a mother of two *rakhals*. China occasionally begs for a living. "There is plenty of *khas* land on the western side of our current location. We are repeatedly appealing for pucca houses under Ashrayan scheme to resettle us there."

It is to be noted that in August the prime minister announced Satkhira Sadar Upazila free of landless and homeless people. The 47 Kaiputra families of Dakshin Alipur in Satkhira Sadar clearly show that the upazila is not free of the landless and homeless, if Kaiputra people are considered citizens of Bangladesh. These families will remain grateful to the prime minister if she resettles each of them on a piece of land.

Living the life of pig graziers in a fast-changing Bangladesh is really challenging. Maintaining a herd of around 500 pigs requires a large sum of money. The owners of the herds do not have access to bank loans. They take loans from moneylenders at a very high interest rate. They also take loans from NGOs, which are inadequate. There are also high risks of swine flu and other unknown diseases that kill pigs in masses.

In January 2022, an unknown disease killed many herds of pigs. Dilip Mondol, owner of a big herd of pigs in Vayana village in Jashore, helplessly watched all of his 700 animals die when an unknown disease struck. His net loss was Tk 50 lakh. His debt to different parties was Tk 30 lakh. He is completely broke now. He is not sure if and when he can come back to business. There are many others who witnessed their pigs' death after the attack of the unknown disease. Many do not report these diseases in fear of hostility from the locals.

The Kaiputra people want change and a respectful life. Bangladesh has indeed made significant progress in many sectors including health, education, economy, employment generation and fisheries. Many from the Kaiputra community have also changed their occupation. Those who have given up their pig grazer profession and moved to fishing feel they are doing better socially and economically. Many have also been changing their Kaiputra title, Mondol, to Tarafdar, Biswas, Sarkar, etc. Their children are getting admitted to schools in greater numbers. Yet, the Kaiputra like those in Dakshin Alipur are left far behind than any other community in the southwest, where they are concentrated.

As long as they keep taking their pigs for grazing in the open field, a practice they have inherited from their forefathers, they need support and protection from state and non-state parties. Their urgent needs include but are not limited to: the ability to take their pigs for grazing without fear, license, insurance, access to bank loans, social protection, access to khas land with ownership, medical treatment for pigs when they are struck by diseases, and recognition of pigs as domestic animals.

Earth: Our only home, our responsibility

Md Ziaul Haque
is assistant professor at the Department of English of the University of Creative Technology Chittagong.

MD ZIAUL HAQUE

The fragile beauty of Earth is a poetic reminder of the intricate balance that sustains all life on our planet. From the expansive oceans to the verdant forests and majestic mountains, every facet of our natural world contributes harmoniously to the symphony of existence. The intricate ecosystems brimming with a diverse array of flora and fauna underscore the resilience and interconnectedness of all living organisms.

However, the swift pace of human activities, which are causing deforestation, pollution, and climate change, poses a severe threat to Earth's delicate beauty. It is crucial for us to acknowledge that our actions have profound consequences on this planet, and to assume responsibility for preserving and safeguarding this irreplaceable home for future generations.

Environmental conservation transcends mere moral obligation; it is an essential prerequisite for the survival of our planet and its inhabitants. The well-being of humanity is directly linked to the health of our ecosystems, encompassing clean air, water, and fertile soil for agriculture. Through the preservation of biodiversity and protection of natural habitats, we ensure that the delicate balance within our ecosystem remains undisturbed, enhancing resilience against environmental perils such as climate change.

Moreover, environmental conservation plays a pivotal role in securing the ability of future generations to flourish on Earth. By taking proactive measures to curb pollution, conserve resources, and mitigate habitat destruction now, we are investing in a sustainable future for all life forms on this planet. Each individual endeavour towards environmental conservation contributes significantly towards fostering a more symbiotic relationship between humankind and the natural world—one that prioritises reverence for the environment and ensures enduring prosperity for all living entities.

Amid mounting evidence showcasing the undeniable impacts of climate change, we must acknowledge the urgency surrounding this global crisis. Rising sea levels, extreme weather phenomena, and ecological shifts are no longer distant anticipations but tangible realities confronting us today. The accelerated pace at which environmental degradation is unfolding necessitates immediate action from individuals, communities, and nations alike.

Of particular concern are the ramifications of climate change on biodiversity. Species worldwide face extinction as their habitats vanish or become inhospitable due to fluctuating temperatures and environmental circumstances. Moreover, the issue of climate change is exacerbating prevalent social disparities by disproportionately affecting marginalised communities that lack the means to adapt or recover from environmental crises. With rising temperatures and an increase in natural disasters, vulnerable populations face heightened risks to their health, livelihoods, and overall welfare. A comprehensive approach to addressing climate change is imperative, one that places equity and justice at the forefront. Preserving biodiversity and the health of ecosystems is not merely an environmental concern but a critical matter for human survival. Each species within an ecosystem plays a vital role in maintaining its equilibrium, and the loss of even one can trigger ripple effects throughout the entire system.

By safeguarding biodiversity, we are also ensuring our own well-being, as diverse ecosystems provide essential resources such as clean air, water, food, and medicine. Additionally, protecting ecosystems is crucial for combating climate change. Healthy forests act as carbon sinks by absorbing significant amounts of CO2 from the atmosphere and helping regulate global temperatures. Safeguarding these natural habitats is essential for addressing climate change and securing a sustainable future for the upcoming generations.

Sustainable living practices are key to securing a flourishing future for our planet. From reducing waste and embracing renewable energy sources to supporting local businesses and promoting ethical consumption practices, each small step we take can have a substantial impact on the environment. By making mindful choices in our daily lives, we can contribute to a more sustainable and harmonious world for upcoming generations.

The adoption of minimalism is another pivotal aspect of sustainable living that often goes unnoticed. Instead of constantly pursuing material possessions and consumerism, embracing a minimalist lifestyle helps decrease our carbon footprint and shift our focus towards experiences over material goods. By simplifying our lives and reducing excess clutter, we not only benefit the environment but also enhance our overall well-being in the process.

Dissemination of information and the education of others on environmental concerns can also serve as a catalyst for collective efforts towards a more sustainable future. Simple gestures such as engaging in community clean-up initiatives or backing local conservation projects have the potential to trigger a cascade of positive outcomes. Ultimately, it falls upon each individual to acknowledge his or her role in shaping the planet's well-being and to strive towards a harmonious coexistence with the natural world.

Government policies and global initiatives hold significant sway in determining the course of our planet's future. International agreements on climate change, like the Paris Agreement, and sustainability targets set by various nations are pivotal in addressing environmental issues on a global scale. It is heartening to witness governments uniting to combat challenges such as deforestation, pollution, and resource depletion through collaborative endeavours and shared commitments. Nonetheless, there remains substantial work ahead in terms of effectively implementing and enforcing these policies. Without robust enforcement mechanisms and accountability measures, many initiatives risk falling short of their intended impact.

Our obligation to safeguard our habitat culminates in recognising that the destiny of Earth lies within our grasp. Each person has a responsibility to safeguard and nurture this planet for generations to come. By curbing our ecological footprint and advocating for sustainable methods, we collectively hold the power to instigate change. Moreover, acknowledging the interdependence among all living creatures underscores the urgency for immediate action. By understanding that every decision we make impacts not only ourselves but also the intricate balance of nature, we can start fostering a sense of duty towards this beautiful planet.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
Pirojpur.
www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No.46.02.7900.000.07.001.2024-721 **Date-30.05.2024**

e-Tender Notice No-64/2023-2024 (OTM)

e- Tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of works office of the under signed.

Sl no.	Tender ID No.	Package No and Name of works	Last selling date & time	Closing & Opening Date & Time
1	993524	**IBRP/Piroj/Ban/Brg-285)** Construction of 21.00m. Long RCC girder bridge on ikree ishaque master house-jhawtala road at ch.2650.00m road [Road ID: 5791454002] under Bhandaria Upazila, District: Pirojpur.	**23.06.2024 16:00 PM**	**24.06.2024 13:00 PM**
2	993525	**IBRP/Piroj/Ban/Brg-286)** Construction of 18.00m. Long RCC girder bridge on sreepur uzr to katakhali boprder via 104 no gps road at ch.400.00m, road [Road ID 579 145256] under Bhandaria Upazila, District: Pirojpur.	**23.06.2024 16:00 PM**	**24.06.2024 13:00 PM**
3	993526	**IBRP/Piroj/Ban/Brg-287)** Construction of 10.00m. Long RCC girder bridge on senerhat- bhitabaria up office. at ch.1870.00m. road [Road ID: 579143001] under Bhandaria Upazila, District: Pirojpur.	**23.06.2024 16:00 PM**	**24.06.2024 13:00 PM**
4	993527	**IBRP/Piroj/Ban/Brg-288)** Construction of 14.00m. Long RCC girder bridge on bhitabaria up office to eneyet khan hat. at ch.2070.00m. road [Road ID: 579143004] under Bhandaria Upazila, District: Pirojpur.	**23.06.2024 16:00 PM**	**24.06.2024 13:00 PM**
5	993528	**IBRP/Piroj/Ban/Brg-289)** Construction of 11.00m. Long RCC girder bridge on matibhanga amir ali khan house bridge to uttar charail poler hat uzr road at ch. 1200.00m. road [Road ID: 579145203] under Bhandaria Upazila, District: Pirojpur.	**23.06.2024 16:00 PM**	**24.06.2024 13:00 PM**
6	993529	**IBRP/Piroj/Ban/Brg-290)** Construction of 10.00m. Long RCC girder bridge on bhandaria-kawkhali rhd road to basher pul to enayet hat via h/o siddik mollabari road at ch.600.00m. road [Road ID: 579144091] under Bhandaria Upazila, District: Pirojpur.	**23.06.2024 16:00 PM**	**24.06.2024 13:00 PM**
7	993530	**IBRP/Piroj/Ban/Brg-291)** Construction of 14.00m. Long RCC bridge on bhitabaria up office to eneyet khan hat. at ch.1620.00m. road [Road ID: 579143004] under Bhandaria Upazila, District: Pirojpur.	**23.06.2024 16:00 PM**	**24.06.2024 13:00 PM**
8	993531	**IBRP/Piroj/Ban/Brg-292)** Construction of 20.00m. Long RCC bridge on bhandaria chairkhali rhd road to md. toyabali shop via md. jabber howlader house, at ch. 120.00m. road [Road ID: 579145122] under Bhandaria Upazila, District: Pirojpur.	**23.06.2024 16:00 PM**	**24.06.2024 13:00 PM**
9	993532	**IBRP/Piroj/Ban/Brg-293)** Construction of 12.00m. Long RCC girder bridge on hetalia ns high school to pasharbunia high school via hosen boyati house At ch. 10.00m. road [Road ID: 579145127] under Bhandaria Upazila, District: Pirojpur.	**23.06.2024 16:00 PM**	**24.06.2024 13:00 PM**

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the national e-GP system portal **(http://www. eprocure.gov.bd)** is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the national e-GP system portal have to be deposited through on line at any branches of registered Banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk **(helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).**

30.05.24
(Md. Abdus Sattar Howlader)
Executive Engineer
LGED, Pirojpur.
Tel: 02478890486
Email: xen.perojpur@lged.gov.bd

GD-900

5 Reasons Why You Should Drink MILK EVERY DAY

SAMIA HUDA

Milk, often referred to as nature's most complete food, has been a dietary staple for centuries. It's not just a beverage; it's a powerhouse of essential nutrients that contribute to overall health and well-being. Here are five compelling reasons why you should make drinking milk a daily habit.

1

EXCELLENT SOURCE OF CALCIUM

Calcium is crucial for maintaining strong bones and teeth. Milk is one of the best sources of this vital mineral, helping prevent conditions such as osteoporosis and dental problems. Consuming adequate calcium, especially during childhood and adolescence when bone growth is at its peak, sets the foundation for a healthier skeletal system throughout life. For adults, regular intake of calcium helps maintain bone density and reduces the risk of fractures.

2

RICH IN HIGH-QUALITY PROTEIN

Protein is an essential macronutrient that plays a critical role in building and repairing tissues, producing enzymes and hormones, and supporting immune function. Milk contains all nine essential amino acids, making it a complete protein source. Drinking milk daily can help meet your body's protein requirements, which is particularly beneficial for those engaged in regular physical activity or muscle-building.

3

PACKED WITH ESSENTIAL VITAMINS AND MINERALS

Milk is rich in vitamin D, which aids in calcium absorption and bone health. Additionally, milk contains vitamin B12, important for red blood cell production and neurological function, and vitamin A, essential for vision and immune health. The potassium and magnesium in milk help regulate blood pressure and support cardiovascular health.

4

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Incorporating milk into your daily diet can aid in weight management. The protein and fat content in milk contribute to a feeling of fullness, reducing overall calorie intake by curbing hunger and preventing overeating.

Studies have shown that individuals who consume dairy regularly are more likely to maintain a healthy weight or even lose weight when combined with a balanced diet and regular exercise.

5

PROMOTES HYDRATION AND OVERALL HEALTH

Milk is composed of about 90% water, making it an excellent source of hydration. Staying hydrated is vital for bodily functions such as temperature regulation, nutrient transport, and waste removal. Furthermore, the electrolytes in milk, such as potassium and sodium, help maintain fluid balance in the body, which is especially important after exercise or during hot weather.

So, raise a glass to better health and make milk a daily habit!

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Learning
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FLASH FLOOD IN SYLHET

6.43 lakh people stranded in eight upazilas

Many facing shortage of drinking water, food

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, *Sylhet*

At least 6.43 lakh people have been marooned in Sylhet's eight upazilas as flash floods hit the district early Thursday, according to the local administration.

Vast swathes of low-lying areas in Gowainghat, Companiganj, Jaintiapur, Kanaighat, Zakiganj, Beanibazar, Golapganj, and Sadar upazilas went under water owing to incessant rains and a gush of water from upstream areas in neighbouring Indian Meghalaya State since Wednesday night.

As a result, homes, schools, vegetable fields, fish enclosures, and key roads were submerged in 48 unions under these eight upazilas.

The flood-affected people are suffering from shortage of food and drinking water.

"Water entered my home so quickly that I could barely save any of my belongings. Paddy stored in the house got wet, and my fish worth Tk 7 lakh in three ponds were washed away," Moklisur Rahman, a resident of Nayagram Uttar area in Gowainghat upazila, told this newspaper last morning as he was drying his crop on a road.

Sabina Akhter's house, located in the same village next to a haor, was swept away by strong currents when the flash floods hit first.

"We had to take shelter at a neighbour's house. We'll now have to take out a loan to rebuild the house, but we aren't sure how we would repay the loan," she said.

Malika Begum of Forfora village in Jaintiapur upazila said her family along with eight other families took refuge at a shelter early Thursday.

"There were 15 families last night. Seven of them left as the floodwater in their localities receded. But we are still not being able to return home as the situation has not improved in our village," she said.

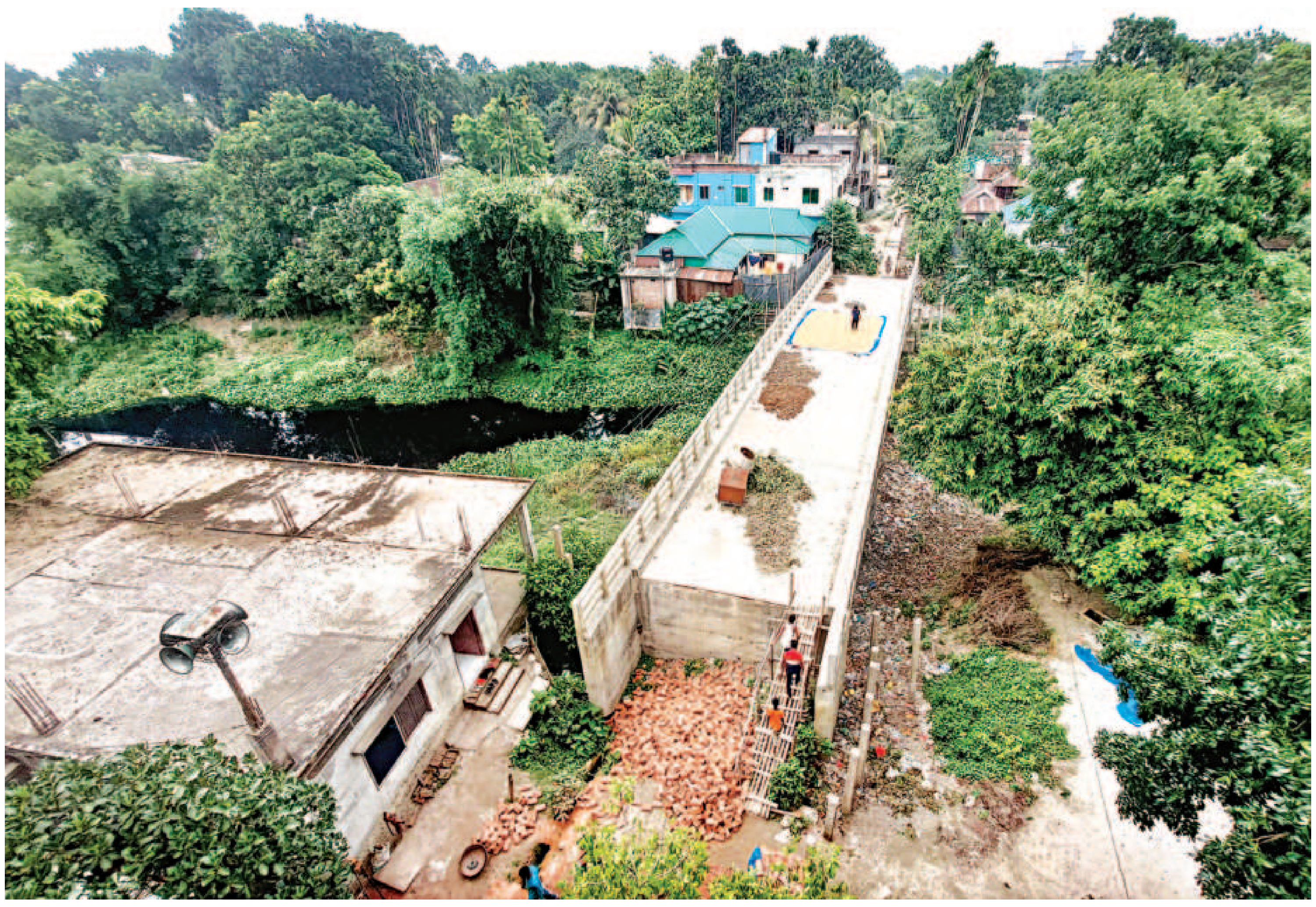
With the Sari-Gowain river flowing below danger level, the floodwaters were slowly receding yesterday in five upazilas that were first hit by the flash floods -- Gowainghat, Companiganj, Jaintiapur, Kanaighat, Zakiganj.

As of 6:00pm yesterday, the river was flowing 24cm below the danger mark at Gowainghat point and 34cm below the danger mark at Sarighat point, where the river flowed 33cm above the danger mark around the same time on Thursday.

In the last 24 hours till 6:00pm yesterday, 15mm rainfall was recorded in Kanaighat upazila and 19mm in Sylhet Sadar upazila.

Meanwhile, 193mm of rainfall was recorded in Cherrapunji, Meghalaya in the last 24 hours till 9:00am yesterday.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5



This bridge on the Louhajang river in Kachuadanga area of Tangail town was built three years ago, but there is no approach road to it. Bamboo walkways built by locals offer a precarious crossing for pedestrians. PHOTO: **MIRZA SHAKIL**

Cricket in uncharted territory

ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP WEST INDIES & USA 2024

AFP, *Dallas*

Cricket ventures into uncharted territory on Sunday morning (Bangladesh time 6:30am) as the first ever major tournament to be staged in the United States gets under way in Texas with the opening game of the T20 World Cup.

A month-long festival of the fastest and most explosive form of the sport -- which is being shared between venues in Texas, Florida, New York and the Caribbean -- begins with the US taking on Canada at the Grand Prairie Stadium on the outskirts of Dallas.

It marks the opening skirmish of the first ever major International Cricket

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

Unrest likely if Rohingyas not sent back to Myanmar

Says home boss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

Unrest may occur in Cox's Bazar if the Rohingyas are not repatriated soon, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said yesterday.

"A hub of international terrorists may be created here. There may be an influx of arms. Many things can happen. And we already see some signs of them," he told journalists while visiting a Rohingya camp in Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar in the morning.

The minister said some people who are fighting inside Myanmar can be seen in Rohingya camps.

"The biggest fear is that drugs have been coming in from Myanmar for a long time although our country does not produce any drugs. Some people in the camps here have got involved in drugs," said Asaduzzaman.

He said the government is trying to identify those

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

Israel offers new Gaza ceasefire plan

Says Biden, urges Hamas to accept it; aid not reaching Gaza population, says UN

REUTERS, *Washington*

US President Joe Biden yesterday said Israel had proposed a Gaza ceasefire in exchange for the release of hostages, and called on Hamas to agree to the new offer, saying it was the best way to end the conflict.

"It's time for this war to end and for the day after to begin," said Biden, who is under election-year pressure to stop the Gaza conflict, now in its eighth month.

Talks mediated by Egypt, Qatar and others to arrange a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas have repeatedly stalled, with both sides blaming the other for the lack of progress.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli prime minister's office or from Hamas on Biden's remarks.

The new proposal Biden laid out yesterday is made up of three phases; the first would be a ceasefire lasting for six weeks.

During this time, Israeli forces would withdraw from Gaza and hostages, including the elderly and women, would be exchanged for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. Palestinian civilians would return to Gaza, including northern Gaza, and 600 trucks would bring humanitarian aid into Gaza each day, Biden said.

- Israel says combat operations in part of north Gaza over
- 60 more Palestinians killed
- Humanitarian situation dire in Gaza: Blinken

In the second phase, Hamas and Israel would negotiate terms of a permanent end to hostilities. "The ceasefire will still continue as long as negotiations continue," the president said.

The third phase would include a major reconstruction plan for Gaza.

The proposal has been relayed to Hamas by Qatar, Biden said.

He called on those in Israel who were pushing for "indefinite" war to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

57 constituencies go to polls today

Modi, Omar Abdullah among key candidates in the last phase

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *New Delhi*

INDIA ELECTION

An estimated 10.06 crore Indians are expected to cast their votes today in the last phase of voting in 57 constituencies spread across eight states and two union territories.

A total of 904 candidates, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, are in the fray in the seventh and final phase of voting which began on April 19.

Modi of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is seeking a third term from the ancient city of Varanasi in eastern Uttar Pradesh, and his nearest challenger is Ajay Rai of Congress.

In a video message to Varanasi voters on the last day of campaigning on Thursday, Modi urged them to turn up at polling booths in record numbers.

Among other key candidates in the seventh phase are: senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad in Patna Sahib constituency in Bihar, Omar Abdullah of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference in Baramulla and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee in Diamond Harbour.

Nine Lok Sabha constituencies in Kolkata, its nearby suburbs, and the Sundarbans are going to the polls in the last phase of elections in West Bengal. Votes will be counted on June 4.

In Punjab, there will be battles for 13 seats between the state's ruling Aam Aadmi Party and Congress despite the fact that the two parties had forged an alliance for taking on BJP for the seven seats in Delhi.

Once again, the focus in the last phase will be on the voter turnout. The turnout in the first six phases of polling was 66.14 percent, 66.71, 65.68, 69.16, 62.2 and

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

AZIZ AHMED

Decision on probing graft allegations soon: ACC

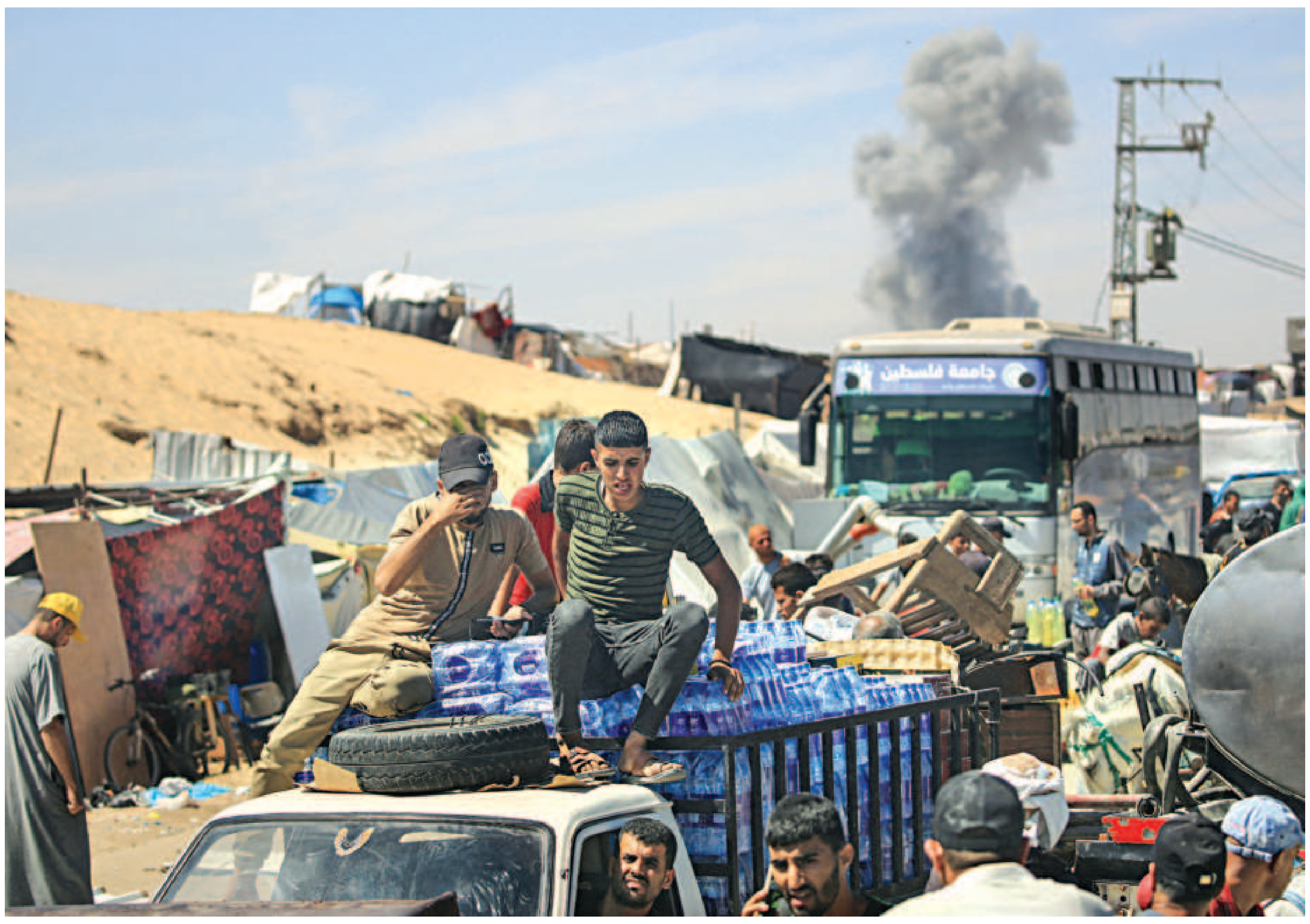
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission will soon decide whether it will launch an investigation into the corruption allegations against former army chief Aziz Ahmed.

In a meeting on Thursday, the ACC reviewed the petition filed by a Supreme Court lawyer and asked its Scrutiny Committee to look into the allegations against Aziz.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, ACC Chairman Mohammad Moinuddin Abdullah said the Scrutiny Committee was instructed to verify whether the allegations against General (retd) Aziz fall within the jurisdiction of the commission as per

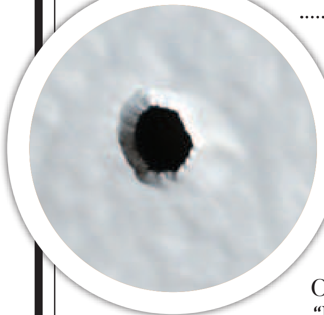
SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Smoke billows following Israeli bombardment as displaced Palestinians move in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: **AFP**

Mysterious pit on Mars could be key to colonising the Red Planet

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



A newly discovered hole on Mars likely connected to underground caves could be key to colonising the Red Planet, astronomers say.

An image of the pit, which is a few metres across, was captured by Nasa's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter.

"Pits may reflect geologically recent tectonic or volcanic activity. Any associated caves could be targets for future robotic exploration," researchers at the University of Arizona who analysed the images said in a blog post.

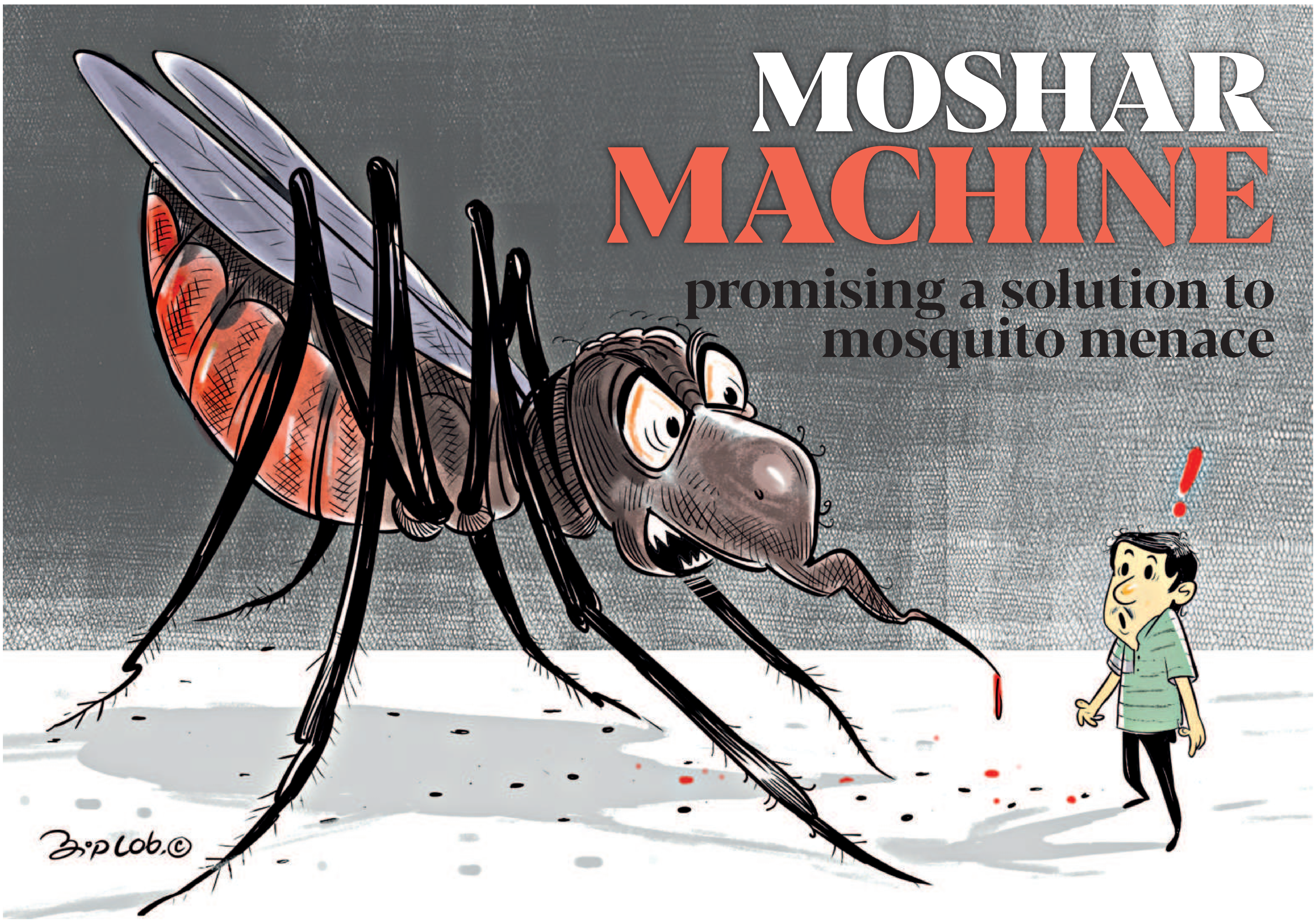
Mars has vast networks of lava tubes similar to those found on Earth which could host life forms, sheltering them from dust storms and the harsh planetary conditions caused by the lack of an effective magnetic shield and a thick atmosphere like Earth's.

Scientists suggest such cave networks, formed from the collapse of ancient lava tubes, could be potential shelters for future astronauts.

The newly discovered pit is near a dormant volcano in the Arsia Mons region, a volcanic plain thousands of kilometres across. This region is elevated relative to the rest of Mars by about 10km on average.

Star WR
WEEKEND READ
DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 1, 2024
JAISHTHA 18, 1431 BS
The Daily Star

MOSHAR MACHINE
promising a solution to mosquito menace



"We designed this metal body to house the device so that it can be deployed in public places. This metal outer cage made this machine extremely durable, requiring simple maintenance like cleaning the nets with a brush."

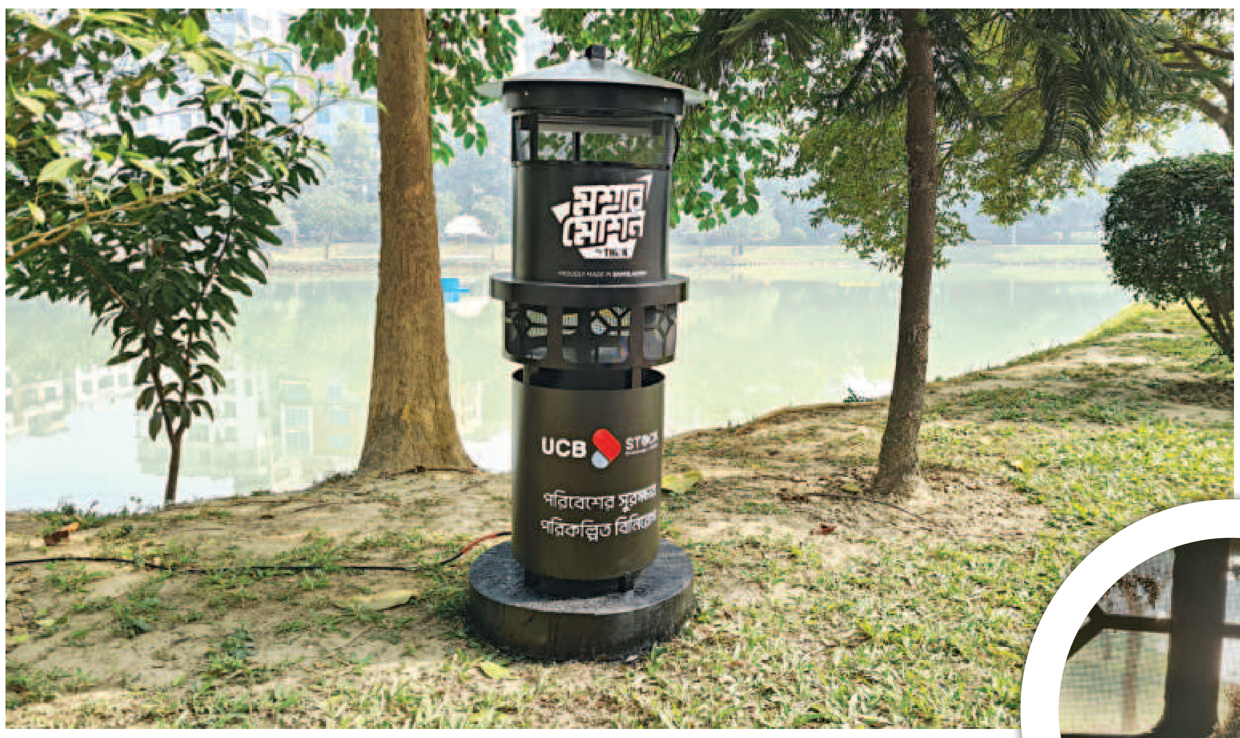
Ashiqur Tanim,
Founder THiNK LABs

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

When the entire country is grappling with mosquito menace, a Bangladeshi entrepreneur and his team have come up with an ingenious solution that promises to be an effective tool in mosquito control.

Manufactured entirely in their lab with low-cost, eco-friendly technology, the device, named "Moshar Machine", can trap and kill a large number of mosquitoes if placed at an appropriate location.

Ashiqur Tanim, an Australian-educated entrepreneur, returned to Bangladesh in 2019 to invest in the research and development sector. He set up a lab in Dhaka named THiNK LABs, hired young Bangladeshi engineers and started developing tech-based solutions for a wide range of clients.



Tanim's love for technology and his drive to make a difference led him to focus on mosquito-borne diseases like Dengue, which take countless lives each year. He saw this as his chance to contribute meaningfully to the society.

After years of research, Tanim and his team at THiNK LABs developed a mosquito trap based on the formula of existing CO2 mosquito traps. However, unlike the other traps, THiNK LABs' device is of much larger capacity, way cheaper, and eco-friendly. It can also be used as an air disinfectant.

HOW THE DEVICE WORKS

The researchers at THiNK LAB have developed a way to make the device emulate human breathing, a feature that female mosquitoes, which require blood to reproduce, find irresistible.

The "Moshar Machine" device is equipped with a light source that emits light at a particular wavelength which enables it to interact with a special chemical coating within the device. Scientifically, this interaction is called photocatalysis.

This process produces highly reactive superoxide anions and hydroxyl radicals which oxidise organic matter in the air (bacteria, viruses and other organic compounds) and this ultimately leads to the release of trace levels of carbon dioxide that replicates human breathing.

According to Tanim, "Usual CO2 mosquito traps burn fossil fuels such as propane and use other chemicals to mimic human breathing. Users have to refuel the device regularly which is expensive and the fuel and its byproducts may also have some adverse impact on the environment."

"The Moshar Machine's innovative technology initiates photocatalysis and uses organic compounds in the air to replicate human breathing. So, we don't need any fuel to operate the machine and it does not produce any adverse by-products," states Tanim.

"On the other hand, the process automatically kills harmful bacteria and viruses in the air thus disinfecting it. And, the huge amount of dead mosquitoes this machine produces can be used as high-quality poultry and fish feed," added Tanim.

Once the mosquitoes get attracted to the machine, they are sucked into it through automated flaps and transferred to a cage where they die within two to three hours from dehydration. The flow of dry air produced by a fan fitted inside the machine speeds up the process of dehydration.

The entire setup comes inside a large metal body so that it can be safely used outdoors.

Tanim said, "We designed this metal body to house the device so that it can be deployed in public places. This metal outer cage made this machine extremely durable, requiring simple maintenance like cleaning the nets with a brush. It also enables the device to have a high volume of mosquito retention capacity."

EFFICACY OF MOSHAR MACHINE

Eminent entomologist Professor Dr Kabirul Bashar has conducted a comprehensive efficacy test of the device at several locations.

He commented in the test report, "According to the test results, the Moshar Machine attracts and captures mosquitoes quite successfully. Its ability to significantly reduce mosquito populations in the tested environments is particularly promising. The Moshar Machine's environmentally friendly design, free of hazardous chemicals, not only makes it safe to use in a variety of situations but it also benefits the environment."

The test report showed that the Moshar Machine successfully captured and killed eight species of mosquitoes including Aedes albopictus which transmits dengue, zika virus and Chikungunya, Anopheles minimus which is one of the primary vectors of malaria and other species of culex, mansonia and armigeres mosquitoes.

When asked about the efficacy of this machine Dr Bashar commented, "I have compared this device with other mosquito traps developed by renowned foreign companies. I have found Moshar Machine more effective and much cheaper than those. It can kill more than 3,000 mosquitoes in one night. It is appreciable that a Bangladeshi company has developed it and I think we should popularise it."

Dr Bashar stated further, "The device only attracts female mosquitoes as a result it can affect breeding and curb mosquito population effectively. The Moshar Machine can be a non-hazardous and environment-friendly approach to control mosquitoes if it can be deployed and managed effectively on a wider scale."

Tanim said the machine's unique technology of emulating human breathing ensures that beneficial insects for the ecosystems such as bees will not get attracted by the device.

He also stated that while any insect trapping system might unintentionally catch a small number of beneficial insects, the Moshar Machine's design significantly reduces the likelihood of this happening. The team is always monitoring field data and feedback to refine the Moshar Machine for maximum effectiveness further and minimise unintended impact.

He suggested, "For indoor use, the best performance can be obtained if the machine is positioned in well-ventilated spaces and entry points of a house. We have also developed the prototype of a smaller portable version of this machine for indoor usage."

According to Tanim, the larger version of the machine is perfect for controlling mosquitos in public spaces and mosquito breeding zones, ultimately reducing mosquito infestation in the locality.

THE INNOVATION NEEDS FUNDING AND PATRONISATION

THiNK Labs' innovative device has attracted attention from various quarters, and many people and institutions have purchased it for personal use.

Bangladesh Diesel Plant Limited, a state-owned engineering company, has shown interest in manufacturing the steel outer cage of the device. At present, the team has the capacity to manufacture 3,500 of these machines per month.

According to Tanim, the full benefit of this machine can only be realised when it is deployed systematically in public places and mosquito breeding zones and managed by relevant authorities.

He said, "If the government tries the machine and patronises its research and development, a more durable, high capacity and low-cost version of this machine can be developed. We have the capacity to install anti-theft and automatic monitoring mechanisms with this machine for deploying in public places. Some of these models have already been deployed at different places in Dhaka and they are working really well."

FICTION

AFTER THE RAIN

MIR ARIF

> **At that time the only thing that mattered to me was being a bad boy in the industry. I knew I was excused for the gossip I created, for a huge portion of my fans were naive to believe that my scandals were simply the creation of the media, to keep the populace returning to theaters for the same films—in other words, a simple business ploy.**

While leaving the institute, a nurse gave me a packet of cigarettes as a token of friendship. I sat on the grassy lawn secured with a chain link fence, took a cigarette out of the packet, and wedged it between my lips. It was one of those slow afternoons when leaves didn't stir and clouds didn't move—only occasionally crows cawed from some magnolia branches, as though waking people up from a reverie. Behind me stood the three-story facility, its red walls peeled off by age and humidity. With no one to disturb my silence, no residents guffawing or raving, I could finally enjoy a silent afternoon on my own. It was strange to be able to sit under the open sky as a part of me didn't want to leave, wanted to go back inside the institute, my second home where I spent 36 years of my life, more than half of which passed sleeping. I was lucky to have never been chained to bedposts, which was done to some patients to avoid violence and aggression. Getting a second chance to live, I knew I wouldn't return there and squander it.

Of all things, I wished to see myself in front of a mirror. Were there any remnants of youth and handsomeness on my face? Or did I turn ugly, so bad that my appearance would frighten strangers and kids? Or was it a face of age and wisdom, with tufts of grey hair resting on my head? I had no idea what I looked like, but I knew that nobody would believe that I was born into a very wealthy family. My father always told me that your birth was just a coincidence in the grand scheme of things. "You are not made of something superior. You and our servants have the same blood. We come from the same a'lam arwa, the world of souls", he told me one day while I was playing hoopla with my brothers, aiming at targets strewn on the grassy backyard. I wouldn't have known that disguised in his grandiose speech was the truth of my birth, that I was born out of wedlock in the womb of one of his servants, a woman I'd never know. She was sent away soon after my birth.

ILLUSTRATION: **MAISHA SYEDA**

I was simply a child, fighting with my siblings or crying out for help when I didn't win in a fight. I'm not ashamed to tell you this: my father kept knocking up servants and his legally married wife ended up having six babies to raise, none from her womb. There was simply no place for her outside of the dictation of my father's world, so she ended up doing what any mother is expected to do. She raised us, fed us, bathed us, and even put us to sleep, singing lullabies about marauders coming to our land and harming peasants' wives and stealing their kids. I can't tell if she loved us, perhaps she did, perhaps she didn't. A thin, wispy woman in my memory, always fighting with my father for something not right in the house. Although she never named it, we kids knew. We knew she wasn't our mother; she was simply passing her years with us. She had nowhere else to go, no laws to protect her rights, no friends to console her. As though to balance the turmoil in the family, my father prospered outside, in his ship-making business. The only good thing he did for us was bring home a projector and run foreign films—mostly Indian and Iranian and occasionally Hollywood, films that came out not so recently but years and decades ago. He watched them with us in the garden, seated on his old Burmese teak chair, surrounded by sash-wearing servants while everyone else, including my mother, sat on the grass.

I didn't know where it came from, probably the movies had something to do with it. I grew up believing I was meant for greater things in life. I'd been acting since high school, a passion I continued with utmost honesty. Years later, after influential letters and phone calls from my father, I signed my first film contract that earned me 30,000 taka. It was a lot back then, for a young bachelor I mean, but I compensated for all the losses of my early youth by sleeping frequently with my co-stars, producer's wives, and occasionally fans. In short, I was a symbol of debauchery and licentiousness. It was a bad deal for a young nation trying to realise what she wanted to become. Frustrated boys looked up to film stars; young girls copied the notion of romance from actresses with beehives, a hairstyle so common in those days. At that time the only thing that mattered to me was being a bad boy in the industry. I knew I was excused for the gossip I created, for a huge portion of my fans were naive to believe that my scandals were simply the creation of the media, to keep the populace returning to theatres for the same films—in other words, a simple business ploy. Another section of my fans viewed those scandals as my "manly" need. A last segment of fans emphasised art should be enjoyed solely for its own materials, irrespective of the artist's personal life and his scandals. Indeed, it was a great pleasure to think that my work had something to do with art, that I was an artist slogging through a nasty, brutal world. I believed in the lies generated by my fans and even perpetuated them through multiple interviews with journalists from *Dawn* and *The Ittefaq*, and *The Morning News*. A confident actor believes in his lies, I told myself. The '60s was a nice time, holding together the nation—both literates and illiterates—through film. They were a novelty to the nation, and actors were at the centre of things. Cinema posters were never painted black, nor did projectionists insert any pornographic materials during the show.

Not all journalists were easy; some Western-educated ones found it appalling having to come back to their homeland to work in a new industry that didn't generate as much profit as they hoped for in their nascent career. They told us how to run things, hounded me for days for gossip. I would neither deny nor affirm my recent scandal with Suchanda and her failing marriage. Sometimes silence lets your audience think you are smart, a simple strategy that I also learned from the industry. It was one of those tough days, having been interviewed between my shooting breaks by a young journalist in a single-breasted jacket. The shooting itself was indoors, in a large duplex mansion, where, according to the plot, I was to visit and grovel at the father of my heroine to ratify our eloped marriage. I was to climb the stairs, only existing in those film mansions, and talk to my heroine's father who was waiting to see my ability to climb stairs, a pure ups and downs affair for the morally astute hero. When the heroine's father shouted—"Get out, you scoundrel. I say get out!"—I might have strayed from the script and uttered one or two sentences on a whim. The director, a university dropout with a strict sense of direction, wasn't happy about my liberty with dialogues. I had a row with him and when I stormed out, the young journalist came after me with unreal questions that had nothing to do with acting or films. Still, I patiently responded to his questions, ruling out any possibility of fathering a child with one of my co-stars. I was in a very bad mood when I left the set without finishing the slotted scenes of the day and drove straight to Dacca Club in my recently purchased Chevrolet Impala. I honked and floored the accelerator recklessly in a rickshaw-filled avenue shaded by flame trees. Although not as fancy as a hand-built Cadillac or Rolls-Royce, the sports coupe had a smooth, elongated body, painted in a shade of beautiful turquoise that no other cars in the city had. I took pride in that classic American car, a symbol of power and style, complementing my rising popularity.

The stairs at the club cascaded up to the third floor, and eventually to the rooftop, where I planned to occupy a table and lounge away smoking cigarettes and ordering one or two shots of Old Monk that quickly let me forget any troubling thoughts. From above, I heard shoes clicking on the mosaic floor. Two girls with beehive hair, and in tasselled, sleeveless blouses were climbing down. Our paths crossed. One of them recognized me and a gasp was visible on her face. I quickly acknowledged their presence with a nod and climbed up to the third floor, to realise that there was nobody to greet or usher me in as my visit was unannounced. I was standing in the stairway alone—then I saw one of the girls coming up to me—in slow, steady steps. She stopped before me and all I could see was the pattern of her saree. It was hard for me to look at that face, so pretty, so young, making me feel that I was in the street after rain and I could see everything had been wiped fresh and clean and the world had never aged, never gotten sick. Being in that world was the most wonderful thing. I was never poetic in that sense; in fact, I hated poets, labelling them as lazy dreamers who had nothing better to do with life, but at that moment, I wished I had words to describe her beauty.

The girl held out a tissue. Immediately I understood why she returned. She tipped her head back to look at me closely. We were listening to each other's breath, so close that I could hear her throbbing heart.

This is part one of the "After the Rain", to be serialised here on Star Literature.

Mir Arif *is a Bangladeshi author living in Ohio. He is working on his novel,* The Second Interpretation*, while awaiting the publication of his story collection,* Adrift. *Find him @mirarif.*

ILLUSTRATION: **MAISHA SYEDA**

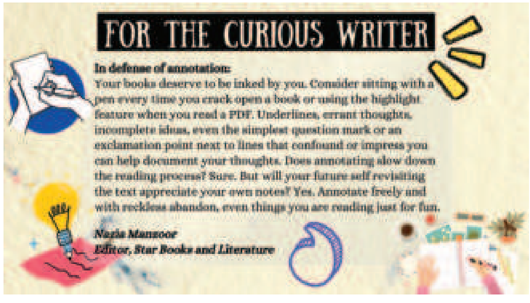
POETRY

Modern graveyard

KASHFIA NAHREEN

We have built a civilisation
of sky-high buildings,
of concrete cities,
of disconnected communities.
Cracks creeping up
the foundation of our homes,
black mold making its way
through every floor,
termites in the walls,
fractures in every bone.
So, we stand,
divided
in this graveyard of hope.

Kashfia Nahreen *is an aspiring poet and author who is doing her Masters in Creative Writing.*



FOR THE CURIOUS WRITER

In defense of annotation:

Your books deserve to be inked by you. Consider sitting with a pen every time you crack open a book or using the highlight feature when you read a PDF. Underlines, errant thoughts, incomplete ideas, even the simplest question mark or an exclamation point next to lines that confound or impress you can help document your thoughts. Does annotating slow down the reading process? Sure. But will your future self revisiting the text appreciate your own notes? Yes. Annotate freely and with reckless abandon, even things you are reading just for fun.

Nazia Manzoor
Editor, Star Books and Literature

POETRY

No longer eighteen

MALIHA TRIBHU

DESIGN: **MAISHA SYEDA**

They said, growing up would be a trap you could fall into,
something you cannot get out of once you slip into it.
It isn't a flip of a coin you toss onto the air
and catch it on the palm of your hands like a resting butterfly catching its final breath, like a caterpillar cocooned into its shell undergoing metamorphosis—growing up sneaks up to you whether you want it or not.
Growing up catches up to you on a random Tuesday,
Somewhere around the scorching heat waves of May; and all of a sudden it isn't entirely about you anymore.
You now hold your mother's grief onto the palm of your hands,
You now carry the anger of your sister's pent up rage over the years
for everything she could not have.
And now you wear an invisible armor just for her, just so you could protect her from everything you could not protect yourself of back when you were sixteen;
Because the world got under your skin at sixteen and you let them,
you let them throw mud all over your face and bicker away their blames for you not being enough—you wandered about the maze made out of your own self-loathing guilt
for years until the truth appeared in front of you
one by one,
on a random Tuesday—welcome to the age you've been so desperately praying for,
to the age of making a difference instead of repeating the mistakes
your mother once made.
You are no longer the clown amusing their circus,
neither are you the puppet of their unfulfilling dreams and aspirations.
You are on your own now—as horrifying and liberating as it sounds.
Growing up never comes up to you with everything figured out in a perfect order, neither
with a survival kit and a manual that might be half-written in Chinese.
It catches up to you like a sudden instinct installing onto our brain; screaming,
"you must protect them now like the way you've always wanted to protect yourself — for everything you could not have for yourself,
for every blame that had been thrown at your face,
for every time you prayed that someone would protect you, that someone would rescue you,
you now wear the armor for them
like a necklace handed down from your mother,
a badge of strength handed down from her mother—but this time, it isn't the iron bars chaining you down to your feet, like the ways it chained onto your mother's bones, but a crown resting onto your head—something you could hand down to your sister."
Growing up is an act of acceptance
of the battles you will win and lose; at the cost of protecting the ones you love.
And when something like that dawns upon you like catching up to a midnight dream
You know then and then
That you are no longer a girl of eighteen.

Maliha Tribhu *is a writer, currently an undergraduate majoring in Marketing at the University of Dhaka.*

BHABNA
'Cannes' do it

The usual scenario of attending any film festival is that artistes go to showcase their films. An unusual scenario took place when Bangladeshi actress Ashna Habib Bhabna returned from the 77th Cannes International Film Festival, after scoring a Malaysian movie.

MUA:
SUMON RAHAT
PHOTOS:
SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

SHARMIN JOYA

As soon as Bhabna returned home, she spared some time for a glamourous photoshoot with The Daily Star.

"The experience was a dream come true and the tour was completely worth it," shared the artiste. "The first actress to walk on the red carpets of the prestigious Cannes was legendary actress Babita, and we also saw Jaya Ahsan visiting the Cannes, so I had a dream to visit the French Riviera someday to represent my country."

She informed that after applying to the festival as a South Asian actress, she received an accreditation letter to attend the event. She got around 20 days to prepare for the adventurous solo trip. "As I was selecting my attires for the festival, I was quite concerned about the fact that I would be representing my country, my culture, my family--swiftly blended with my taste, which ultimately showcased during the festival."

Renowned Indian newspaper Times of India published an article titled, ***Sari not sorry! This Bangladeshi actress dressed better than any Bollywood star at Cannes*** — remarking on her great fashion sense. "I consider this as an award for myself, the report was such a sweet surprise for me. I saw the article when I returned to Dhaka. I have pinned this message on my Facebook timeline as well."

During the eight days of her solo trip, she enjoyed the premiers of many films, walked on the official red carpet wearing her mother's elegant wedding saree, and also graced the event with some unique attires, that caught everyone's attention. Her outfits for the festival included traditional jamdani, a gown made with Banarsee material, and a crow-styled fancy outfit, which earned her praises. During her visit, she also signed a Malaysian film ***Zenubia***, announced to be directed by Bangladeshi-born filmmaker Zafor Firoze, and executive produced by Qiao Li. "The director told me that he had been trying to reach me for a long time, and when we met at the festival, he approached me for this work; everything seemed like a miracle to me!"

According to Bhabna, it has been a great experience for her as she could meet many international artistes and directors there. "There is a misconception regarding the festival that you can only attend if you go with your work. Many international artistes visit the festival for networking, to approach or collaborate for new projects. It is a huge arena and the film market itself is a great way of worldwide networking. As a media personality, anyone can visit the event if they are eligible and receive an invitation from the festival."

Bhabna mentioned that one of her dresses carried the names of her most favourite actresses, which included Meryl Streep, Audrey Hepburn, Babita and Suborna Mustafa. "It was another miracle that my first visit coincided with Meryl Stripe receiving an Honourary Palme d'Or at the festival."

The actress had the opportunity to watch the premiere of the Chinese film ***Caught by the Tides***, directed by Jia Zhangke. "After walking the official red carpet, I watched this film at Rumer Hall, and at that time, I made a wish that one day my film would be premiered in this hall, which I believe will come true someday!"

As Bhabna dreams big, she is now flooded with good wishes and appreciation from her admirers. At the same time, she is also facing criticism, as she was trolled on social media a few days ago over posting a photo of a cow standing on a truck in extreme heat. To this, the actress remarked, "I saw an animal suffering in the heat, where I was sitting in an air-conditioned car, it deeply hurt me, and I couldn't resist posting this, as I always do. I didn't suggest anybody to refrain from eating meat, nor did I say I don't eat meat."

Bhabna has three films awaiting theatrical release--***Dampara***, ***Payel*** and ***Japito Jibon***. The actress also shared that the shooting of ***Zenubia*** would commence from November in Malaysia.

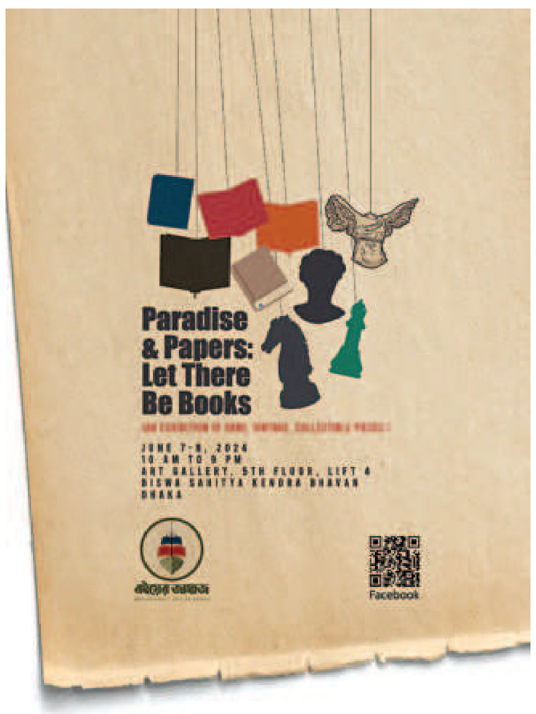
OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA

Art exhibition: Inner Speed

June 1-4| 3pm- 9pm
Alliance Française de Dhaka

Batighar Theatre Festival

June 8-10| 7pm-9:15pm,
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy


Paradise & Papers: Let There Be Books
JUNE 7-8, 2024
10 AM TO 9 PM
ART GALLERY, 5TH FLOOR, LIFT 4
BISWA SAHITYA KENDRA BHAVAN
DHAKA
Facebook

Paradise and Papers: Exhibition of Rare, Vintage Collectibles

June 7-8| 10am-9pm
Bishwo Shahitto Kendro

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Crew

RISK IT
FAKE IT
STEAL IT
CREW

Prime Video
Panchayat Season 3

PANCHAYAT
SEASON 3
MAY 13
prime video

Chorki
Kalpurush

NOW STREAMING

Disney plus
The Acolyte

STAR WARS
THE ACOLYTE

HBO Max
Ren Faire

HBO ORIGINAL
REN FAIRE
max

WHAT'S ON THE GRAM

ARIFIN SHUVOO

Last year, Arifin Shuvoo caught the Bollywood limelight with his performance in the Bangabandhu biopic, ***Mujib: The Making of a Nation***.

Recently, the actor shared some eye-catching photoshoot outcomes on his Instagram account, exuding a mysterious vibe in a printed black, white, and golden shirt that adds an alluring touch to his appearance.

He looks fierce, channeling his inner masculine aura as he wears matching rings to add to his whole vibe.

The actor will next appear in the Mithu Khan directorial film ***Neel Chokro***.

WHAT'S PLAYING

KHOONEYE MA

Marjan Farsad's ***Khooneye Ma*** is a hauntingly beautiful Persian folk song that evokes a profound sense of nostalgia for the old world of Iran. With its simple yet poetic lyrics, the song offers a glimpse into the longing experienced by those who leave their homeland behind.

Released in 2014 as part of her album ***Blue Flowers***, ***Khooneye Ma*** masterfully blends traditional Persian melodies and heartfelt storytelling. Farsad's soothing voice creates a melancholic atmosphere, while the lyrics paint a vivid picture of cherished memories and a yearning for the warmth and laughter of home.

A few lines of the song loosely translate to: ***Our house has stories/It has sour cherries and pistachios/Behind its warm laughs/It has tired people.***

TV TALKIES

'THE 8 SHOW'
A high-stakes tale of survival and greed

It seems that South Korea takes its series based on high-stakes survival games rather seriously. ***The 8 Show***, based on the Webtoon ***Money Game & Pie Game*** by Bae Jin-soo, which premiered on Netflix this month is yet another wildly extreme show that sticks the landing in its genre.

On the heels of the success of the popular South Korean show ***Squid Game***, this show centralises around eight random individuals in financial crisis. The show presents a compelling narrative, particularly with the ultimate prize money amounting to burgeoning outrageous degrees.

Participants are offered a chance to engage in a clandestine game with intricate regulations. The objective? Secure a prize of 44.8 billion won. At first glance, it appears straightforward, until the players grasp the bewildering intricacies of the competition and realise the lengths to which each of them is prepared to go.

The 8 Show relies on the even playing ground that the participants begin with to exploit the various degradations of human nature. Enveloped in plunging mystery, the series ends with a promise to be able to do more in a possible second season.

MANMADE FIBRE

Bangladesh's best bet to become top apparel exporter

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Having become the world's second largest source for apparel items after China, Bangladesh is now pushing for the top spot by adding more value-added products to its export basket.

Clothes made of manmade fibre (MMF) are playing a particularly vital role in this regard as such highly value-added apparel items have significant demand abroad.

Besides, non-cotton apparel fetches higher prices than cottonwear for being more flexible, durable and functional, with the cost of a T-shirt made from MMF being about double that of one made from cotton.

As such, local garment makers have been diversifying their product base with non-cotton items.

Additionally, they have increased their production capacities, maintained consistency in supply and improved product quality over the past five decades.

Now, about 7.9 percent of all apparel items sold worldwide come from Bangladesh as the country has turned into a reliable source for international clothing retailers and brands.

PHOTO: REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Non-cotton apparel fetches higher prices than cottonwear for being more flexible, durable and functional, with the cost of a T-shirt made from MMF being about double that of one made from cotton

And with about 29 percent of the country's garment exports comprising MMF products, Bangladesh aims to use this segment to expand its global market share to 12 percent by 2030.

With this in mind, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) aims to increase the country's annual apparel exports to $100 billion within the next six years.

Against this backdrop, local exporters have been exploring markets for MMF products and increasing their value addition, BGMEA sources said.

Value addition in the country's export-oriented garment items currently stands at about 71 percent, as per data of Bangladesh Bank.

Exporters attribute the growing volume of MMF apparel shipments for the increased value addition in export-oriented garment items.

This is because the MMF segment accounts for a bulk of the export receipts from highly value-added garments, with some producers even exporting MMF jackets worth $100 per piece.

The share of MMF in global fibre production has increased to 78 percent over the past five years, according to a study, styled "Beyond Cotton – A Strategic Blueprint for Fiber Diversification in Bangladesh Apparel Industry", released in March this year.

Of the total non-cotton fibre production, about 39 percent is comprised of polyester filament yarn while polyester staple fibre makes up 15 percent, the study shows.

And although the production of nylon filament yarn and viscose staple fibre has increased, they each account for just 5 percent of the global output.

On the other hand, global production of acrylic staple fibre declined from 1.7 percent in 2017 to 1.4 percent in 2022. Meanwhile, wool and silk have a negligible global production share of 1 percent and 0.1 percent respectively.

Volume-wise, the trade of both cotton and non-cotton fibres has increased at a rate of about 1 percent annually from 2018 to 2022.

During this five-year period, global trade of polyester fibre fell by a compound annual growth rate of 3 percent while polyester yarn and fabric saw increases of 1 percent and 2 percent respectively.

The boom in local MMF apparel production was practically initiated by the collapse of Rana Plaza in April 2013 as the tragedy revealed how workers in the garment industry were subject to unbearable working conditions.

This prompted many international retailers and brands to move away from the country until certain conditions, particularly those laid out by the Alliance and Accord, were met by local producers.

So, as a part of the remediations, garment makers invested extensively to fortify workplace safety as per the recommendations, which included addressing fire, structural and electrical concerns.

Not only did this boost the confidence of foreign buyers, but it also led to Bangladesh emerging as the global champion in green garment factories.

Now, the country has 217 LEED certified green garment units, of which 83 are platinum rated, 120 are gold, 10 are silver and four are just certified by the US Green Building Council.

It was only after these investments were made that the capacities of local garment makers reached such a level that they could diversify their product base with more value-added items and include non-cotton products.

Another trend that spurred the transition to synthetic fibres is changing fashion.

For example, the demand for casualwear such as polos and T-shirts made from blended fibres has increased as their acceptability in formal settings such as offices has risen over the past decade.

Now, non-cotton apparel is the largest and fastest growing category of garment exports, contributing 50 percent of all shipments from leading sources such as China, Vietnam and Italy.

The concentration of cotton apparel exports compared to non-cotton is higher in cotton producing countries like India and Turkey. However, Bangladesh accounts for a high share of global cotton apparel exports even though cotton production in the country is negligible at best.

Objects like plastic bottles can be recycled to make fibre. PHOTO: ZAHANGIR SHAH

China is the largest exporter of non-cotton apparels with a market share of 36 percent while India contributes 2 percent and Bangladesh provides 1 percent.

However, China's share is declining as it was 56 percent just a few years ago while India is also seeing reduced non-cotton apparel exports.

On the other hand, the situation is reverse in Bangladesh as the country's share in the global non-cotton apparel trade used to be even less than 1 percent, the study shows.

"If we want to achieve more from garment exports, the traditional model will not work as a new model prioritising fibre diversification is needed," said Faruque Hassan, the immediate past BGMEA president.

The data also shows that MMF imports recently increased, indicating that local garment manufacturers are expanding their product base.

"Still, government support is needed for the sector's growth," Hassan said.

Against this backdrop, he urged the government for a 10 percent incentive on exports of MMF garments to encourage production and thereby help grab a bigger share of the global non-cotton apparel market.

"Cotton is also a priority for Bangladesh but MMF-based garment production is an innovative idea to grab more market share," Hassan said.

He also urged for withdrawal of the Tk 3 value-added tax on sales of MMF yarn in the domestic market.

But like all things artificial, MMF does come with its own set of drawbacks, particularly environmental.

MMF or synthetic fibres are engineered through a complex chemical process rather than being manufactured from natural sources.

In essence, these fibres are mainly made from polymers derived from petrochemicals.

So, while the fossil-fuel-derived fibres are not conflict materials, they are products of an industry with a heavy social impact.

Besides, MMF are not biodegradable and have been contributing to environmental pollution as washing non-cotton clothes releases microplastics.

Investment in artificial fibre still low

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Investment in manmade fibres in Bangladesh is low as the country has mainly focused on the trade and production of cotton fibre garments over the past five decades.

The total investment in the relatively new sector stands at around Tk 7,000 crore.

But with the evolution in fashion and climate change, the demand for garments made from manmade fibres has been rising worldwide and China, the largest apparel supplier globally, is dominating in this segment.

Recently, Vietnam has also been staging a strong performance in this segment globally.

Bangladesh's share in the total global trade of manmade fibre-based garments is still hovering at around 5 percent and it is growing gradually through the gain of contracts lost by competitors China, Vietnam and India.

If Bangladesh invests $18 billion, the country will be able to export $46 billion worth of non-cotton garment items by 2032, according to a study on "Beyond Cotton – A Strategic Blueprint for Fibre Diversification in Bangladesh Apparel Industry".

The study was conducted by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) in March this year.

Of the amount, $4.6 billion needs to be invested in fibre, filament and yarn manufacturing, $9.2 billion in fabrics manufacturing and $4.2 billion in garment manufacturing, the study also said.

This will enable the installation of an additional 4.7 million spindles, 14,000 knitwear machines and 0.5 million sewing machines.

Bangladesh should expedite the process of enhancing its capacity in manufacturing garments from manmade fibres, recommended another study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) on behalf of the BGMEA in April this year.

This is due to the fact that 60 percent of the $1,121 billion-worth garments to be traded globally in 2030 will be constituted of manmade fibres, be it wholly or by a substantial margin, it said.

Meanwhile, 35 percent will be cotton and cotton-rich garments and only 5 percent others.

In contrast, the value of garment items traded globally in 2022 stood at $953 billion, of which manmade fibre and manmade fibre-rich garments accounted for 50 percent, cotton and cotton-rich fibres 37 percent and others 13 percent, the study said.

The study also found that the total global trade of four garment items, including brassieres, technical textiles, activewear and swimwear, jackets, suits and blazers, stood at $100 billion in 2022.

Around 73 percent of that value came from manmade fibre-based items.

There are six to seven mills dedicatedly producing manmade fibres, said Monsoor Ahmed, additional director of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), a platform for primary textile millers.

Many have expanded their manmade fibre production capacity along with that of cotton fibres to cater to local garment manufacturers and export small quantities, he said.

Since the investment in this segment is still low, most of the demand is met through imports, mainly from China, he added.

Abul Kalam Mohammad Musa, managing director of Manikganj-based Mumanu Polyester Industry, said he has been producing manmade fibres from discarded polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles by setting up a mill in 2018.

The fibre is used in the production of jackets, outerwear, sportswear and activewear, he added.

His production capacity is 120 tonnes per day but he can utilise just half of it for a scarcity of raw materials in local markets and due to a restriction on imports of the required polymer.

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SECOND EDITION
DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 2, 2024
Regd. No. DA 781 | Vol. XXXIV No. 133 | Jaishtha 19, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | Zilqad 24, 1445 Hijri | 20 Pages: Tk 15.00

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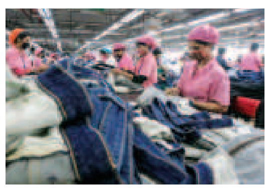


RMG export prices fell up to 16% in last 8 months

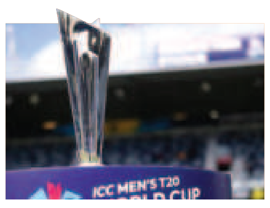
B1

A symbol of our degradation

P8

US seeking to build Asia-Pacific version of Nato

P7



The biggest T20 event upon us: 4-page supplement on T20 WC

Narrowest budget deficit in a decade as govt to curb expenses

REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* **ASIFUR RAHMAN**

As the government wants to lower expenses, it is likely to contain the budget deficit to 4.6 percent of gross domestic product in the next fiscal year, a level seen a decade ago.

The government usually keeps the budget deficit at around 5 percent.

During the political turmoil of 2013, ahead of the 2014 national election, the government placed the budget of which the deficit was 4.6 percent.

The upcoming budget will be the first one of the current government. The political situation is stable now, but the economy is facing a prolonged crisis.

In the 2019-20 fiscal year, the government was in a difficult place because of the shutdown of the economy due to coronavirus restrictions. The Ukraine-Russia war also made a global impact on economies in 2022.

Economists now believe that the dwindling foreign currency reserves are the biggest crisis.

The upcoming budget will be the first one of the current government. The political situation is stable now, but the economy is facing a prolonged crisis.

Finance ministry officials say they are finding it hard to maintain macroeconomic stability due to the low foreign currency reserves.

According to Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of Policy Research Institute, macroeconomic stability should be the first priority in the upcoming budget, which will be placed in parliament on June 6.

"Earlier, the policymakers were in denial, thinking they could overcome the crisis in a matter of months. At least, they have realised now that they have to do something," he said.

The International Monetary Fund also suggested lowering government expenditure and raising revenue collection.

In the current, 2023-24, fiscal year, the budget deficit is Tk 2,61,785 crore. In the coming one, the amount is likely to be Tk 2,57,000 crore.

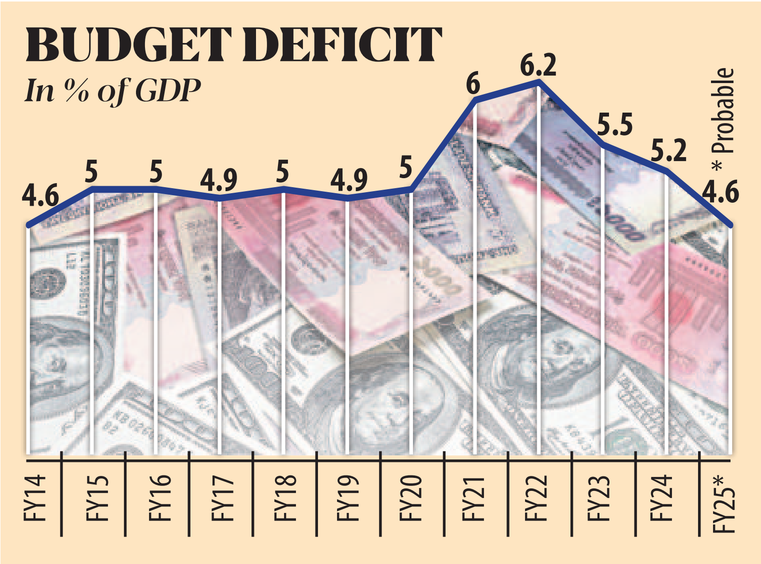
This is a departure from the norm because the deficit amount usually rises year on year, officials say.

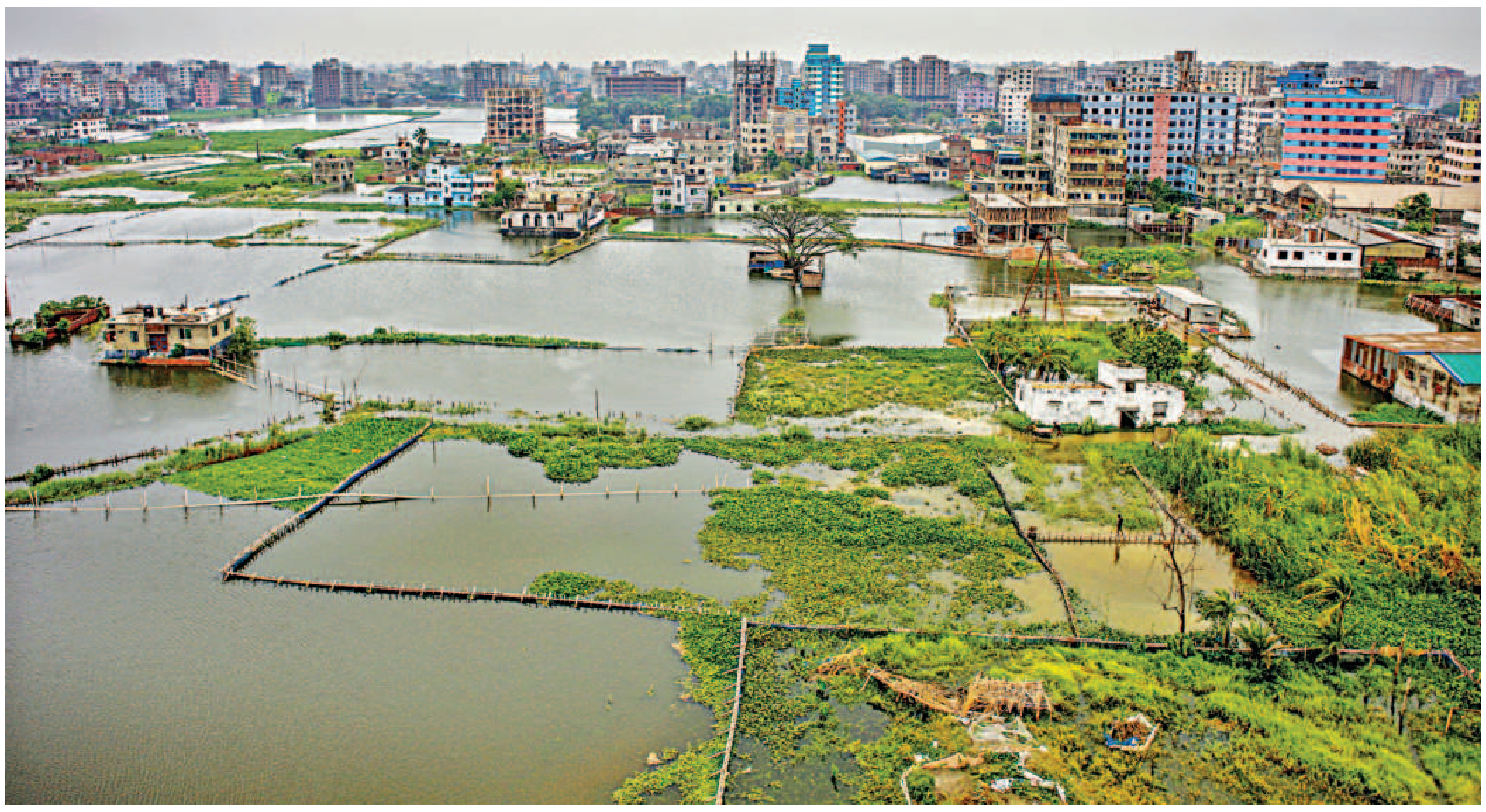
A budget deficit means the gap between the government's revenue income and the expenditure. The government borrows from the domestic and global development partners to meet the deficit.

Most of the time, the budget size increases by 12 to 14 percent compared to the previous year's budget. But this time around, the Tk 7,96,900 crore budget is likely to be just 4 percent bigger than the previous one.

An IMF mission agreed to set a target of tax revenue at Tk 4,78,050

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1





Owing to poor drainage, Matuail Medical Road area in the capital has been inundated following rain caused by cyclone Remal. Locals say they grapple with waterlogging issue for about four months a year. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

JOBS IN MALAYSIA

Mismanagement left over 3k workers with no ticket to KL

JAMIL MAHMUD *and* **RASHIDUL HASAN**

Mismanagement by government authorities and local recruiting agents led to over 3,000 workers failing to reach Malaysia before the deadline of May 31.

Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) has initially estimated that 3,000 to 4,000 Bangladeshi workers could not reach the Southeast Asian country within the deadline, set by Kuala Lumpur in early March.

On Friday, several hundred workers waited for hours at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to catch flights. Many of them went there without tickets after receiving assurances from local recruiters that they would be given tickets on time.

Malaysia announced the deadline in March but the Bangladesh government did not respond to this until late last month, said Shariful Hasan, head of BRAC's Migration and Youth Initiatives Programme.

Shariful Hasan, head of BRAC's Migration and Youth Initiatives Programme, said Malaysia announced the deadline in March but the Bangladesh government did not respond to this until late last month.

Some additional flights were operated on Dhaka-Kuala Lumpur route only late last month which was not enough, he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Controversial recruitment system to stay 3 more years

STAR REPORT

The Malaysian government will use for another three years the Foreign Worker Centralized Management System, which is fraught with allegations of irregularities, news portal Malaysiakini reported yesterday.

The online system operated by Bestinet Sdn Bhd manages the recruitment of workers from Bangladesh and 14 other countries.

Bestinet owner Aminul Islam Abdul Nor, a Bangladesh born Malaysia citizen, is behind a cartel of 100 Bangladeshi recruiting agencies that syphoned crores of taka paid by migration seekers out of Bangladesh, according to insiders of overseas recruitment business.

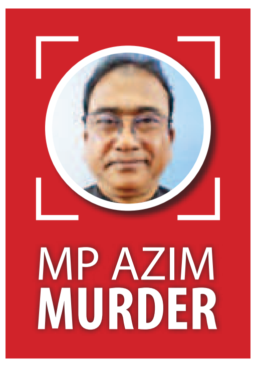
The 100 recruiting agencies were selected by the Malaysian government in August 2022 to recruit Bangladeshi workers. Since then, almost 500,000

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Azim 'taxed' every gold bar smuggled

Say investigators

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **RASHIDUL HASAN**



Anwarul Azim Anar, the recently slain MP of Jhenaidah-4, was a powerful figure in the criminal underworld with his tight grip over a gold smuggling racket as well as the narcotics trafficking in the region, investigators say.

Law enforcers and the intelligence agency involved in the investigation of his gruesome murder also said Azim got too greedy.

They explained that Azim had been leading the gold smuggling racket for over a decade, but in recent years, he got so greedy that he imposed a "personal tax" on every gold bar smuggled through his turf.

Unsurprisingly, this angered the syndicate members, ultimately leading them to hatch a plan to "get rid of" Azim.

The contract for his murder went to Amanullah, a leader of the Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), courtesy of Azim's business partner, Aktrauzzaman, also a member of the syndicate.

As per plan, the lawmaker was butchered at a New Town flat in Kolkata on May 13, a day after he went there for medical treatment.

Sources said Azim was actively involved in the PBCP until he joined BNP politics with Abdul Mannan in 1988.

ANOTHER STORY ON PAGE 2

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

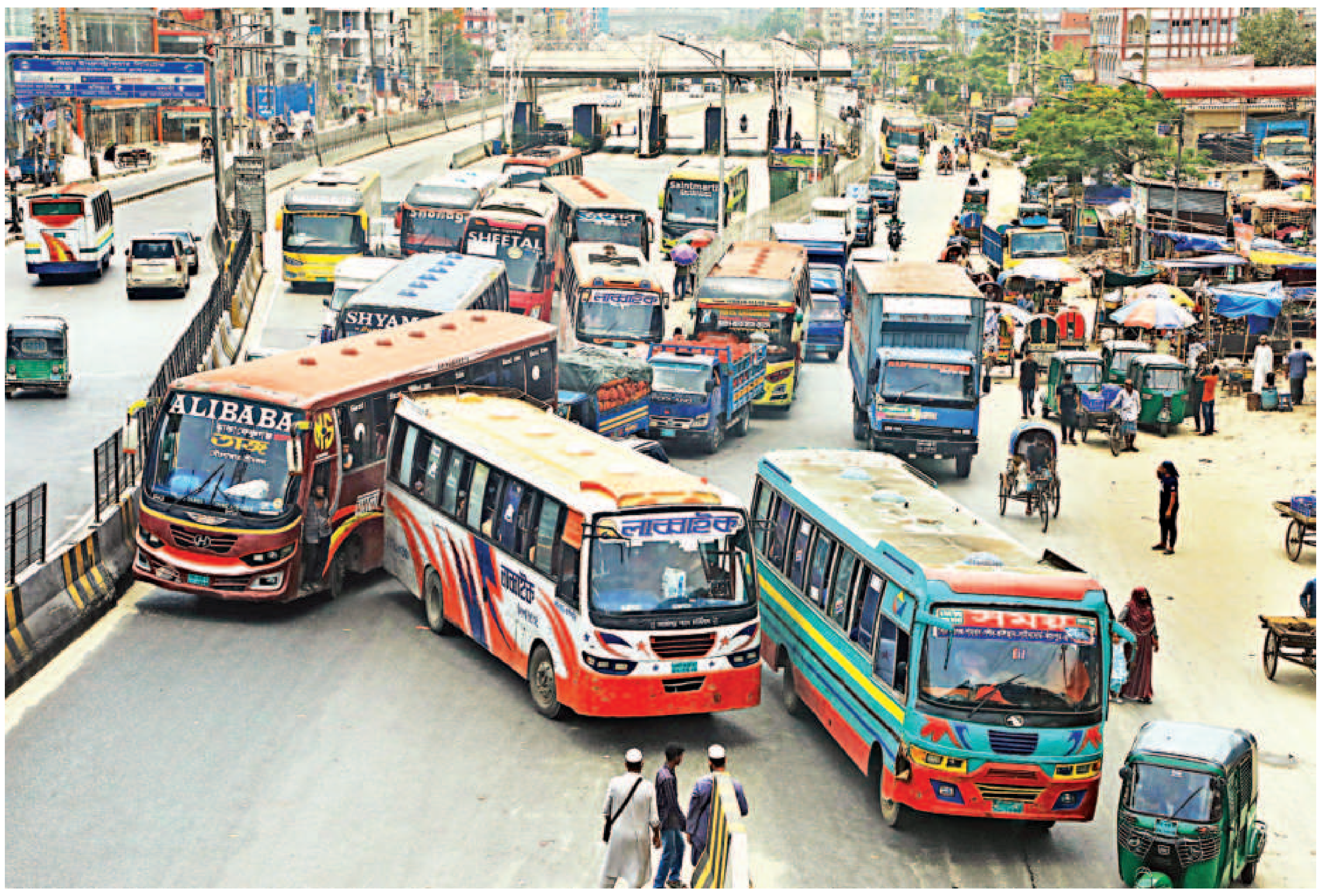
Supersized T20 WC sets stage for giant-slayers

REUTERS

A record 20 teams have converged upon the United States and West Indies ahead of the Twenty20 World Cup, offering plenty of chances for cricket's lesser lights to shine in the month-long spectacle which begins today.

Split across four groups, the sport's usual trophy contenders are joined by a dozen more hopefuls eager to make their presence felt, starting with Canada and co-hosts United States who both make their tournament debut in the opening match in Dallas, with the match scheduled to kick off at 6:30am Bangladesh time.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Buses picking up and dropping off passengers clog the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in the capital's Shanir Akhra yesterday. This forces passengers to take unnecessary risks and often creates tailbacks.

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

Modi set for return with a big margin

Predict exit polls as India's mammoth 7-phase election ends

STAR REPORT

INDIA
ELECTION

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led alliance is projected to win a big majority in the general election that concluded yesterday, TV exit polls said, suggesting it would do better than expected by most analysts.

Most exit polls projected the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) could win a two-thirds majority in the 543-member lower house of parliament, where 272 is needed for a simple majority. A two-thirds majority will allow the government to usher in far-reaching amendments to the Constitution.

However, according to the exit polls, the NDA is likely to fall short of the 400-seat target it set for itself in this year's national elections, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

A summary of six exit polls projected the NDA could win between 355 and 380 seats, a number that is likely to boost financial markets when they reopen on Monday. The NDA won 353 seats in the 2019 general election, of which BJP accounted for 303.

The opposition "INDIA" alliance led by Rahul Gandhi's Congress party was projected to win between 125 to 165 seats.

Meanwhile, exit polls have shown that the BJP is making fresh gains in West Bengal ruled by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress. Most polls gave BJP more seats than the TMC.

In his first comments after voting ended, Modi claimed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

MP AZIM MURDER

‘Celesty was supposed to receive Azim at Kolkata flat’

Police team now in Nepal to quiz suspect Siam

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **RASHIDUL HASAN**

Celesty Rahman, a friend of Aktaruzzaman, alleged mastermind of the murder of Jhenaidah-4 MP Anawarul Azim Anar, was responsible for receiving the lawmaker at a flat in Kolkata's New Town on May 13.

She was given the responsibility as part of the killing plan, said the Wari division of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police in its second investigation report submitted to a Dhaka court on Friday.

Celesty is now in DB custody.

Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan, who was tasked with carrying out the killing mission, and his associate Foysal received Azim in Kolkata and took him to the flat at Sanjeeva Gardens of New Town where he was killed on May 13, according to the investigators.

According to a police source, Aktaruzzaman was a friend and business partner of Azim.

“Aktaruzzaman had invited the lawmaker to a business meeting in the Kolkata flat over a video call, during which Celesty Rahman waved to the MP. Aktaruzzaman later returned to Bangladesh on May 10 without informing the lawmaker that he was leaving Kolkata,” said the police source, citing the second investigation report.

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and spent the night at his friend's home. He went out the next day, saying he would visit a doctor.

On May 22, India and Bangladesh police said the MP was murdered at the New Town flat.

Investigators also said that they

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Firefighters work to douse a blaze that gutted over 200 makeshift shelters built for Rohingya refugees as well as over 100 shops at Block D-3 of Camp 13 in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar yesterday afternoon. The camp saw another fire just like this last week.

Israel pounds Gaza defying US truce plan

Netanyahu says there won't be any ceasefire until Hamas destroyed

AFP, *Rafah*

Israeli forces hammered Rafah in southern Gaza with tanks and artillery yesterday, hours after US President Joe Biden said Israel was offering a new roadmap towards a full ceasefire.

Shortly after Biden's announcement, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted his country would still pursue the war until it had reached all its aims.

He reiterated that position yesterday, saying that “Israel's conditions for ending the war have not changed: the destruction of Hamas's military and governing capabilities, the freeing of all hostages and ensuring that Gaza no longer poses a threat to Israel”.

Hamas, meanwhile, said it “views positively” the Israeli plan laid out by Biden.

In his first major address outlining a possible end to the nearly eight-month war, the US president said Israel's three-stage offer would begin with a six-week phase that would see Israeli forces withdraw from all populated areas of Gaza.

It would also see the “release of a number of hostages... in exchange for (the) release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners”.

Israel and the Palestinians would then negotiate for a lasting ceasefire -- but the truce would continue so long as talks are ongoing, Biden said.

The US leader urged Hamas to accept the Israeli offer.

“It's time for this war to end, for the day after to begin,” he said.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called his counterparts from Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey on Friday to press the deal.

UN chief Antonio Guterres “strongly hopes” the latest development “will lead to an agreement by the parties for lasting peace”, his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said the offer “provides a glimpse of hope and a possible path out of the war's deadlock”, while EU chief Ursula von der Leyen welcomed a “balanced and realistic” approach to end the bloodshed.

Saudi Arabia stressed its “support for all efforts aimed at an immediate ceasefire” and the withdrawal of Israeli troops.

Indonesia, meanwhile, said it was ready to send “significant peacekeeping forces” and medical personnel to Gaza if a ceasefire is agreed.

Remal destroys 68 lakh trees

Says forest department

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

Over 68 lakh trees covering around 27,300 hectares of forest land have been destroyed by Cyclone Remal in Patuakhali and Barguna, according to the Forest Department.

Apart from this, many trees and tree saplings in house yards, educational institutions, and plant nurseries were also damaged.

According to Patuakhali Coastal Forest Division, the financial loss is over Tk 11 crore -- Tk 7.90 crore in Patuakhali and Tk 3.15 crore in Barguna.

“We have prepared a damage report and sent it to higher authorities seeking directives for further steps for reforestation,” said Patuakhali Coastal Divisional Forest Officer Shafiqul Islam

There are 91,000 hectares of forest land in Patuakhali and Barguna, including 36,136 hectares of reserve forest, he added.

According to locals, the forest served as a natural shield during the cyclone, protecting lives, homes, and other properties.

A resident of Barguna, Shafiqul Islam Khokon, said, “We are always protected from cyclones, floods, and other natural disasters by the Pathorghata reserved forests. To preserve our existence, the forest must be preserved.”

Fisherman Tunu Mia of Patuakhali's Kuakata area said that the reserve forests there shield people from several types of destruction. “These forests save us, like a friend,” he added.

Kalapara Forest Range Officer Monirul Haque said to counteract such damage, reforestation initiatives will be implemented.

“There was a large Chambol tree in our house yard. The tree was uprooted during the storm,” said Deepali Rani, a resident of Rahmatpur area of Patuakhali Kalapara town.

“We had around 30 to 35 trees around our house. Almost all the trees have fallen during the storm,” said Badal Matubbar, a resident of Salimpur village of Kalapra upazila.

Around 100,000 trees at different educational institutions have been damaged in Kalapra upazila only, said Kalapara Forest Range Officer Monirul Haque.

Immediate initiatives will be taken for reforestation, he said.

National organisation “Dhoritree Rokkhay Amra” Member Secretary Sharif Jamil said, “There is no alternative to planting more trees to protect the coast from natural disasters.

Narrowest budget

FROM PAGE 1

crore by June 2025, a 21 percent increase compared to the current fiscal year's target.

A finance ministry official told The Daily Star that the Bangladesh Bank took several measures to increase foreign currency reserves, but the measures are not working.

“We are trying to accommodate those measures in the upcoming budget which might reduce the pressure on foreign currency reserves,” he said.

The Annual Development Programme has incorporated the foreign loan and grants allocations at Tk 1,00,000 crore.

As a budgetary support, the government will get between $3 billion and $3.5 billion from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. After debt servicing, the net borrowing will stand at Tk 1 lakh crore.

The rest of the Tk 1,57,000 crore deficit will be met by borrowing.

Economist Ahsan H Mansur said the government has already tightened its monetary policy.

“There are many ways to reduce the expenditure. It will impact positively on the balance of payment,” he said. “We should try to bring back the days when we had macroeconomic stability.”

Supersized T20 WC

FROM PAGE 1

West Indies, meanwhile, take on associate nation Papua New Guinea at the Providence in Guyana at 8:30pm Bangladesh time.

The T20 showpiece had previously grown from 12 to 16 teams since its 2007 inception and the format's unpredictable nature has seen many strong outfits humbled.

In the 2022 edition, South Africa, Sri Lanka and West Indies fell to Netherlands, Namibia and Scotland respectively, three blossoming sides capable of ruffling more feathers this time around despite operating with a fraction of the budget distributed by the ICC to Test-playing nations.

Despite beating eventual champions England during the group stage of the last World Cup, Ireland face an uphill Group A battle placed alongside India and Pakistan.

Afghanistan, whose talismanic captain Rashid Khan and predecessor Mohammad Nabi return from Indian Premier League duty, pose a constant white-ball threat and will fancy their chances of a top-two finish in Group C ahead of two-time victors West Indies.

Bangladesh are no longer pushovers but the T20 World Cup has not been a happy hunting ground and a 24% winning record suggests it will be difficult to advance past South Africa and Sri Lanka in Group D.

To have any hope of reaching the ‘Super 8s’, Oman would need to stun Australia or England in Group B.

Nepal, travelling without spinner Sandeep Lamichhane who was recently cleared of rape on appeal but has been unable to secure a visa to enter the US, and Papua New Guinea enter their second showing with minimal expectations but nothing to lose.

Mismanagement left over 3k workers

FROM PAGE 1

He blamed both the countries for the suffering of the migrant workers.

Labour migration expert Prof CR Abrar said a traveller is not expected to go to the airport without a ticket.

The recruitment process of the Malaysia-bound workers had started much earlier and many went to the airport as part of the process, he told The Daily Star.

“The authorities should seriously look into the suffering of the migrant workers, find out those responsible and take stern action against them,” said Abrar, also the executive director of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU).

He said syndicates of some quarters had been active in labour migration from Bangladesh to Malaysia over the years.

Enquired about the matter, State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Shofiqur Rahman Choudhury yesterday said the government would look into Friday's incident and take action against those responsible.

Those who failed to go to Kuala Lumpur on Friday despite having valid travel documents will be given priority for jobs in Malaysia whenever the next opportunity is available, he told this newspaper over the phone.

In March, Malaysia announced the May 31 deadline to bring in foreign workers from 14 countries, including Bangladesh.

Speaking at an event in Dhaka on Wednesday, Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Haznah Md Hashim said the deadline for workers' entry to Malaysia would not be extended and that this was in “the interest of the country's national security”.

BRAC's Shariful said imposing a deadline on the entry of valid visa holders means creating opportunities for some other stakeholders to take undue advantage of the situation.

He said a person having a valid visa of a particular country should be able to enter that country without trouble.

Baira Secretary General Ali Haider Chowdhury yesterday said they were yet to have the final figure of workers who could not travel to Malaysia failing to get a flight.

“Our office was closed on the weekends [Friday and Saturday]. We will able to get the final statistics on Sunday [today],” he told The Daily Star.

Malaysia has been an attractive job destination for low-paid Bangladeshi migrant workers over the years. They prefer the Southeast Asian country to some traditional markets in the Gulf due to many reasons, including higher wage.

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics' “Labour Force Survey-2022”, a Bangladeshi migrant worker earns Tk 28,822 a month in Malaysia on average compared to Tk 24,957 in Saudi Arabia.

However, the Bangladesh-Malaysia migration was marred by irregularities and exploitation, which had prompted Malaysia to shut its door on Bangladeshi workers on multiple occasions.

The country had suspended labour recruitment from Bangladesh in 2018 over allegations of irregularities. It resumed hiring Bangladeshi workers in 2022.

Data from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training shows that nearly 4.50 lakh Bangladeshis migrated to Malaysia between August 2022 and April 2024.

Last year, Malaysia was the second largest overseas job market for Bangladesh after Saudi Arabia.

Jasiya Khatoon, director of Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants Development Foundation, said Friday's incident at the Dhaka airport is proof of Bangladesh's poor migration management.

She blamed local recruiters and the government authorities concerned.

She said the government should step up its diplomatic efforts to address the challenges facing the migrant workers.

Azim ‘taxed’ every gold bar smuggled

FROM PAGE 1

Belonging to a fisherman's family, Azim once traded fish in the Kaliganj Bazaar. His involvement in gold smuggling began after he finished his degree course at Jhenaidah's Government Mahtabuddin College in 1988.

A source in an intelligence agency told this newspaper that Azim first joined a biker gang that smuggled gold on their bikes.

Abul Kalam Azad, chairman of Barobazar union parishad, told The Daily Star, “Kaliganj upazila and its surrounding areas have long been a haven for gold smuggling for its proximity to the Indian border.”

Regarding Azim's killing, he said that the lawmaker had a falling out with Aktaruzzaman over their business partnership, but did not elaborate on the kind of business they were in.

Azim joined the Awami League in 1995 and became the Kaliganj municipality mayor in 1996.

The post's influence corrupted his young mind, and he became involved in a variety of criminal activities, including the narcotics trade, claimed local sources.

In 2001, when the BNP government came to power, Azim went into hiding in neighbouring India.

Between 2001 and 2008, at least 22 cases were filed against Azim, including a murder charge and a red notice.

But in 2009, he made a comeback as the Kaliganj upazila chairman. Later, he went on to become the lawmaker for Jhenaidah-4 in 2014 and for the next two consecutive terms.

Over the years, he managed to clear the charges brought against him in all 22 cases since he became the upazila chairman in 2009.

Azim's criminal persona was an open secret in the constituency, but none dared speak against him, for those who did were either attacked or even killed by hired goons at his command.

Several dozen people have become victims of his oppression, say locals.

The Daily Star managed to speak to the family of Ariful Islam, general secretary of a local ward unit Jubo League, who was killed in his home by political rivals on November 29, 2022.

“Some six to seven armed criminals broke into our home and stabbed my father to death in front of our eyes. These criminals worked for Azim. They killed my father as he was the lawmaker's political rival,” Tahsinur Rahman, son of Ariful, told The Daily Star yesterday.

On July 8, 2023, one Mehedi Hasan was killed over an internal feud with local drug addicts in Kaliganj upazila.

Two suspects, Akram and Saddam, were arrested over the incident and sent to jail. But later they managed to secure bail as they were followers of Azim, sources alleged.

This newspaper was not able to communicate with the victim's family as they moved away after the murder out of fear, said locals.

Contacted, Ashraful Alam, mayor of Kaliganj municipality, acknowledged the existence of the gold smuggling racket and claimed he and MP Azim took action against the racket.

Speaking on Azim's murder, Ashraful said it might have occurred over either business or political rivalry.

“The parliament is yet to declare his [Azim] seat vacant, but his rivals have already started campaigning for the post.”

When this newspaper asked if the MP position was sought to take control of the smuggling racket, the mayor did not respond clearly.

Controversial recruitment

FROM PAGE 1

workers have migrated to Malaysia.

The Southeast Asian country suspended foreign workers recruitment on May 31. The Malaysian government's previous contract with Bestinet expired the same day.

On March 28, four UN experts wrote a letter to the Malaysia and Bangladesh governments, saying that criminal networks operate in the recruitment process of Bangladeshi workers who are deceived and obliged to pay exorbitant sums which pushes them into debt bondage.

Besides, the workers are recruited by companies that exist only on papers.

The UN experts said Bangladeshi migrants paid between $4,500 to $6,000 for recruitment fees, which is the highest in the world.

Many migrants find on arrival in Malaysia that they do not have a job as promised and are forced into overstaying their visa. Consequently, they risk arrest, detention, ill-treatment and deportation. Many become destitute and face an alarming humanitarian crisis, said the UN experts.

The situation requires urgent attention before it escalates further or before lives are further put at risk, they said .

According to Malaysiakini, the Malaysian cabinet agreed to continue using Bestinet's service after reviewing a paper presented by the home ministry on May 29. However, the terms of the agreement with the company remains unclear.

The news portal wrote that it could not get comments from Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail and Bestinet President Aminul.

The Auditor-General's Report 2022 revealed that Bestinet's online system had many weaknesses that made it susceptible to manipulation, with instances of conflict of interest and breach of governance and control, reports Malaysiakini.

Malaysia's Public Accounts Committee recently investigated Bestinet, but its findings will only be tabled in parliament when the house convenes later in June, it said.

Last week, Channel News Asia (CNA) reported that the government was under pressure to renew the lease with the platform linked with trafficking allegations, despite the intentions of Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's regime to overhaul the system.

Sources told CNA that Bestinet, a firm with strong ties to top politicians and a history of controversy, was pushing back against the government's migrant labour reform agenda.

Modi set for return

FROM PAGE 1

victory without referring to the exit polls.

“I can say with confidence that the people of India have voted in record numbers to re-elect the NDA government,” he said on X, without providing evidence of his claim.

“The opportunistic INDI Alliance failed to strike a chord with the voters. They are casteist, communal and corrupt.”

Nationally, an exit poll from broadcaster CNN-News18 forecasts Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its coalition allies to win 355 seats.

Republic Bharat- P Marq exit poll gives BJP-led NDA 359 seats, India News-D-Dyanamics gave it 371 while Republic Bharat- Matrize said NDA is set to get any numbers between 353 and 368. News Nation gave BJP-led alliance between 342 to 378 seats and TV 5 Telugu exit poll projected 359 seats for NDA.

PMARQ exit poll predicts 154 seats for the opposition INDIA bloc and 30 for others. Republic TV Matrize put the seat numbers between 118 and 133, while India News D Dynamics poll gave 125 seats to the opposition. News Nation poll predicted 153-169 seats for INDIA bloc and NDTV India -Jan Ki Baat estimated 141-161 seats.

In West Bengal, TMC, which had lost a significant number of seats to BJP in 2019 and won 22 seats, may end up losing a few more in this year's elections if the exit poll predictions prove true, reports Reuters.

According to the Matrize exit poll, TMC will secure 16-20 seats, while Jan Ki Baat has predicted 16-18 seats for the party in West Bengal. PMARQ exit poll has predicted 22 seats for BJP and 20 for TMC.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, BJP had won 18 of the total 42 seats in the state.

In Andhra Pradesh, the NDA is expected to get 18 of the state's 25 seats, reports Reuters.

Karnataka is also expected to vote overwhelmingly for the BJP, despite its preference for the Congress at the state level. In Telangana too, the Congress may be unable to capitalise on its assembly poll victory. The BJP is likely to walk away with over half of the state's 17 seats.

The BJP is even expected to open its account in Tamil Nadu, with at least two seats, and in Kerala with one, exit polls predict.

In neighbouring Odisha, the BJP can do even better, winning 15 of the state's 21 seats and confining Naveen Patnaik's Biju Janata Dal -- once the unquestioned choice of the people -- to the margins.

The opposition dismissed the exit polls, and ahead of their publication had called them “prefixed”. Most opposition parties accuse India's main news channels of being biased in favour of Modi, charges the channels deny. They also say exit polls in India are mostly unscientific.

“This is a government exit poll, this is Narendra Modi's exit poll,” Supriya Shrinate, the Congress's social media head, told news agency ANI, in which Reuters has a minority stake.

“We have a sense of how many seats we are winning, it will not be one seat less than 259,” she said.

Nearly one billion people were eligible to vote in the seven-phase election that began on April 19 and was held in scorching summer heat in many parts.

The Election Commission will count votes on June 4 and results are expected on the same day.

A victory for Modi, 73, will make him only the second prime minister after independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru to win three consecutive terms.

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How could ex-IGP Benazir flee country?

Asks Fakhrul

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday questioned how former IGP Benazir Ahmed and his family members "left the country without obstruction" despite the allegations of amassing assets illegally.

Speaking at a discussion, he also said this exposes the ruling party leaders' claims of not sparing wrongdoers as "mere eyewash and deception."

"I saw a media report that Benazir and his family went to Singapore, leaving the country on May 4. Before leaving, he emptied all his bank accounts and withdrew around Tk 60 crore. I don't know whether the amount is much bigger," Fakhrul said.

"My question is, how

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

As Eid-ul-Azha draws closer, such cattle farms are seeing more visitors by the day, as people prepare to purchase their sacrificial animals ahead of the joyous occasion. The photo was taken near Beribandh in Mohammadpur area yesterday. PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Bangladesh needs US $876b for implementation

Says environment minister

BSS, *Dhaka*

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury yesterday said Bangladesh needs US $876 billion to implement its ambitious climate action plans.

He said the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) of the country estimates an investment of US $230 billion is required for adaptation till 2050.

The remarks came during an inaugural function of a three-day workshop organised by the Economic Relations Division (ERD) at BRAC CDM, Savar.

Additionally, he said, implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) requires US $175 billion.

"The Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCPP) and the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 estimate US $471.72 billion to implement the identified priority projects. Partnership is fundamental. To coordinate among the development partners, the government formed Bangladesh Climate Development Partnership," he said.

"Mobilising climate finance is essential to support our transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy. We must leverage private sector investments, international climate funds, and innovative financing mechanisms," said the minister.

"We need to build robust institutional frameworks and enhance our technical capacities to effectively

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Coordinated action needed for Rohingya repatriation

Foreign minister tells UN, partners

UNB, *Dhaka*

Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud has urged the United Nations organisations and other partners to take coordinated action for the repatriation of about 1.3 million Rohingyas sheltered in Bangladesh on humanitarian grounds.

He also sought effective steps to resolve the ongoing conflict in Rakhine state and for the betterment of the Rohingya population.

The foreign minister, who is now in the United States on a three-day official visit, made the appeal during four

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Bangabandhu Bridge set for largest maintenance since opening

Chinese joint venture to start work later this year

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangabandhu Bridge, the second largest bridge in the country, will later this year undergo the biggest maintenance work since its opening 26 years ago.

Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) will replace all the pot bearings, a vital element for load transmission, on the 4.8km bridge.

It has already selected a joint-venture firm in China to carry out the work, which is considered very critical and time-consuming, at a cost of Tk 128.47 crores, said sources.

"The bridge authority wants to carry out the job while keeping the crucial bridge fully functional. But it may have to suspend vehicle movement for some time," an official said.

The move came around three years after BBA decided to replace the bearings after it was found that 45 percent of pot bearings had problems.

The bridge on the Jamuna River, which was opened to traffic in June 1998, is a vital strategic economic road, rail, energy, and telecommunication link between the northern and southern parts of the country.

The Bangladesh Bridge Authority will replace all pot bearings on the 4.8km Bangabandhu Bridge at a cost of Tk 128.47 crore, marking the largest maintenance effort since its opening 26 years ago.

Pot bearings are a special type of bridge bearing used for transmission of loads from superstructures to piers and to absorb vibration caused by vehicle movement, experts said.

Italian company FIP Industrial supplied the pot bearings and as per the bridge maintenance manual, the service life of the bearings is between 20 and 30 years, shows BBA documents.

China Communications Construction Company Limited (CCCC) -- BBA's operator for maintenance and operation of Bangabandhu Bridge -- in a report to BBA in 2021 said around 45 percent of 112 bearings' pads on the bridge had problems.

A BBA board discussed the issue in September 2021 and decided to replace the bearings, shows the document.

Quazi Muhammad Ferdous, chief engineer of BBA, said the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase (CCGP) last week approved a proposal to hire a joint venture firm to replace pot bearings.

The companies are CCCC, Second Harbor Engineering Company Ltd and China Road and Bridge Corporation, according to document.

The firm will get Tk 128.47 crore for supply, installation, testing, and commissioning of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Foreign secy to meet Chinese counterpart tomorrow

Hasina's proposed visit to China to be discussed

UNB, *Dhaka*

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen is scheduled to visit China to have bilateral discussions with his Chinese counterpart tomorrow.

"He will have a meeting with Chinese Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Sun Weidong, which is scheduled to take place on June 3," a senior official told UNB.

Issues of mutual interest, including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's proposed visit, are likely to be discussed.

Meanwhile, an inter-ministerial meeting was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The two sides will discuss finding a convenient date for the PM's visit to China.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to pay an official visit to China before July 15.

In May 2023, the Chinese vice minister was in Bangladesh on a two-day official visit to discuss issues of mutual interest.

He had a bilateral meeting with Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen during his stay in Dhaka.

Recently, Ambassador of China to Bangladesh Yao Wen said Bangladesh and China should

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Political goodwill, accountability necessary

Say speakers on ensuring safety of coastal areas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Government officials lacked the necessary experience and dedication to build embankments in the country, speakers told a programme yesterday.

As a result, damage to embankments by Cyclone Remal in the coastal areas left people homeless and caused the inundation of villages, croplands, and low-lying areas adjacent to the embankments by saline water, they added.

A group of environmentalists, rights activists, and teachers spoke at a press conference organised by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon in the capital's Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Addressing the event, Bapa president Nur Mohammad Talukder said, "To build embankments in the coastal areas, the concerned government officials lack experience and patriotism. Those [embankments] are built based on foreign instructions, and are not fit to provide safety to the coastal people."

"To address this issue, political goodwill and accountability are needed," he added.

Reading out a written statement, Gauhar Naeem Wara, a member of Bapa's national committee, said, "The cyclone damaged 61 kilometres of embankments across three districts in Khulna region."

"In Barishal region, embankments have been damaged in at least 400 places. Embankments were also breached in many places across Noakhali and Chattogram regions, allowing saline water to enter villages and damage freshwater sources," he also said.

Gauhar stressed the need to change current policies and strategies.

"Environmental damage is being done under political influence in the name of unplanned development. It needs to stop," said Bapa vice-president Mohidul Hoque Khan.

Bapa's joint secretary Ahmed Kamruzzaman Majumder alleged that the government did not properly account for the damage caused by the cyclone, while Bapa member Rafiqul Alam recommended using simpler warning signals to inform common people ahead of natural disasters.

Environmental damage is being done under political influence in the name of unplanned development. It needs to stop.

MOHIDUL HOQUE KHAN
Vice president of Bapa

Litchis in Bijoynagar upazila of Brahmanbaria have ripened ahead of schedule due to environmental factors. The owners and workers of this litchi farm are now busy selling and marketing their products. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: **MASHUK HRIDOY**

3 killed

FROM PAGE 5

Police seized the truck but its driver fled the scene, the OC said.

A case was filed with Sirajganj Sadar police station accusing the truck driver and police are trying to nab the trucker.

In Patuakhali, one person was killed and two others were injured when a battery-run rickshaw-van fell into a roadside ditch at Ulania in Galachipa area. The accident took place around 8:00pm on Friday.

Md Jihad, 15, son of Zakir Khan of Dakua village of Galachipa upazila was declared dead at Galachipa Upazila Health Complex.

The injured -- Shahjahan Gazi, 38, from Kacharikand village; and Faisal, 17, son of Dulal Faraji from Gurinda Bazar area in the upazila -- were undergoing treatment at Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital, said Galachipa Police Station OC Ferdous Alam Khan.

Bangabandhu

FROM PAGE 3

pot bearings and shock transmission devices on the bridge, it shows.

Ferdous said they will sign a contract with the firm once they get the written approval of CCGP.

The replacement work is supposed to be completed within one and a half years, he said, adding, "But it may take a little more time given the complex nature of the work."

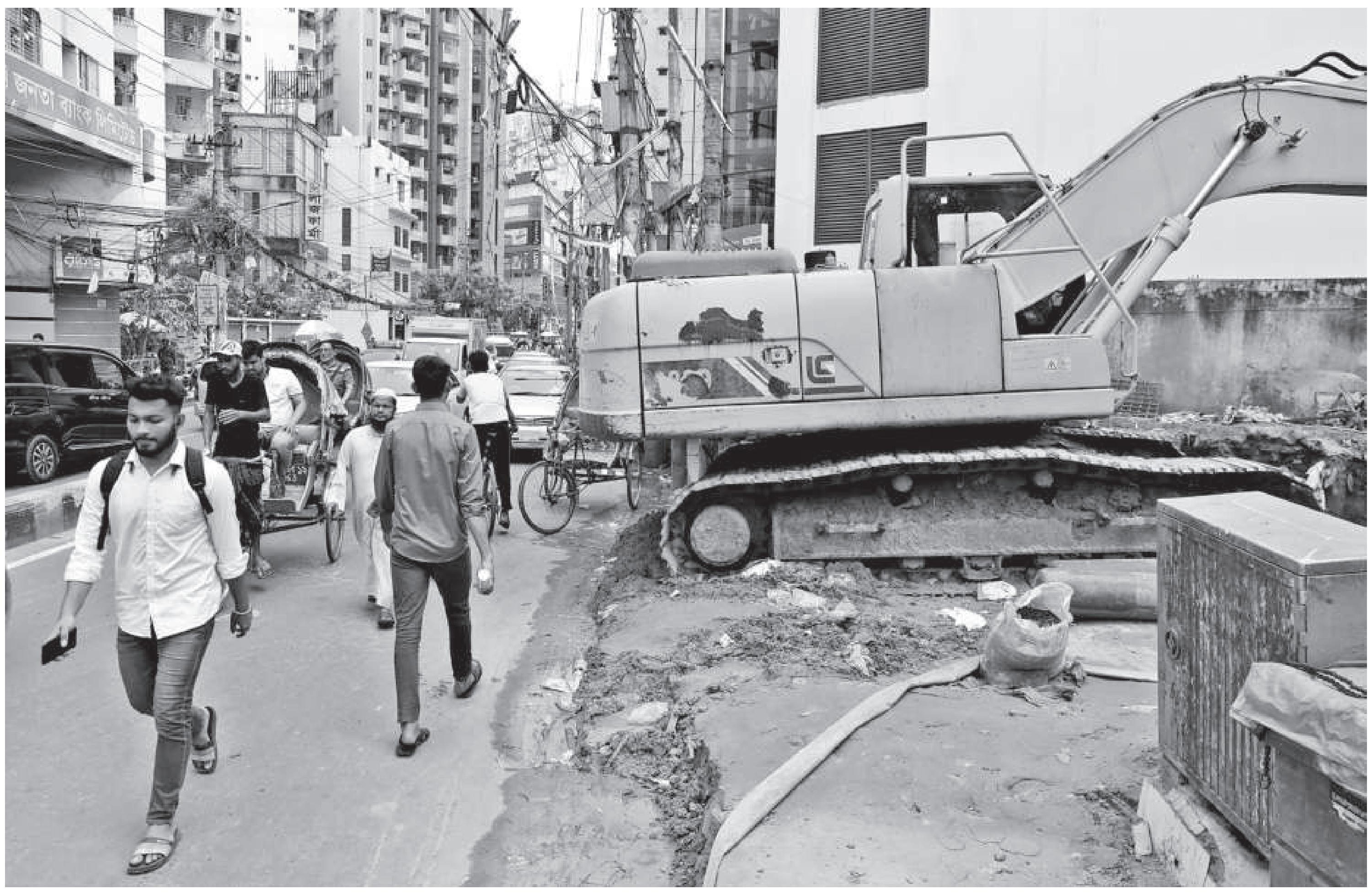
Asked when the work may start, he said it may take up to six months as the contractor, after signing deals, has to collect the bearings and start replacement.

He said the bridge had gone through some repair work. "But replacement of all the pot bearings of the bridge will be the biggest maintenance work on the bridge since its opening," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 2

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-45	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-50	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**



Construction of a building has left very little space for pedestrians to traverse the area safely. They are instead forced to walk on the road amid traffic. The photo was taken in the New Elephant road area yesterday.

PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

AFTERMATH OF CYCLONE REMAL

Living under open sky for six days

SUSHANTA GHOSH, *from Bhola*

At least 12 families have been living under the open sky for the past six days in Kutuba union under Bhola's Borhanuddin upazila after becoming homeless as Cyclone Remal left a trail of destruction in the district.

Visiting Chhota Manika village in the union on Friday, this correspondent saw Kawsar Gazi, 70, and his wife Nurjahan Begum cooking rice and lentils in front of the remnant of their house.

"Before the cyclone lashed here on May 27 midnight, we had taken shelter at a house near the embankment. We could not take anything from the house with us. When we returned, we found our tin-shed house completely destroyed and all our belongings washed away," said their granddaughter Amena Begum, 15.

"Since then, we have been living under the open sky for past six days. We only got 30 kilogrammes rice as relief," said Nurjahan Begum.

Kawsar Gazi pleaded the authorities to provide them with assistance to rebuild their house.

At least 181 houses were partially and 37 completely damaged in the cyclone in Borhanuddin upazila, said Md Raihan-Uzzaman, upazila nirbahi officer.

"We have already distributed relief among the victims in the upazila. We are now preparing a list of those whose houses were destroyed to provide them with assistance to rebuild the houses. Kawsar Gazi's name is on the list," the UNO added.

Cattle farmers in dire need of support

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cyclone Remal, left over 9,000 acres of grazing land flooded and damaged across 19 cyclone-hit areas.

This led to an acute crisis of fodder for cattle in those areas, affecting at least 2.5 million livestock.

As such, cattle farmers are in dire need of support to provide fodder and medical treatment for their livestock, speakers told a programme yesterday.

They demanded compensation for the farmers and suggested waiving their loans taken from NGOs and cooperatives for cattle rearing.

A group of cattle farmers and their leaders made the plea at a press conference organised by Bangladesh Dairy Farmers' Association at the capital's CIRDAP auditorium.

"Of my 20 cattle, 15 died after falling sick. A veterinarian from Khamarbari demanded Tk 10,000 to come for providing treatment and later settled for Tk 8,000, but they arrived a day late," said Rashida Begum, a dairy farmer from Dhaka's Adabar area.

"During treatment, two more cows died. They took samples for testing but the reports are still not provided. I am feeling helpless," she added.

Jamal Hossain, another dairy farmer from Mohammadpur, echoed her.

Addressing the event, Imran Hossain, president of the association, said their cattle are getting sick due to lack of clean water, and crisis of fodder since the cyclone hit Bangladesh.

"Despite reaching out to the livestock officers at upazila and district levels, farmers are not receiving any medical assistance for their cattle," he said, adding that the officials cited transportation issues as an excuse.

"Earlier, government officials from livestock department used motorcycles to visit the farms for treatment of livestock, taking Tk 500–1,000 per visit. Now, they are using cars to make the visits and demanding Tk 3,000–10,000," Imran also said.

How could ex-IGP

FROM PAGE 3

did he leave the country? What is the significance of a court order to confiscate his assets and freeze his bank accounts and the Anti-Corruption Commission's move to file a case against him? When he was told he wouldn't be allowed to go anywhere, how did he sneak off to Singapore right under the government's nose?" asked the BNP leader.

He said the ruling party leaders also made remarks that no one involved in corruption would be spared.

"Do they (the government) think people are stupid? They understand all these are eyewash and deceptions. You're ruling the country by resorting to trickery," said Fakhrul.

Bangladesh Sammilita Peshajibi Parishad, a platform of pro-BNP professionals, organised the programme at the Jatiya Press Club, marking the 43rd death anniversary of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman.

Fakhrul said the government not only nurtured Benazir and Aziz Ahmed (former army chief) but also promoted countless corrupt individuals.

Awami League has turned Bangladesh into a "safe haven for plundering," he added.

Bangladesh needs

FROM PAGE 3

access, manage, and deploy climate finance," he also said, adding that developed countries have a moral and legal responsibility to support developing countries in their climate actions. "We call upon our international partners to honour their commitments and provide predictable, adequate, and accessible financial support. We must also explore innovative sources of finance, such as green bonds, climate insurance, and public-private partnerships," he continued.

Secretary of Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance Shahriar Kader Siddiky; Deputy Head of Development Cooperation, the Embassy of Sweden Nayoka Martinez-Bäckström; Deputy High Commissioner and Development Director of British High Commission in Dhaka Matt Cannell; Country Director of Asian Development Bank Edimon Ginting; and Resident Representative of UNDP Bangladesh Stefan Liller also spoke at the event.

Coordinated action

FROM PAGE 3

separate meetings at the UN Headquarters in New York on Friday, a foreign ministry's press release said yesterday.

During the meeting with United Nations General Assembly President Dennis Francis, the minister said when about one million people fled to Bangladesh to escape violence in Myanmar, the people of Cox's Bazar and Chattogram received them with compassion.

"But gradually the Rohingyas are getting employment in different places out of the camps, and the camps have become a haven for various crimes, including human trafficking, drug smuggling, and terrorism. As a result, the locals are having a very difficult time," he added.

During his meeting with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, Hasan said since last February, about 750 members of the Myanmar Border Guard Police and Army have fled to Bangladesh at various times.

"Not only that, the shells of the conflicting groups in Myanmar have also caused casualties in Bangladesh. It is absolutely necessary to prevent the recurrence of these," Hasan said.

In a meeting with Julie Bishop, UN secretary general's special envoy for Myanmar, Hasan Mahmud said the ongoing conflict situation in Myanmar is not a new phenomenon and should not be allowed to be used as an excuse against Rohingya repatriation.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Jail Super
Bhola District Jail, Bhola

Memo No. 58.04.7200.100.04.021.24. Date: 29.05.2024

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal:

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Tender/proposal package name	Publishing and closing date & time
01.	992026	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-1 for the Period of 01 July'2024 to 31 December'2024	29-May-2024 22:30 13-Jun-2024 12:00
02.	992027	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-2 for the Period of 01 July'2024 to 31 December'2024	29-May-2024 22:30 13-Jun-2024 12:10
03.	992028	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-3 for the Period of 01 July'2024 to 31 December'2024	29-May-2024 22:30 13-Jun-2024 12:20
04.	992029	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-4 for the Period of 01 July'2024 to 31 December'2024	29-May-2024 22:30 13-Jun-2024 12:30
05.	992030	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-5 for the Period of 01 July'2024 to 31 December'2024	29-May-2024 22:30 13-Jun-2024 12:40
06.	992031	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-6 for the Period of 01 July'2024 to 31 December'2024	29-May-2024 22:30 13-Jun-2024 12:50
07.	992032	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-7 for the Period of 01 July'2024 to 31 December'2024	29-May-2024 22:30 13-Jun-2024 13:00
08.	992033	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-8 for the Period of 01 July'2024 to 31 December'2024	29-May-2024 22:30 13-Jun-2024 13:10
09.	992034	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-9 for the Period of 01 July'2024 to 31 December'2024	29-May-2024 22:30 13-Jun-2024 13:20
10.	992035	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-10 for the Period of 01 July'2024 to 31 December'2024	29-May-2024 22:30 13-Jun-2024 13:30
11.	992036	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-11 for the Period of 01 July'2024 to 31 December'2024	29-May-2024 22:30 13-Jun-2024 13:40
12.	992037	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-12 for the Period of 01 July'2024 to 31 December'2024	29-May-2024 22:30 13-Jun-2024 13:50
13.	992038	Goods Procurement of Dietary Articles of Package-13 for the Period of 01 July'2024 to 31 December'2024	29-May-2024 22:30 13-Jun-2024 14:00

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Didarul Alam
Jail Super
Bhola District Jail
Telephone No. 02479966210

GD- 911

Foreign secy to meet

FROM PAGE 3

deepen their strategic partnership for cooperation and explore new growth points.

"China is willing to work with Bangladesh to continue exploring cooperation opportunities under the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative and Global Civilisation Initiative," he said.

In particular, the ambassador said, they were willing to promote the upgrading of industries and digitalisation process in Bangladesh.

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ACCELERATING SELF-SUFFICIENCY & PROSPERITY
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Old Address
~~Crown Agents Limited~~
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~~House 25, Road 11, Block H~~
~~Banani, Dhaka 1213, Bangladesh~~

New Address
Crown Agents Limited
Neel Komol, House-100
Flat No. 6A (5th Floor)
Road-11, Block-C, Banani
Dhaka 1213, Bangladesh

SAARC
SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC)
BARC Complex, Farmgate
Dhaka – 1215, Bangladesh

Vacancy Announcement

SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) is inviting application for the following position *[to be recruited from the citizens of Bangladesh]*;

1. Senior Technical Officer

Details of appointment notice, qualification and experience, terms and conditions, salaries/allowances, facilities and benefits, etc. shall be available at the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), BARC Complex, Farmgate, Dhaka – 1215, Bangladesh and in website: ***http//:www.sac.org.bd***.

Application in English with complete "Curriculum Vitae" with two copies of recent passport size photographs, *photocopies of all certificates and other documents (education, experiences, trainings, NID, etc.)* should be submitted to Director, SAARC Agriculture Centre, BARC Complex, Farmgate, Dhaka - 1215 within ***24th June*** **2024**.

Canvassing of any form will disqualify the candidate.

All rights reserved by the authority.

Director, SAC

GD- 907

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Jail Super, Patuakhali District Jail
www.prison.patuakhali.gov.bd
jailsuperpatuakhali@gmail.com

Memo No-58.04.7800.145.01.013.24-1452 Date-30.05.2024

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the national e-GP portal;

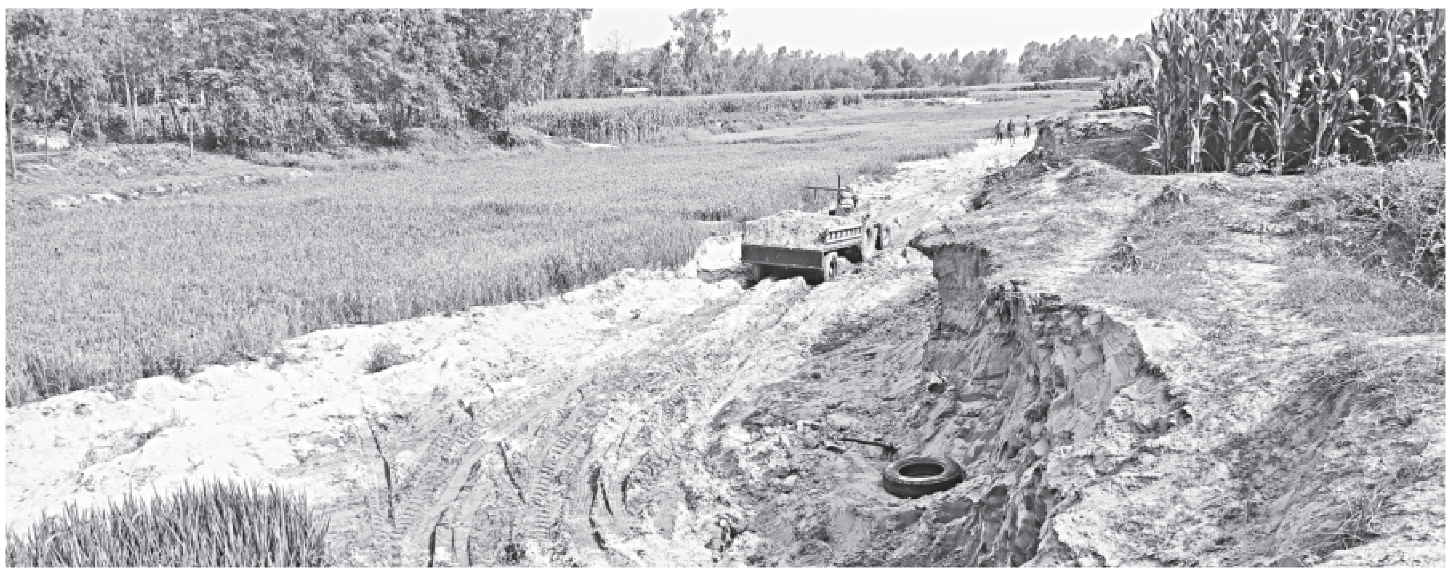
Sl No	Tender ID No.	Name of work	Publishing date & time	Last date & time of Tender Security submission	Closing Date & Time
01	992647	Procurement of Dietary Articles of **package-01** for the period of July/2024 to December/2024.	30-May-2024 10:15	13-June -2024 10:30	13-Jun-2024 11:00
02	992648	Procurement of Dietary Articles of **package-02** for the period of July/2024 to December/2024.	30-May-2024 10:15	13-June -2024 10:30	13-Jun-2024 11:30
03	992649	Procurement of Dietary Articles of **package-03** for the period of July/2024 to December/2024.	30-May-2024 10:15	13-June -2024 10:30	13-Jun-2024 12:00
04	992651	Procurement of Dietary Articles of **package-05** for the period of July/2024 to December/2024.	30-May-2024 10:15	13-June -2024 10:30	13-Jun-2024 13:00
05	992652	Procurement of Dietary Articles of **package-06** for the period of July/2024 to December/2024.	30-May-2024 10:15	13-June -2024 10:30	13-Jun-2024 13:30
06	992653	Procurement of Dietary Articles of **package-07** for the period of July/2024 to December/2024.	30-May-2024 10:15	13-June -2024 10:30	13-Jun-2024 14:00
07	992654	Procurement of Dietary Articles of **package-08** for the period of July/2024 to December/2024.	30-May-2024 10:15	13-June -2024 10:30	13-Jun-2024 14:30
08	992655	Procurement of Dietary Articles of **package-09** for the period of July/2024 to December/2024.	30-May-2024 10:15	13-June -2024 10:30	13-Jun-2024 15:00
09	992656	Procurement of Dietary Articles of **package-10** for the period of July/2024 to December/2024.	30-May-2024 10:15	13-June -2024 10:30	13-Jun-2024 15:30
10	992657	Procurement of Dietary Articles of **package-11** for the period of July/2024 to December/2024.	30-May-2024 10:15	13-June -2024 10:30	13-Jun-2024 16:00
11	992658	Procurement of Dietary Articles of **package-12** for the period of July/2024 to December/2024.	30-May-2024 10:15	13-June -2024 10:30	13-Jun-2024 16:30
12	992659	Procurement of Dietary Articles of **package-13** for the period of July/2024 to December/2024.	30-May-2024 10:15	13-June -2024 10:30	13-Jun-2024 17:00

This is an Online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the National e-GP portal **(http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)** is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the national e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank.

Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(MD. MAHBUBUL ALAM)
BJ NO-02699900205 ৩০/৫/২৪
JAIL SUPER
PATUAKHALI DISTRICT JAIL
TELEPHONE NO-+8802478880834

GD- 909



Illegal sand extraction plagues Dharla, two other rivers

Erosion devours croplands, homes in Patgram, Lalmonirhat

S DILIP ROY, *Lalmonirhat*

Illegal stone and sand extraction has caused severe erosion in three transboundary rivers -- Dharla, Singimari, and Saniajan.

Visiting the river banks in Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat recently, this correspondent saw sand and stones piled up on the banks after extraction with dredger machines, while large holes were formed on the river beds.

Locals complained that indiscriminate sand extraction is causing riverbank erosion, subsequent flash floods during monsoons, and damage to croplands, homes, biodiversity, and livelihoods.

Dharla is about 31.5 kilometres long on the Bangladesh side, while Singimari is 21km and Saniajan 4km long, according to Bangladesh Water Development Board.

In fiscal year 2017-18, the BWDB completed 4km of excavation and 2.5km of embankment protection works at a cost of Tk 24.72 crore on the rivers, the officials added.

"Dharla's erosion devoured my homestead, 10 bighas of my arable lands, and also the village graveyard. Like me, many others lost everything to the river," said Nazrul Islam, 77, a farmer in Patgram's Rasulganj village.

Many locals have alleged that a section of ruling party leaders are patronising the sand lifter. They are colluding with dishonest officials in the administration to extract sand and stones illegally.

With change of power, the rivers also change hands, but their fate remains unchanged, they said.

Ruhul Amin Babul, general secretary of Patgram upazila AL and also the upazila chairman, said illegal sand lifters are criminals, and their political identity is irrelevant. "They change their allegiance with the change of power. They don't belong to any political party," he said.

Strict action should be taken against these people, he added.

Shahidul Islam, 65, a farmer from the same village, said, "At present, some 400-500 dredger machines are being used to lift stones and sand round the clock from the rivers."

Nazir Ali, 78, of Banglabari village, called upon authorities concerned to take strict measures to bring the culprits to book.

Contacted, Abdul Gaffar, upazila agriculture officer in Patgram, said, "Many families who were engaged in agriculture lost their croplands to river erosion. This, in turn, adversely affected the area's agricultural productivity. However, there has been no survey done on how much arable land was lost to river erosion."

MA Momin, additional deputy commissioner (revenue) of Lalmonirhat and member secretary of the district's National River Protection Committee, said, "The district and upazila administrations are firmly against illegal sand and stone extraction from the rivers."

Shunil Kumar, executive engineer of BWDB in Lalmonirhat, said, "Local administration will take legal action against the culprits. Proposals have been sent to the government for dredging Singimari and Saniajan rivers. For Dharla river, the government will decide on necessary measures."

Nurul Islam, UNO of Patgram upazila, said, "The upazila administration has conducted numerous mobile court drives. Although these illegal activities have mostly stopped, there are reports of some stone lifting at night. Our drives will continue."

When asked about the allegation that some officials are involved in sand lifting, he denied it.

RMG workers demand wages, Eid bonus by June 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati, an RMG workers' platform, demonstrated in Dhaka yesterday, demanding full salaries with overtime and Eid bonuses by June 10.

They also demanded that the government stop excessive bus fares and ensure safe travel arrangements for garment workers during the Eid journey.

To press home their demands, they brought out a procession from Purana Paltan and later held a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

Speaking at the event, Taslima Akhter, president of Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati, said nearly 80 percent of Bangladesh's foreign exchange earnings come from the hard work of garment workers, but they face various challenges during the two Eid celebrations every year.

She expressed concern over the common practice of factories failing to pay bonuses on time. Workers have faced mistreatment and abuse when they protest demanding arrears, said Taslima.

The labour leaders said during Eid travel every year, transport fares double and even triple. Garment workers risk their lives by taking low-cost transport to reach home. The government needs to address this issue, they said.

POLLS CODE VIOLATION

2 BCL leaders jailed, UP chairman fined

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

A mobile court in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila has sentenced two local leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League to seven days' imprisonment for violating electoral code of conduct.

They are: Abdullah Al Fahad, senior joint convenor of upazila unit of BCL, and Ishad Ahmed Mallick Nishad, former member of Warshi union unit of BCL.

The mobile court of executive magistrate Masudur Rahman, also assistant commissioner (Land) in the upazila, also fined local Warshi Union Parishad Chairman Mahbubul Alam Mallick Tk 10,000 over similar charges.

Masudur Rahman caught the convicts red-handed while distributing biryani among people after a meeting on Friday afternoon, ahead of the Mirzapur Upazila Parishad polls slated for June 5.

An altercation ensued between the executive magistrate and the convicts. Informed, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Mirzapur Sheikh Nurul Amin went to the spot around 8:00pm and ordered the trio to be taken to the UNO office.

Later, around 11:00pm, they were handed down the punishments under Section 32(1) of the Upazila Parishad Election Code of Conducts of 2016. The two BCL men were taken to jail around 1:00am, confirmed Masudur Rahman.

Additional police personnel were deployed as supporters and associates of the convicts gathered at the UNO office premises.

3 killed, 5 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least three people have been killed and five others injured in accidents in two districts, according to reports from our local correspondents.

In Sirajganj, two people were killed and three others injured as a CNG-run auto-rickshaw and a truck collided in Alokdiar area of Sadar upazila on Friday night.

Mohadeb Shah, 60, of Hat-Pangashi village in Raiganj upazila; and Abu Obaida, 24, of village Muktargati in Sirajganj Sadar upazila died on the spot.

Sirajganj Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Sirajul Islam said the accident took place around 10:00pm on Friday. The injured were undergoing treatment at Sirajganj 250-bed Bongomata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib General Hospital.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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Office of the Chief Engineer
Sirajganj Power Station, NWPGCL
Soydabad, Sirajganj

Ref: 27.28.8878.007.07.002.19.243 Date: 01/06/2024

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

The following e-Tender has been invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd):

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Brief Description of Tender	Publication Date	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1	920979	Construction of RCC road inside Sirajganj Power Station.	30/05/2024	19/06/2024, 03:30 PM	20/06/2024 12:00 PM

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

01/06/2024
Engr. Md. Shafiqul Islam
Chief Engineer
Sirajganj Power Station
NWPGCL, Soydabad, Sirajganj
Contact No.: +8801755630007

GD- 912

Build cold storage facilities in Rangpur region

Demand local farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

The Krishak Sangram Parishad has called for a special allocation in the upcoming national budget to construct cold storage facilities for potatoes and vegetables in the Rangpur region.

This demand was raised at a human chain formed in front of Rangpur Press Club yesterday.

Lawyer Palash Kanti Nag, convener of Krishak Sangram Parishad, addressed the gathering.

Speakers said there was an urgent need for cold storage facilities in Rangpur and Dinajpur, pointing out that the lack of such infrastructure results in an annual loss of Tk 10,000 crores due to rotting vegetables. Without adequate cold storage, 30 percent of vegetables produced in this area are wasted yearly.

They said total vegetable demand in the country stands at 1.52 crore tonnes annually. Insufficient government cold storage facilities compel farmers to sell their produce at extremely low prices to avoid spoilage.

Palash Kanti criticised the reduction in agricultural subsidies and allocations in recent budgets, stressing the necessity of ensuring fair prices for farmers.

He also demanded interest-free loans on easy terms for farmers.

Following the rally, a procession marched the main road of the city, with participation from marginal-level farmers from various areas of Rangpur city.

রেজিস্ট্রার দপ্তর
যশোর বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
যশোর-৭৪০৮, বাংলাদেশ।

Office of the Registrar
Jashore University of Science and Technology
Jashore-7408, Bangladesh

স্মারক নং-যবিপ্রবি/রেজিঃ/সংস্থাপন/রাজস্ব জনবল/১০০২ (৭) /শ্যাডো/ ২০২৩-১০৮৪ তারিখঃ ২৯ /০৫/২০২৪খ্রিঃ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

যশোর বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের **ভেটেরিনারী মেডিসিন অনুষদের** নিম্নোক্ত পদগুলো পূরণের নিমিত্তে বর্ণিত শর্তসাপেক্ষে বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রঃ নং	পদের নাম, পদসংখ্যা ও স্কেল	ভেটেরিনারি মেডিসিন অনুষদের আওতাধীন বিভাগসমূহ	সর্বোচ্চ বয়স	শর্তাবলী
০১	**অধ্যাপক, ০১টি স্থায়ী পদ** (যোগ্য প্রার্থী পাওয়া না গেলে উক্ত পদের বিপরীতে প্রভাষক নিয়োগ দেওয়া হবে) **বেতন স্কেলঃ** ৫৬৫০০-৭৪৪০০/- (৩য় গ্রেড)	01. Medicine, Surgery and Theriogenology 02. Microbiology and Hygiene 03. Anatomy and Histology 04. Pharmacology 05. Physiology and Biochemistry 06. Animal Breeding and Genetics 07. Dairy and Poultry Science 08. Pathology and Parasitology 09. Animal Science and Nutrition 10. Agricultural Economics	....	আবেদনকারীকে career.just.edu.bd ওয়েবসাইটে গিয়ে প্রয়োজনীয় সকল কাগজপত্রের Scanned copy, আবেদন ফিসহ আগামী ২১/০৬/২০২৪খ্রি. তারিখ বিকাল ৪.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে অনলাইনে আবেদন করতে হবে। অনলাইনে আবেদন করা ও ফি প্রদানের বিস্তারিত নিয়মাবলী https://career.just.edu.bd/docs/how-to-apply.pdf এই লিংক-এ পাওয়া যাবে। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইটঃ www.just.edu.bd হতে যোগ্যতাসহ অন্যান্য শর্তাবলীর বিস্তারিত বিবরণ সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।
০২	**সহযোগী অধ্যাপক, ০২টি স্থায়ী পদ** (যোগ্য প্রার্থী পাওয়া না গেলে উক্ত পদের বিপরীতে প্রভাষক নিয়োগ দেওয়া হবে) **বেতন স্কেলঃ** ৫০০০০-৭১২০০/- (৪র্থ গ্রেড)		....	
০৩	**সহকারী অধ্যাপক, ০৪ টি স্থায়ী পদ** বেতন স্কেলঃ ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/- (৬ষ্ঠ গ্রেড)		....	
০৪	**প্রভাষক, ১০ টি পদ** (০৭ টি স্থায়ী পদ এবং ০৩ টি অধ্যাপক ও সহযোগী অধ্যাপক পদের বিপরীতে অস্থায়ী পদ) **বেতন স্কেলঃ** ২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/- (৯ম গ্রেড)		৩০ বছর	

স্বাঃ/
প্রকৌশলী মোঃ আহসান হাবীব
রেজিস্ট্রার
যশোর বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

GD- 910

16 dengue patients hospitalised

UNB, *Dhaka*

Sixteen people were hospitalised with dengue fever in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Of the new patients, nine were admitted to hospitals in Dhaka city and the rest outside it, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Currently, 113 patients are receiving treatment at different hospitals across the country.

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স্মারক নং : ৩৫.০১.৮৬৬৯.৪৬৮.০৭.০০২.২৪-৯৭৭(৬) তারিখ : ৩০-৫-২০২৪

e-Tender is invited in the Nation al e-GP System Portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the below works.

Tender ID No	Package No.	Name of Work/Package Description	Last Selling date & time	Opening date & time	Remarks
993146	e-GP/ 31/EE/SRD/ 2023-2024.	Pavement Maintenance work by Aggregate Base Type-I & DBS wearing-course of Mostafapur-Madaripur-Shariatpur (Monohar Bazar)-Ibrahimpur-Horina-Chandpur (Bhatialpur) Road (R-860) at 31km (P) under Shariatpur Road Division, during the year-2023-2024.	16-06-2024 16:00 AM	13-06-2024 14: 00 PM	Only online tender.
993173	e-GP/ 32/EE/SRD/ 2023-2024.	Pavement Maintenance work by Aggregate Base Type-I, II & DBS-wearing course of Mostafapur-Madaripur-Shariatpur (Monohar Bazar)-Ibrahimpur-Horina-Chandpur (Bhatialpur) Road (R-860) at 37 km (P) under Shariatpur Road Division, during the year-2023-2024.	12-06-2024 16:00 AM	13-06-2024 14: 30 PM	Only online tender.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

30.05.24
(Sheikh Nabil Hossain)
ID No-602255
Executive Engineer(c.c.), RHD
Road Division, Shariatpur.

GD- 908

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

RICHI SOLAIMAN returns to your screens

> **About getting back to work, Richi shared, "It feels amazing to be back in front of the camera. I can't describe it in words. I'm returning to my roots and my audience, and I couldn't be happier!"**

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Richi Solaiman, a once popular household name on television, is making her way into the realm of Bangladeshi web content with ***Girgiti***. Known for her roles in numerous single dramas and serials during the early 2000s, she was one of the busiest artistes in the industry.

Currently, Richi resides in the US with her husband, Rashek Malik, a detective in the New York Police Department, and their two children.

The actress is poised to make her web debut with the film ***Girgiti***. She recently wrapped up filming in Kolkata and has now returned to Dhaka.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Richi explained, "I stepped away from work to raise my kids. They have always been my priority, and now that they can take care of themselves, I decided to return to my career."

Proud of her children's independence, Richi considers it a significant achievement that they can manage their studies and other activities on their own.

About getting back to work, Richi shared, "It feels amazing to be back in front of the camera. I can't describe it in words. I'm returning to my roots and my audience, and I couldn't be happier!"

She also mentioned that she will be selective with her projects, aiming to take up one project a month. "The plot of ***Girgiti*** is women-centric, which is one of the main reasons I chose this project," she confirmed.

The film revolves around the lives of two women. "For the first time in my career, I will be playing a police officer, a role for which I prepared for about four months," she said.

Richi is confident that her return will be special. "Over the last few years, many people have asked when I would return, expressing how much they missed me. I missed them too. Even my son encouraged me to start working again to become actress Richi Solaiman once more. I want my comeback to be memorable, and I hope this project will make it worthwhile."

PHOTOS: **COLLECTED**

Produced by Bengal Multimedia Limited and directed by Bijoy Jana, the web-film will be released on the OTT platform Rtv Plus.

Richi Solaiman embarked on her acting career in the much-acclaimed mini-series ***Iti Amar Bon*** in 1992. The actress who is also a trained *kathak* dancer, used to dance in BTV programmes and during one of her rehearsals she caught the attention of Mustafizur Rahman. He was planning to direct ***Iti Amar Bon*** at that point. Although the series was a raging success, Richi didn't continue with acting. Instead she pursued her passion for dancing.

Eventually, she started feeling more inclined towards acting and as a result landed her first role as an adult in Begum Mumtaz Hossain's ***Bela Obela***.

Throughout her acting career, the actress has often been proud of her performance in women-centric roles, when we asked her which performance of hers is close to her heart. The actress revealed, "The serial ***Nir*** showed an interesting relationship between a woman and her mother-in-law. Anwara *apa* played my mother-in-law in it. That serial received positive reactions from many. I was also highly appreciated by people from all walks of life for my role in the serial ***Nabila Chorito***. Many people told me that nobody could have pulled off that character better than me."

The actress further received praise for her performances in the serials ***Nil Nirjone***, ***Moyur Bahon*** and ***Tyag***.

Apurba nearly collapses while filming

Recently, Ziaul Faruq Apurba sustained serious hand and back injuries while filming action scenes for the spin-off series, ***Golam Mamun***, which is awaiting release this month.

Sources report that Apurba injured himself during an outdoor action scene, exacerbating his back pain and nearly losing consciousness. Despite being advised to rest, he returned to the set after receiving first aid from a physiotherapist.

Project director Shihab Shaheen commented, "Apurba was seriously injured during filming. Despite receiving painkillers and being advised to rest, he resumed work to avoid delays."

Apurba said, "Many people are involved in a production, so focusing solely on me isn't feasible. Painkillers helped me feel somewhat better."

Gigi and Bella Hadid donate $1m to support Palestinian families

Gigi and Bella Hadid, born to a Palestinian father, have consistently expressed their pride in their heritage and supported Palestine on social media.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Gigi and Bella Hadid are donating USD 1 million to four organisations focused on children and families: HEAL Palestine, the Palestine Children's Relief Fund (PCRF), World Central Kitchen (WCK), and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

These collectively provide humanitarian aid, including food, medical programmes, assistance to displaced families, and psychological services, amidst the Israel-Palestine conflict.

NEWS

Celesty was supposed to receive Azim

FROM PAGE 2

recovered body parts, suspected to be those of the slain lawmaker, from the septic tank of the flat based on the information provided by Celesty.

During interrogation, Celesty told investigators that she heard the sound of a toilet being flushed repeatedly on the second floor of the duplex flat. Based on that information, detectives asked the Kolkata CID to conduct a search in the sewerage line and septic tank of the flat.

Four people have so far been arrested in connection with the murder.

Jihad Howlader, a butcher who dismembered the lawmaker's body and dumped its parts later, is in custody of the West Bengal CID.

Amanullah, his nephew Tanvir Bhuiyan, and Celesty are in custody of the Detective Branch of DMP.

Aktaruzzaman, the alleged mastermind behind the murder, is believed to be in the USA. Another suspect, Foysal, is absconding.

Suspect Siam Hossain, who along with Jihad dumped the lawmaker's body, went to Nepal after the killing. He was arrested by police there.

Masud Alam, counselor at the Bangladesh embassy in Nepal, told The Daily Star, "Siam Hossain is in custody of Nepal police. An Interpol team, now in Nepal, is probing the murder."

He said further details about the investigation would be disclosed later.

POLICE TEAM IN NEPAL

A three-member team of Bangladesh Police, led by Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (DB) of DMP, went to Nepal yesterday to investigate the murder.

Speaking to reporters at the Dhaka airport, Harun said, "We have heard about Siam's arrest in Nepal. Some other suspects may be hiding in Nepal."

Earlier, a three-member DB team, led by Harun, went to Kolkata on May 26 to probe the murder. The team returned home on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said that the murder of Azim took place in India, which is why the case was filed there.

The Indian authorities will also investigate the murder, he added.

"The mastermind flew to the United States. India has an extradition treaty with the USA. So, the Indian government will appeal to them [USA]," the minister said in response to a question from a journalist after attending a programme at Dhaka University's Student-Teacher Centre.

The frequent flyer that is the agri secy!

FROM PAGE 12

for this? Isn't there any monitoring mechanism in place?"

VIOLATIONS OF DIRECTIVES

As per the 2011 PMO circular, foreign trips should only be made for matters related to national interest, like signing of MOUs, agreements or mandatory representation in international bodies.

It also clearly directed that for events like educational tours, seminars, symposiums and workshops, junior officers and field-level officials should be prioritised over secretaries.

According to documents seen by this newspaper, three of the agriculture secretary's trips last year violated the rules: twice for a workshop and once for contract discussions.

This year, Wahida already travelled five times: thrice in May, once in April and once in January. Two were for roundtables and discussions and three for signing contracts.

She went abroad six times to sign contracts in Singapore, China, Tunisia, Canada, Saudi Arabia and Morocco.

The expenses of these trips were covered by the agriculture ministry's operational budget, violating another directive that prohibited foreign trips funded by operational or development budgets.

From May 21-23 this year, Wahida led a delegation of five officials to Australia for a bilateral meeting and a meeting on trade and investment.

On May 6, she accompanied Agriculture Minister Abdus Shahid to a roundtable in the Netherlands, against yet another PMO directive, which discouraged the minister and secretary of a ministry to go on foreign trips together.

It, however, said that exceptions may be made for national interests, such as meetings with the World Bank, International Monetary Fund or donor groups.

Between April 15 and 19, she was set to visit Kenya to learn about digital agriculture but had to cancel due to a minor accident.

In November last year, she attended a workshop in the Philippines.

From September 1-4 last year, the secretary joined a workshop in China; on August 1-5, she attended a discussion in Malaysia; and from June 4-9, she visited Canada for an existing contract.

"For contract signings, wing chiefs usually go; secretaries don't need to go unless there are major complications," said former secretary Awal.

Asked, the agriculture secretary claimed there is no such directive.

Awal further said, "In my tenure, I sent junior officers for trips, as they will serve the country for a longer time than I will ... The precedent set by the current secretaries will have a more negative impact in the future."

Speaking to The Daily Star, Wahida said the secretaries travel abroad in the interest of the country, not for pleasure.

"You surely know that the approval for foreign trips of secretaries comes from the Prime Minister's Office. The secretary can travel as many times as deemed necessary in the interest of the country."

Regarding criticism, Wahida said, "I don't know who's making these criticisms, but I can't take anymore of what you [this newspaper] are saying. Everyone in our ministry knows the purposes of the trips."

Agriculture Minister Abdus Shahid told this newspaper, "If the foreign trips-related files don't come to me, I can't intervene."

Asked whether the files for the secretary's trips may have been sent to the PMO without his approval, he said, "Ask the secretary about that ... I act or settle things that come to me as per the rules."

He, however, admitted that some files do not reach him. "If the files don't come, what can I ask about them? ... If there is no discussion with me, I can't say what is right or not."

Firoz Mia, a researcher on public administration, said, "The minister's approval is required for foreign trips. If there's an exception, that might be another issue."

A minister, speaking anonymously, said, "Approval from the minister is needed for foreign trips. If there isn't any, it indicates a poor relationship between the minister and the secretary."

Benazir withdrew Tk 70-80cr

FROM PAGE 12

short period of time."

THE ACCOUNTS AND THEIR HOLDERS

According to the ACC investigation team's source, they identified 33 bank accounts: six in Benazir Ahmed's name; five in Jissan Mirza's name; three for Farheen Rishta Binte Benazir; and one for Tahseen Raisa Binte Benazir.

There is one joint account shared by Jissan Mirza, one Mirza Monwara Reza and one Mirza Anwar Parvez.

Other accounts are held by entities such as Ekti Shishir Bindu, Stealth Industries Ltd, Savanna Farm Products, Savana Agro Ltd, Savana Park Resort and Country Club, and Bangla Tea Manufacturing Industries Ltd. There are also three unspecified accounts with Sonali Bank PLC and a Sanchayapatra worth Tk 30 lakh.

On May 23, Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court ordered the freezing of all these accounts.

Benazir also has two beneficiary owners' (BO) accounts with IFCI Securities Ltd and Dragon Securities Ltd. Jissan Mirza has two BO accounts with Southeast Bank Capital Services Ltd and EBL Securities Ltd, while Tahseen Raisa has two with Dynasty Securities Ltd and EBL Securities Ltd.

The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission on Monday froze the BO accounts.

"We have frozen the BO accounts following the ACC's request," said a senior official of the stock market regulator, requesting anonymity.

Officials said the BSEC have already asked Central Depository Bangladesh Ltd, which facilitates transfer and settlement of shares and other securities against BO accounts, to close the accounts.

BENAZIR OUT OF COUNTRY

On May 4, Benazir left to Singapore using his passport -- B00002095, an intelligence source confirmed to The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said that he does not know whether the ex-IGP is in the country or not.

"We've not banned him [from travelling abroad] yet ... I still don't know for sure if he is here or not. I have to be sure."

Govt missteps led

FROM PAGE 12

said it is indecent for the country to have a businessman like him. That businessman has "removed his name from the list of defaulters by depositing 2 percent".

Muinul said, "Money laundering is the biggest problem but no steps have been taken to control hundi."

Rather, he added, various benefits including tax exemptions have been offered to bring back the laundered money, but not a single taka has returned.

About loan money being laundered, he said, "Tk 5 lakh crore out of total Tk 18 lakh crore loans in the banking sector are defaulted. But Bangladesh Bank does not recognise it. Bank loans are being repaid with borrowed money. A loan is being rescheduled seven to eight times."

Speaking about the lingering high inflation, he said, "Other countries could reduce it, but Bangladesh couldn't. To the contrary, the prices have been pushed up further."

Muinul said now the names of the former police and army chiefs are being discussed. "They are being talked about only because the government wants them to be talked about. Where did former home minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir get the money to set up Padma Bank? Why is Bachchu (Abdul Hai) of BASIC Bank still missing? Where are the sons of Sikder who ruined the National Bank?"

He said that Russia has set up projects like Rooppur power plant in India at half the cost. "So why are we spending more money there? A lot of unnecessary infrastructure is being built. Money is being looted through it."

Muinul observed Sri Lanka has collapsed in the wake of massive unnecessary infrastructure. "We are also going in the same direction with such eccentricities. After 2008, there was no fair election in the country. All the elections were one-sided. Deviation from democracy is a bad sign for the country, and is affecting the economy."

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon said, "We can understand the poor state of the economy through media reports as well as through our lifestyle. If you go to the market, you can feel how badly the economy is doing."

He added that syndicates are controlling the market. "The ruling party leaders are also saying the same. No one disagrees with this. But no attempt has been made to identify those who are in the syndicate. Most of the syndicates are close to the government."

The economy is controlled by a small section of military-civilian bureaucrats and wealthy elites and wealth is becoming concentrated in them, he said.

Workers Party Politburo Member Sushant Das and General Secretary Fazle Hossain Badsha also spoke at the event.

Woman dies

FROM PAGE 12

On information, locals rushed to their aid and took them to the hospital and on May 29, the woman died but her husband survived.

On May 31, the woman's uncle filed a case with Rajibpur police accusing four people. The two other accused are Shukkur Ali, 59, of Karigarpara village, and Soleyman, 29, of Tangalipara village.

Contacted, OC Ashiqur said police were trying to arrest the other two accused.

Flooding

FROM PAGE 12

Jaintapur, Kanighat, Jokiganj, Beanibazar and Golapganj upazilas and 9 wards of Sylhet city were flood affected.

At least 550 shelters have been opened in the district in which 3,342 people moved in.

Deputy Commissioner Sheikh Russel Hasan said the lower areas of Sylhet city, Beanibazar and Golapganj upazilas were flooded again due to onrush of water from upstream.

Yesterday morning, former foreign minister Abdul Momen MP visited the flood-affected area in the suburbs. He blamed the Surma not being dredged for the flooding.

He said the river dredging project was taken up and work had begun but, after a few days, it was shut down for various reasons.

Had the job been completed, the water would have drained quickly, he said.

Sylhet City Corporation opened a 24-hour control room (01958284800) for emergency services of the city dwellers.

Russia attacks Ukraine energy sites

100 missiles, drones fired

AFP, *Kyiv*

Russia fired a combined 100 missiles and drones at Ukraine overnight, in a barrage that targeted energy sites across the country, Ukrainian officials said yesterday.

Russia has launched dozens of aerial attacks at Ukraine's power facilities throughout the two-year war, causing significant damage and energy shortages.

"The enemy launched 53 missiles of various types and 47 attack drones," the air force said, adding that it shot down 35 of the missiles and all but one of the drones. Two thermal power plants were damaged in the attack, it added.

In a daily briefing, Russia's defence ministry said the strikes were a "response to attempts by the Kyiv regime to damage Russian energy and transport facilities."

Ukraine has hit several Russian oil depots and refineries in drone strikes over recent months -- something Kyiv says is fair retribution for Moscow's own aerial attacks.

SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE IN SINGAPORE

US seeking to build 'Asia-Pacific version of Nato'

Says China as US defence chief praises 'new era of security' in the region

AFP, *Singapore*

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin yesterday hailed a "new era of security" in the Asia-Pacific region, as Washington strengthens its network of alliances aimed at countering China's growing military might and influence.

From Japan to Australia, the United States has been deepening defence ties across the region, ramping up joint military exercises and regularly deploying warships and fighter jets in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea -- infuriating Beijing.

Responding to Austin, Chinese Lieutenant General Jing Jianfeng accused the United States of seeking to build "an Asia-Pacific version of Nato", and described the superpower as the "greatest challenge to regional peace and stability".

In the past three years, Austin said there had been a "new convergence around nearly all aspects of security" in the Asia-Pacific, where there was a shared understanding of "the power of partnership".

"This new convergence is producing a stronger, more resilient and more capable network of partnerships and that is defining a new era of security in the Indo-Pacific," Austin told the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore.

However, it was not "about imposing one country's will" or "bullying or coercion", Austin said, in an apparent shot at China, which has increased its sabre-rattling over self-ruled Taiwan and grown more confident in pressing its claims in the South China Sea.

"This new convergence is about coming together and not splitting apart," Austin said. "It's about the free choices of sovereign states."

The Shangri-La Dialogue, a major security forum attended by defence officials from around the world, has become a barometer of US-China relations in recent years.

This year's edition comes a week after China held military drills around Taiwan and warned of war over the US-backed island following the inauguration of President Lai Ching-te, who Beijing has described as a "dangerous separatist".

Taiwan is one of the thorniest disputes in US-China relations.

Austin met with his Chinese counterpart Dong Jun on Friday for the first substantive face-to-face talks between the two countries' defence chiefs in 18 months.

China scrapped military communications with the United States in 2022 in response to then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan.

Tensions between Washington and Beijing were further stoked by issues including an alleged Chinese spy balloon that was shot down over US airspace, a meeting between Taiwan's then-president Tsai Ing-wen and Pelosi's successor Kevin McCarthy, and American military aid for Taipei.

Friday's meeting offered hopes of further military dialogue that could help prevent flashpoint issues from spinning out of control.

Austin said the United States and China would resume military-to-military communications "in the coming months", while Beijing hailed the "stabilising" security relations between the countries.

The Philippines, a treaty ally of the United States, is a key focus of Washington's efforts to build an arc of alliances across the region.

Given its position in the South China Sea and proximity to Taiwan, which China claims as its own, Philippine support would be crucial for the United States in the event of any conflict.

The Philippines has increased to nine the number of military bases open to US troops under a 2014 agreement, including two in the country's far north less than 450 kilometres (280 miles) from Taiwan.

Austin insisted yesterday that Washington's commitment to defend Manila under their mutual defence treaty remained "ironclad", as repeated confrontations between Chinese and Philippine vessels in the South China Sea have stoked fears of a wider conflict.

ANC loses majority in South Africa

AFP, *Johannesburg*

South Africa's ruling ANC faced a search for allies to help it form a new government yesterday after it lost its three-decade-old absolute majority in a watershed election.

With 99 percent of the votes from Wednesday's election counted, President Cyril Ramaphosa's African National Congress had only 40 percent, a catastrophic slump from the 57.5 it won in 2019.

The party has enjoyed an absolute majority since 1994, when liberation leader Nelson Mandela led the nation out of white-minority rule and into democracy.

The ANC must now either negotiate a coalition government, or at least persuade other parties to back Ramaphosa's re-election in parliament to allow him to form a minority government reliant on other parties for support to pass budgets and legislation.

Boat tragedy kills 20 in Afghanistan

AFP, *Kabul*

Twenty people, including children, drowned when a boat sank during a river crossing in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province yesterday, a provincial official said.

"A boat with women and children on board sank on Saturday morning at 7:00am in the river in the Basawul area of Momand Dara district" of eastern Nangarhar, said Quraishi Badloon, the head of the province's information department.

He said five people survived the accident, the cause of which was being investigated. At least five bodies had been recovered and efforts were underway to find the others, provincial government officials said.

'We are hated'

Israelis feel isolation over Gaza war as sympathy over Oct 7 attack fades

AFP, *Jerusalem*

A series of diplomatic setbacks, strong condemnation of a recent Gaza strike, and intense protests on Western campuses have left Israelis feeling their country is unfairly isolated.

Israelis expected unwavering support from their allies and the international community after Hamas's October 7 attack.

But as Israel's retaliatory offensive against Hamas in Gaza deepened, it seems to have lost the sympathy it initially received after the unprecedented attack.

This loss of support intensified following last week's Israeli strike on a camp for displaced Palestinians in Rafah, which killed at least 45 people, according to Gazan officials. The military has denied targeting the camp.

The strike drew condemnations from Istanbul to Beijing and from Washington to Paris.

On social media platform Instagram, more than 47 million posts with the hashtag "All eyes on Rafah" have been recorded since the strike.

But Israelis remain defiant despite the growing isolation.

"I don't think Israel should care what the world has to say... I support our military 100 percent," Netanel Aronson, a 24-year-old Israeli-American, told AFP.

"I pray for them every day that they should be safe and come home."

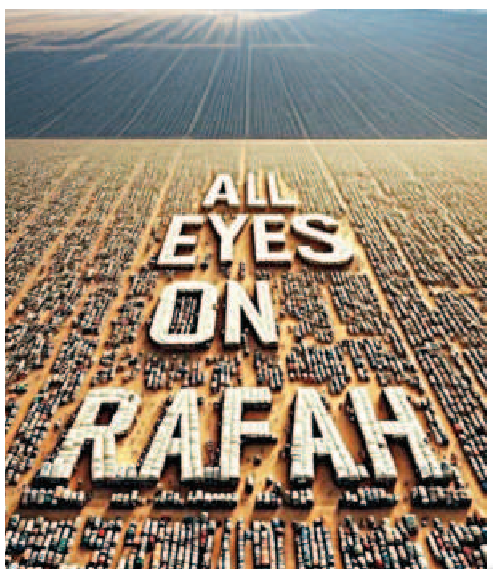
At least 36,379 Palestinians, mostly civilians, have been killed in Gaza in Israeli bombardments and ground offensive since October 7, according to the health ministry in Hamas-run territory.

Israel's retaliatory campaign came after the Hamas attack resulted in the deaths of 1,189 people in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures.

The militants also took 252 people as hostages, of which 121 are still held in Gaza, including 37 the military says are dead.

"It is a tragedy for everyone," said Nathalie, who declined to give her last name, referring also to the fate of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

"Since everybody is connected, we can see what's happening. We feel that we are hated," the 50-year-old said.



"We have the feeling that we are accused of being colonialists and imperialists. But we see ourselves as refugees," she added, echoing the feeling of many Jews who arrived during the creation of Israel in 1948.

The Palestinians call the creation of Israel as the Nakba -- or "catastrophe" -- when about 760,000 Palestinians fled or were forced from their homes by the war over Israel's creation.

Last month, Israel faced a series of diplomatic setbacks.

While the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to stop its ongoing offensive in Rafah, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court sought arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, along with three senior Hamas leaders.

Ireland, Norway and Spain also recognised a Palestinian state in a coordinated decision on Tuesday, while Slovenia's parliament is due to vote on such a proposal next week.

Political analyst Dahlia Scheindlin said Israelis were aware the war was damaging their global standing.

"(Israelis) think the world is against Israel. They think that many institutions and countries are anti-Semitic, and that there is a double standard," Scheindlin said.

She regretted the "devastating" impact of the war on Gazans, but said Israelis see the ongoing military campaign as an "existential struggle" for their people.

Scheindlin said Israelis have been demoralised over the setbacks at international tribunals after Israel was accused of committing some of the worst crimes in Gaza.

Such crimes "Israelis believed were only ever committed against them", she added.

"So, it's very hard for them to accept this. They fear the isolation."

Israelis are also countering the social media campaign "All Eyes on Rafah," with their own that says "If your eyes are on Rafah, then help us find the hostages".

In a survey by US-based Pew Research Center before the May 26 strike on a camp of displaced people in Rafah, 40 percent of Israelis thought the country would "definitely" achieve its Gaza war goals.

Only four percent of the Jewish majority thought Israel's military response in the Palestinian territory had gone "too far".

But for Christians like Annie Dikbikian, the war has only increased "the hatred" on both sides.

"It's affecting us... as Christians," said the Jerusalem-based hairdresser, who hoped "peace, love, and respect" would return soon.

Main Hoon
Modi Ka Parivar

Indian election: How accurate are exit polls?

AGENCIES

Voting for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections ended yesterday with the conclusion of the seventh phase. Before the final results scheduled for June 4, exit polls show the BJP-led coalition is set to win the election by a big margin.

Most exit polls projected the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) could win a two-thirds majority in the 543-member lower house of parliament, where 272 is needed for a simple majority. A two-thirds majority will allow the government to usher in far-reaching amendments in the constitution.

The exit polls for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections were due to be broadcast from 6:30pm yesterday, 30 minutes after the polling ended.

The actual results for all 543 parliamentary seats will be announced by the Election Commission of India on June 4.

Warning: The exit polls do not always get it right. They have been way off the mark in the past.

Here's a look at a summary of some data on exit polls projections published in various Indian news outlets and the actual results in Lok Sabha elections in 2014 and 2019.

In 2014, predictions for the NDA, BJP-led coalition, were not very accurate. On average, the predictions were off by 55 seats. Some predictions were even further off. Predictions for the UPA, Congress-led coalition, were also quite inaccurate. The average error was just over 50 seats, but the errors varied widely.

In 2019, predictions improved for both NDA and UPA. For the NDA, the average error dropped to about 27 seats, with less variation in errors compared to 2014. For the UPA, the predictions were off by 22 seats on average, with fewer large errors.

In 2014, predictions were not very accurate for both NDA and UPA. By 2019, predictions improved a lot. The errors were much smaller.

This shows that polling methods and data collection got better over time. Polls in 2019 were closer to the actual results.

Noab honours 6 newspapers

FROM PAGE 12

make mistakes. The media's job is to identify those."

Referring to the country's slide in the World Press Freedom Index, he said that there was incorrect information in the ranking, and the information ministry pointed those out.

"In order to reflect the real picture of the country, they should have followed a well-established research methodology. But this was not the case here.

In his welcome speech, Noab President AK Azad said his association and the Editors' Council have raised concerns over the Cyber Security Act.

"We hope the government will take our concerns into cognisance," he said.

Ittefaq Editor Tasmima Hossain said her newspaper played a crucial role in 1971.

Nihad Kabir, a member of the board of directors of the Sangbad, said, "Newspapers are under pressure from various quarters. We try very hard to stay on the right path ... ."

Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman said, "Free journalism is no longer an easy task around the world and in Bangladesh."

Shihab Malik, executive editor of Dainik Azadi, said his newspaper started its journey in 1960 and will continue to serve the nation.

Manabzamin Editor Motiur Rahman Chowdhury said, "In this country, some things can be said, and some things cannot be uttered. If we speak, there will be problems ... If the laws and regulations that tie our hands are removed, we believe we will be able to write freely."

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said nine laws work directly or indirectly against the freedom of the media.

"If you had given us more leeway, you would have been served better. This is the relationship between a free press and a government," he said.

Bonik Barta Editor Dewan Hanif Mahmud moderated the event.

UN mission in Iraq to end after two decades

AFP, *United Nations*

At the request of Baghdad, the UN Security Council unanimously decided Friday that the United Nations political mission in Iraq will leave the country at the end of 2025 after more than 20 years.

The Iraqi government welcomed the decision, saying it reflected progress and stability in the country since the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) was established in 2003 after the US-led invasion and fall of Saddam Hussein.

But analysts say the mission has struggled to make an impact in areas such as impunity, and that its exit is part of a trend for host nations to reject UN missions.

The UNSC resolution adopted on Friday extended the mission's mandate until December 31, 2025 "after which UNAMI will cease all work and operations."

The mission has about 700 staff, with tasks including advising the government on political dialogue and reconciliation, as well as helping with elections and security sector reform.

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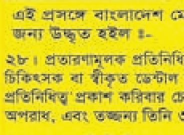
বিজ্ঞপ্তি



কথিত নামঃ মোঃ নুরুল হাসান
প্রতারকের প্রকৃত
নামঃসুভাষ চন্দ্র মোহন্ত

মোঃ নুরুল হাসান (তাহার প্রকৃত নামঃ সুভাষ চন্দ্র মোহন্ত) গ্রামঃ শাহীপাড়া, পোঃ রংপুর সদর, উপজেলাঃ রংপুর সদর, জেলাঃ রংপুর, উক্ত ব্যক্তি রংপুর মেডিকেল কলেজ হইতে পাশকৃত একই নাম ডাঃ মোঃ নুরুল হাসান (বিএমএন্ডডিসি রেজিস্ট্রেশন নং: A-30921, Date:28.03.2001) এর রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের এমবিবিএস সার্টিফিকেট, রংপুর মেডিকেল কলেজের প্রত্যায়ন পত্র ও রংপুর মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতালের ইন্টার্নশীপ সার্টিফিকেট প্রতারনার আশ্রয় গ্রহন পূর্বক কথিত নিজের নামে তৈরী করে বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল হইতে রেজিস্ট্রেশন নং: A-75685, Date:10.02.2016 গ্রহন করিয়াছেন, যাহা প্রমানিত হইয়াছে। এতদ্বারা সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাইতেছে যে, বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল হইতে তাহাকে প্রদত্ত রেজিস্ট্রেশন (রেজিস্ট্রেশন নং-A-75685, Date:10.02.2016) বাতিল করা হইয়াছে এবং তাহার বিরুদ্ধে ফৌজদারী আইনে মামলা দায়ের করা হইবে।

এই প্রসঙ্গে বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল আইন,২০১০ সনের ৬১নং আইন এর ধারা ২৮(১) সকলের অবগতির জন্য উদ্ধৃত হইল ঃ-

২৮। প্রতারণামূলক প্রতিনিধিত্ব বা নিবন্ধনের দন্ড।-(১) "যদি কোন ব্যক্তি প্রতারণার আশ্রয় লইয়া ইচ্ছাকৃতভাবে নিজেকে একজন স্বীকৃত মেডিকেল চিকিৎসক বা স্বীকৃত ডেন্টাল চিকিৎসক হিসাবে এই আইনের অধীনে নিবন্ধন, অথবা নিবন্ধন করিবার উদ্যোগ গ্রহন, অথবা মিথ্যা বা প্রতারণামূলক প্রতিনিধিত্ব প্রকাশ করিবার চেষ্টা করেন অথবা মৌখিক বা লিখিতভাবে উক্তরূপ ঘোষনা করেন, তাহা হইলে উক্ত ব্যক্তির অনুরূপ কার্য হইবে একটি অপরাধ, এবং তজ্জন্য তিনি ৩ (তিন) বৎসর কারাদন্ড অথবা ১ (এক) লক্ষ টাকা অর্থদন্ড বা উভয় দন্ডে দন্ডনীয় হইবেন" ।

এমতাবস্থায় তিনি নিজেকে চিকিৎসক বলিয়া পরিচয় দিতে কিংবা চিকিৎসা কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা করিতে পারিবেন না। তিনি যদি চিকিৎসা কার্য চালাইয়া যান তাহা হইলে আইন প্রয়োগকারী সংস্থাসমূহকে সকলকে অবহিত করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাইতেছে।

Hossain 29.05.24
ডাঃ মোঃ লিয়াকত হোসেন
রেজিস্ট্রার (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)
বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Another display of abuse of power

Chattogram councillor found involved in illicit cigarette market

An investigative report by this paper has brought to light another disgraceful case of power abuse by a public official. A councillor of Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) and his brother have been found to be involved in illicit cigarette market, having majority stakes in two companies that have a significant share in this market. As indicated by an ongoing investigation by the NBR's Central Intelligence Cell (CIC), the two companies have been making fake versions of foreign brands and putting counterfeit banderoles on their cigarette packs. These fake cigarettes have entered major markets, including Dhaka and Chattogram, where they are being sold at lower prices compared to the authentic ones.

As this is an illicit trade, the country loses about $100 million in tax revenue, and the two companies are largely responsible for it. CIC officials suspect that they have been evading tax by illegally importing raw materials through phantom entities. What is more surprising is that a city corporation councillor could have carried out such activities undetected. Obviously, his position gave him a great deal of impunity and power to carry on without any hindrance. It is laudable that the NBR took the initiative to investigate allegations that the two companies were selling fake brands of cigarettes. Our report in this regard has further revealed a complex web of illegal activities involving the two.

In the last few weeks, such blatant examples of abuse of power to enhance personal wealth have been exposed through the media. A recently murdered MP was allegedly involved in a massive gold smuggling racket. A former army chief was sanctioned by the US Department accusing him of engaging in corruption and assisting his brother to evade accountability for criminal activities. A former IGP and his family members were accused of amassing 114 acres of land among other possessions.

That these individuals in such prime seats of power could abuse their position for so long and so blatantly demonstrates the lack of accountability of public officials in a system that enables criminal behaviour. It seems being connected to power automatically gives individuals a shield of immunity, allowing them to go on violating the law for personal gain. This serves to amplify the anxiety and insecurity of the ordinary people whose interests these public officials and leaders were supposed to protect.

It should be recognised that relevant state organisations are trying to unravel some of these cases of unbridled corruption. But this is more likely to be the tip of the iceberg for public officials involved in illegal activities. Unless the government clamps down on the criminal activities of all those in powerful public positions, the hydra of corruption will continue to grow exponentially, damaging the country's image abroad and leading to a nation that is haemorrhaging economically and morally.

Sylhet flood victims need urgent help

Govt must critically assess the situation, intervene properly

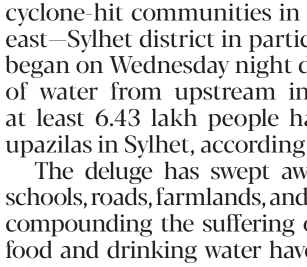
We're worried about the evolving flood situation in Sylhet that came hard on the heels of another severe calamity in the form of Cyclone Remal earlier last week, the effects of which are still very much felt. While the nation's focus remained fixed on cyclone-hit communities in southern Bangladesh, the north-east—Sylhet district in particular—was hit by flash floods that began on Wednesday night due to torrential rains and onrush of water from upstream in India's Meghalaya. Since then, at least 6.43 lakh people have been marooned across eight upazilas in Sylhet, according to a report by this daily.

The deluge has swept away many houses and submerged schools, roads, farmlands, and fish enclosures in about 48 unions, compounding the suffering of the victims. Acute shortages of food and drinking water have been reported. True, the district administration set up 547 shelters—housing about 3,739 people on Friday, down from 4,802 the previous night—but many more people are in need of shelter, support and rehabilitation. The stories of some of the villagers approached by this daily are heart-wrenching yet familiar, as flash floods triggered by water influx from upstream areas as well as lack of preparation on our side have ravaged these communities many times in the past, most notably during the devastating 2022 flood that went down as a "once-in-122-years weather event" in the region.

While the geopolitics of transboundary river management can complicate things for a region dealing with such events, many after the recent flood have rightly questioned the government's preparations, especially its river dredging programmes which are supposed to help manage water flow and reduce erosions. Experts have also highlighted the importance of preventing encroachments on floodplains that have been quite prevalent in recent years. Clearly, we need to consider both short-term and long-term interventions as we prepare for yet another monsoon season.

Right now, the priority is to ensure that the affected communities in Sylhet, especially those stranded, have food, clean water and medical supplies delivered to them as soon as possible. Since the floodwaters have begun to recede in many areas, the administration must also focus on repairing critical infrastructure including roads and schools. Many have lost their homes and means of livelihood, so they will require financial assistance to rebuild their lives. The district administration and local representatives must engage with all villagers to ensure that they get the help they deserve.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Elizabeth II crowned queen

On this day in 1953, 27-year-old Elizabeth II, the elder daughter of King George VI, was crowned queen of the United Kingdom at Westminster Abbey, having taken the throne upon her father's death in February 1952.

50 percent of the world's jute is produced in Bangladesh. PHOTO: **STAR**

A symbol of our degradation

It is a rare instance in the world when a country is sending its raw materials—jute in the case of Bangladesh—abroad without utilising it themselves

Dr Serajul Islam Choudhury
is professor emeritus,
Dhaka University.

SERAJUL ISLAM CHOUDHURY

A truly unforgettable representation of the poor farmer can be found in the character Gafur from Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's short story "Mahesh." While a century has passed, this Gafur is still present today, in the same old form, for the kind of suffering may have changed but the cause has not. And the reason is our prevailing social system.

Over a hundred years ago, Gafur fled his village for the city in the dead of night, to work at a jute mill. He didn't want to go at all. Gafur was deeply worried that Amina, his only child—that too motherless—wouldn't survive in the slums where jute mill workers lived. But he still had to go, because he had committed a terrible crime in a village ruled by a Brahmin landlord: he had killed a cow. It wasn't as if the cow belonged to someone else, it was his own. He had named it Mahesh.

As the story goes, Mahesh was extremely close to Gafur, whose ancestors were weavers. The East India Company had swallowed up the looms, so Gafur had to become a farmer. But he didn't have the materials needed to farm. There was no land, and his plough was broken. He had put his trust in Mahesh, who had grown old. There was a severe drought in the village, and drinking water was hard to come by. Amina had a lot of trouble fetching water from the distant tube-well. She had to walk carefully, lest she touched a high-caste Hindu woman by mistake. On a hot summer afternoon, she brought a pitcher of water, and a parched Mahesh broke the pitcher while drinking. Blinded by anger, ego, and grief, Gafur hit Mahesh on the head with the share of his broken plough. Mahesh died immediately after, forcing Gafur to flee the village.

The Gafur of that time, who was from West Bengal, living near the capital Kolkata, could still put his faith in jute. There were many jute mills around Kolkata, jute used to come from East Bengal, while the mills were in Kolkata. It was the only marketable asset of East Bengal to speak of, before and after partition. But East Bengal wouldn't get the profit from the sale of that jute: it went to Karachi, then to Rawalpindi. A new capital was built in Rawalpindi, partly from the money obtained from selling jute. Jute money also started buying weapons, which, in 1971, were used against the unfortunate East Bengal. Being from West Bengal, Gafur was at least able to get a job in a jute mill. If he were a resident of present-day East Bengal, he wouldn't have even gotten that.

There is jute, but no jute mill: in this circumstance, a few mills were set up in East Bengal after 1947. Knowing that there would be good profit, two or three of the 22 famous industrial families of the time invested in the jute industry. And, indeed, the profits were good. Adamjee's mill was said to be the best, not only in Asia but also the world. After Bangladesh's independence in 1971, many mills were closed down. Meanwhile, Adamjee's fall was monumental. However, Adamjee did not fall because of its workers, it fell because of mismanagement.

The main reason behind the high yields of jute is the labour of farmers. PHOTO: **SUZIT KUMAR DAS**

The Bangalee managers, after gaining independence, embarked on committing such robbery that far from profits, it became "impossible" to manage losses. Adamjee fell, but almost immediately across the border in West Bengal, there was a flurry of new jute mills. And the jute went from Bangladesh. The old system was revived: raw material were from here, but the factories were there. Right after independence, Adamjee's non-Bangalee general manager—who was very efficient—moved to the other side, and was welcomed graciously by industrialists there. Who will confirm whether this was part of an alleged Pakistani conspiracy after independence?

In an independent Bangladesh, jute mills were either closing down one by one or going under private ownership. It was understood that capitalism had been liberated; it would not tolerate any obstacles and would display its ruthless activities. Privatising state factories was government policy. Even though the government changed several times after independence, the policy did not. Those responsible for looking after state industries were the ones who transferred them to private entities. Some officials of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation received cash bribes, some were given ownership of the mills. The good people just watched on with their eyes wide open.

After independence, it was even heard that jute has no future: it will walk the path of the once-famous indigo. But that did not happen; it survived, because jute possesses utility. It is eco-friendly. On the contrary, polythene and plastic are engaged in constant hostility against nature. And it's not like only sacks are made from jute: it's also used for making carpets, clothes, and furniture. And that's why jute did not fall to its demise. It is being cultivated in large quantities in other countries. But still, 50 percent of the world's jute is produced in Bangladesh. However, other countries do not want to export their jute. India strictly does not export at all, but Bangladesh does.

It's a rare instance in the world that a country is sending its raw materials to foreign nations without utilising it themselves. Most of the jute is exported to our good friend and great neighbour India. The country procures the best consignment of jute at cheap prices during peak season, while Bangladesh is left with the worst quality of jute, with which it is impossible to produce excellent products. According to experts, 78.54 percent of the total raw jute exports in the world now go from Bangladesh. The market for jute products is growing, but Bangladesh has been cornered. Neither are its jute products of high quality, nor is there any state effort to enter the market.

The main reason why government jute mills are incurring losses is the corruption of managers. They come to the market late to buy jute, by which time the good jute has already been sold. They buy low-quality jute for cheap but show high prices on paper. Jute is bought from areas near the mills but the account states faraway places, so that travel and vehicle expenses are high. The surplus money goes into their pockets, and so, losses are inevitable. As a result, workers don't get their salaries, and frustrated, they go on strike. Production stops, losses mount, and the field is set for the establishment to be padlocked, or sold off to the private sector at a dismal price.

In comparison, private mills are doing well, the main reason being they employ cheap labour. They don't want Gafur; they want Gafur's teenage daughter Amina. Because Amina doesn't know how to negotiate, and if she disagrees, there are other Aminas at the ready. Amina will work like a slave, the way tea plantation workers do. Another secret of private profits is tax evasion. Their skills in this regard are immense. Besides, they can't think of buying rotten jute from the market; they buy the best, and as a result, the product quality is better. It's also heard that some stamp India's seal on their products, hoping to get a slice of that market.

The bustling jute industry of the Pakistan period is now on the verge of destruction. When the country was divided in 1947, many thought East Bengal would not survive. How could it? Where were its factories? It could only rely on paddy and jute. Rice would provide the food, and money would come from jute. Although the plan to get money from jute didn't work out that well, paddy did save us. The main reason behind this wasn't nature, but rather the labour of farmers. The same is true for the high yields of jute.

After independence, the US said Bangladesh would be a basket case, while many others grinned and nodded. But the reason the country did not drown, and even made some sort of progress, is down to the farmers. Most of those who go to distant countries, take on inhumane jobs, and send money back without having proper meals themselves are also children of peasant families.

These families fought in 1971. After March 25, the invaders quickly took possession of our big cities, but faced trouble while attacking the villages. The groundwork for the invaders' defeat was laid in the villages, although the theatre of surrender was staged in the capital. Most of the three million people whose sacrifice we boast of were farmers and their children. Most of the three lakh women who have lost their dignity were the wives and daughters of labourers. This should always be remembered.

Translated from Bangla by Shoaib Ahmed Sayam.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Subscription:
01711623906

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bangla.thedailystar.net/

Are we ready for generic drug names on prescriptions?

The Institute of Health Economics (IHE) at the University of Dhaka recently held a policy discussion titled, "Can the Use of Generic Names in Prescriptions Effectively Control Aggressive Drug Marketing in Bangladesh?" **Dr Syed Abdul Hamid**, *professor of IHE and moderator of the dialogue, talked to* **Tamanna Khan** *of* **The Daily Star** *about the pros and cons of using generic drug names.*

What are some of the main concerns about drug sales that came up in this discussion?

There are over 250 functional drugs manufacturing companies that need to sell the products they are making. Now, how are they selling these drugs?

Medical representatives or promotional officers of pharmaceutical companies go to doctors, medicine shops, or quacks and request them to write the name of their company's drugs in the prescriptions. Initially, they (medical reps) used to provide samples. According to the guideline (code of pharmaceutical marketing practice), samples as well as leaflets or flyers on the drugs can be given because a doctor needs to know about the drugs.

Later, because of the presence of a large number of pharmaceutical companies, competition increased among them, and at one point, perhaps one pharmaceutical company started giving gifts to doctors on different occasions. This (gift-giving) now reached such an extent that samples are not given to everyone. Only junior doctors or those who do not have a well-established practice in the market receive samples. Those who have well-established practices often receive incentives such as expensive gifts, monthly allowances, cars or flats from pharmaceutical companies to prescribe their products.

The companies also try to differently incentivise those who are not qualified to write prescriptions—such as quacks or pharmacy shops. Top companies, or the brands we consider as good, do not give a lot of incentive to the pharmacies because their drugs are of good quality. Drugstores get a better commission by selling drugs of companies that are not well-known to the public. They get more commission from new companies or companies that do not yet produce drugs of a certain standard.

The way pharmaceutical companies are marketing their products in our country, they end up spending a lot of money on marketing. That cost is reflected in the (drug) price. So, people end up buying medicine at a higher price.

PHOTO: **COURTESY**

The term 'bioequivalence' came up in discussion. What does it mean?

There are many companies that manufacture drugs. There are variations in their products in terms of quality. All these drugs have the approval of the DGDA (Directorate General of Drug Administration). Since these drugs have been marketed with the DGDA's approval, the quality of these drugs is not supposed to be bad. But the DGDA cannot guarantee that all the drugs in the market are of the same or similar quality. The reason is, before giving permission, the DGDA cannot get a main test conducted, which is the bioequivalence test.

Through bioequivalence, the generic drug's biomass and concentration level in blood plasma are compared to the original researched product. That means how much of the (generic) drug is being absorbed by the body. If it is seen that the difference is within a permissible limit, then it is considered to be a bioequivalent tested drug. If the drug is similar to the original drug in terms of effectiveness and efficacy, then we can assume that the (generic) drug is of good quality.

If all the drugs in the market passed the bioequivalence test, then we could assume that the quality of all these drugs are similar. Under that circumstance, if a doctor writes the generic name and I take it (the prescription) to the pharmacy, all the drugs in the pharmacy will be of good quality, because they are bioequivalence tested. If this test is not done, then if I go to a shop where the brand name is not mentioned, then the pharmacist becomes responsible for suggesting a quality product.

Now the thousands of pharmacies we have in our country do not have any pharmacist. Under this situation, if generic names are written in the prescription, then the power will shift from the doctors' hands to the salesman of the pharmacies. Since they are not trained and educated like their counterparts in other countries, then rationally they will push the low-standard drugs because the bad companies give them more incentive and commission.

Why is it possible to conduct bioequivalence tests on medicine exported from our country, but not on the products sold in local market?

All the countries we export to have bodies like our DGDA and they make it mandatory—that they will accept the medicine only if it passes the bioequivalence test. Most of the companies in our country get the test done from India. But the European or American market specifies the location for getting the bioequivalence tests done. All the products we export are exported after conducting the bioequivalence test. But for the about Tk 200 billion drug market for local consumers, the drugs sold are not quality-tested. The quality of a drug is considered good because it cures diseases, but the drugs are not quality-tested.

The cost of the bioequivalence test is not that much. It is about Tk 20-30 lakh. Now the question is, if we want to do bioequivalence tests for all our products, can we do it in our country? My answer will be "no", because we do not have enough institutions that will conduct the test. Currently, there are three to four functional institutions that can do the test. The number and quality of these institutions need to increase. We will also need a regulatory body to monitor the bioequivalence testing companies, which must have national and international accreditation.

Now the thousands of pharmacies we have in our country do not have any pharmacist. Under this situation, if generic names are written in the prescription, then the power will shift from the doctors' hands to the salesman of the pharmacies. Since they are not trained and educated like their counterparts in other countries, then rationally they will push the low-standard drugs because the bad companies give them more incentive and commission.

How advantageous would the use of generic names be when pharmaceutical companies also market to village doctors and pharmacies, who serve a large population segment?

That is one of the reasons why there is no opportunity to prescribe drugs using generic names in Bangladesh at this moment.

Now, the pharmaceutical companies are running after doctors to make them write their brand name in the prescriptions, then they will run after pharmacies or drugstores to push them to sell their drugs. Currently, only the small companies give more commission. Then if generic names are used, the big companies too will have to give more commission. At present, the doctors are getting the incentive, but then people connected to drug stores will get direct or indirect incentives.

But there is opportunity to write prescriptions using generic names in organisations, where people have the option to buy drugs from within the institutions like they do in Evercare or Combined Military Hospital (CMH). The precondition to implement the use of generic names on prescriptions is that the quality of all our drugs must be similar. All the pharmaceutical companies that produce the same kind of drugs must conduct the bioequivalent test to make the drugs similar.

Multilateral institutions aren't doing enough for climate justice

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MIZAN R KHAN

The Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank convened during the third week of April, 2024. This is the first time the meeting failed to have an agreed communique, because of dissensus among member states on a number of geopolitical issues. A stock take was done about the evolution of the World Bank's mission to better respond to global challenges. The series of meetings focused on issues like the capital expansion of the multilateral financial institutions (MFIs) for addressing global challenges like climate change and the soaring debt burdens, both of which are related to the functioning of the Bretton Woods system.

First about enhanced financing for global development by the World Bank: a pledge to increase funding by more than $5 billion a year, so this could potentially generate up to $50 billion of investment for tackling global challenges over the next decade. Besides, the 10 heads of multilateral development banks (MDBs) also agreed to generate an additional $300-400 billion over the next decade to finance global development including climate change and SDGs. The MDB heads pledged to boost climate actions that include designing the first common approach to measuring outcomes and aligning their operations to the Paris Agreement goals. Also, they agreed to jointly report on climate financing and their engagement in achieving the new collective goal on climate finance. Another initiative was taken where 11 rich countries committed to a new Livable Planet Fund totalling $11 billion to support the SDGs, which is expected to leverage six to seven times more money over the coming decade. Pressure has been mounting for reforms of the MFIs in the hopes of boosting climate finance through measures such as grants and low-cost loans, special drawing rights, and co-investment with the private sector.

The IMF and the World Bank are taking an increasing interest in climate financing, where spending by the World Bank reached almost $32 billion in 2022. Now the IMF has its Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST), created last year to provide long-term concessional financing for adaptation and energy transition, under which a number of countries, including Bangladesh, reached an agreement. However, these steps are extremely short of the growing needs for addressing the increasing impacts of climate change. There are estimates of $2.4 trillion a year needed by 2030 to shift on to a decarbonisation track, that is compatible with limiting average temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

But the supply continues to witness a shortfall. Still, the Global South does not agree that the long-pledged climate finance of $100 billion goal has been met. Against this, in 2024, debt repayment that developing countries are likely to pay will be over $400 billion, which is $50 billion more than they are expected to get as new grants and loans. So, there is a net outflow of direly needed resources from the Global South, particularly from the LICs. Today, about 60 percent of low-income countries are either in debt distress or at high risk of it. A new UN report on SDG financing shows how prioritising debt over basic services like food, health care and education plagues the developing world, and that for the least-developed countries, debt service will amount to $40 billion annually between 2023 and 2025, up more than 50 percent from $26 billion in 2022. More frequent and destructive climate disasters account for more than half of the debt in these vulnerable countries. Against this, the UN Chief warns of growing inequalities, and trust in institutions and solidarity between developing and developed countries as "low and falling." So, Guterres is calling for mobilising $500 billion a year of additional investments in sustainable development and climate action.

While attending the meetings, President-designate Mukhtar Babayev of COP29 emphasised that climate finance remained the top priority for the Baku Summit, expecting the flow of climate finance to increase by "several multiples." In a similar vein, the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) executive secretary talks of the need for a "quantum leap" in climate finance. So, a small group of nations led by Barbados, France and Kenya met on the side lines to push for more taxes on fossil fuel burning that developing nations could use to deal with climate shocks. Besides, discussions are ongoing about some levies on air travel and maritime transport for mobilising extrabudgetary resources.

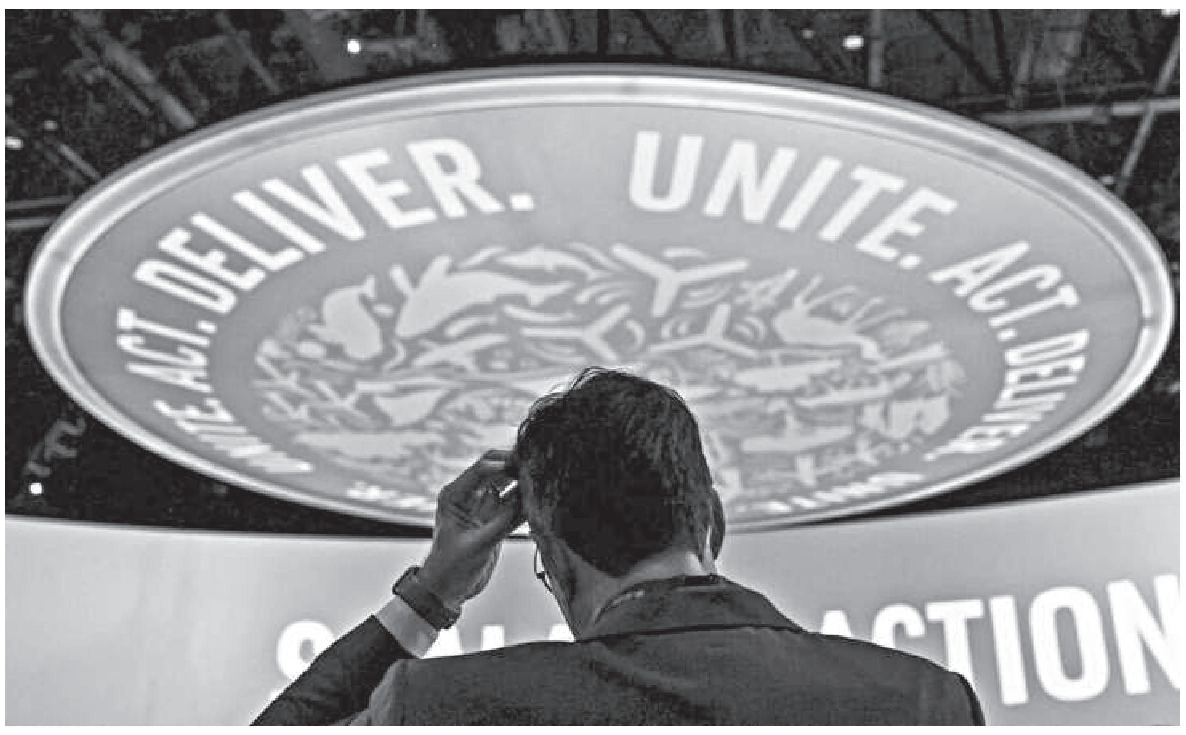


PHOTO: **REUTERS**

A person attends the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The meeting also reviewed the Global Sovereign Debt Roundtable (GSDR) initiated last year to accelerate negotiations on debt restructuring through negotiations among major creditors including China and a diverse group of private investors. At the end, the reforms must include the provision of grants for adaptation in the most impacted countries, debt cancellation for the most debt distressed ones, long term concessional loans and changes in the lending practices of MDBs that allow capital flowing back to developing countries. The reform also has to include putting climate-resilient debt clauses in loan agreements, with suspension of debt repayments during the time a country recovers.

But frustrations from the leaders of low-and middle-income countries keep mounting. Mia Mottley, the Barbados Prime Minister who is most vocal about MFI reforms with the Bridgetown Initiative, accuses developed countries of double-speak—manifest in them telling lower income countries to refrain from doing things like not printing money, yet during the Covid-19 pandemic, they did not shy away from it themselves. Sermonising of doing not what they do, but doing what they tell the developing countries to do. She also alleges that the development paradigm still reflects the colonial framework of power relationships. In a similar vein, Amina Mohammed, the deputy UN secretary general, asked whether the responses of the MFIs reflect "one humanity", or if there is a deviation of our "moral compass".

This deviation is evident in the acute dearth of political will, not money. We may recall the lesson that Adam Smith, the father of "classical economics" taught us, that interests either at individual or national levels are bounded with one another. To realise our interests, we need to respect the interests of others in a free market system, upon which our climate regime is founded. Are we doing it? So, the billion-dollar question today before humanity is—how can the moral compass be directed to reverse the dysfunctional world order, as the UN Chief calls it.

Enhancing well-being through therapeutic activities for individuals with Alzheimer's disease

Therapeutic activities play a vital role in enhancing the well-being of individuals with Alzheimer's disease, promoting happiness, relaxation, and overall health. These activities encompass a broad range of actions, from physical presence and social interaction to engaging in arts and crafts or interacting with pets.

Engaging in therapeutic activities can improve cognitive functioning, thereby enhancing the individual's ability to perform daily tasks and reducing the risk of emotional disorders. Moreover, these activities contribute to maintaining or improving the individual's quality of life, which is beneficial for both the person with Alzheimer's and their carers.

While it can be challenging to measure the exact effectiveness of therapeutic activities, it is essential to recognise that responses vary among individuals with Alzheimer's. Therefore, it is crucial to tailor activities to the person's interests, capabilities, and stage of the disease.

Starting therapeutic activities early in the disease progression is recommended, as individuals with Alzheimer's may begin to withdraw from normal activities before it becomes necessary. Customised activity plans based on the person's preferences and abilities should be developed, with regular assessments of hearing and vision to ensure effective communication during these activities.

Throughout the stages of Alzheimer's, various types of activities can be beneficial. In the early stages, cognitive, physical, social, expressive, and memory-based activities, such as trivia, fitness routines, storytelling, and cooking favourite recipes, can be particularly helpful.

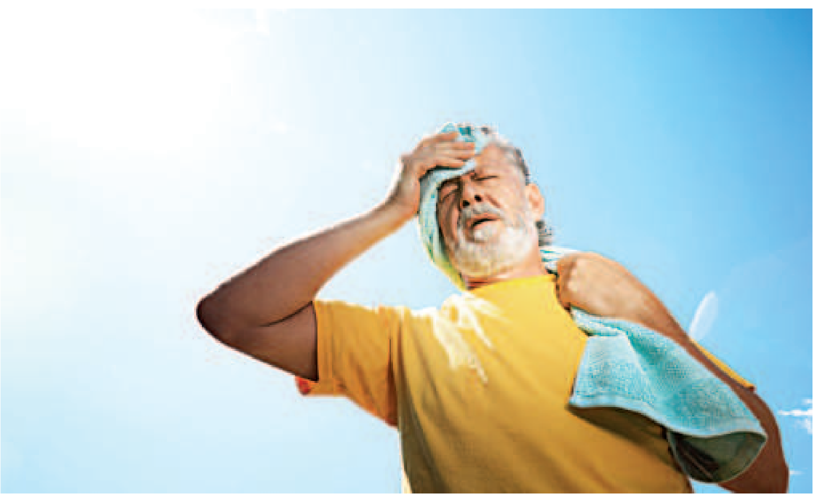
In the moderate stage, daily living tasks like folding laundry and sorting items, as well as activities like pet playdates and arts classes, can provide meaningful engagement. In the severe stage, focusing on sensory stimulation, such as listening to music or enjoying aromatherapy, becomes crucial for promoting quality of life.

Overall, adapting therapeutic activities to the individual's changing needs and abilities is key to maximising their benefits and enhancing their well-being throughout the progression of Alzheimer's disease.

MANAGING EXTREME HEAT

Understanding risks and protective measures

PROF GOLAM NABI



Globally, the environment is changing very rapidly, and one of its effects is the change in atmospheric temperature. In the last few decades, we did not face such hot and humid weather. Nowadays, temperatures surge up to 41–42°C, and due to high humidity, it feels like 44–45°C, which makes our lives miserable, especially for the elderly and children.

In health, the body core temperature is maintained at 37°C by the hypothalamic regulatory center. Heat is produced by cellular metabolism and lost through the skin by both vasodilatation and sweating, as well as through the lungs in expired air. Profuse sweating occurs when the ambient temperature is greater than 32.5°C and during exercise. The evaporation of sweat is a vital mechanism for cooling the body. If we stay for a long time in this weather, the following things happen:

Heat acclimatisation: Acclimatisation to hot climates takes several weeks. Sweat volume increases, and its salt content falls. Increased evaporation cools down the body.

Heat cramps: Painful muscle (usually leg) cramps often occur in well-acclimatised, fit young people when they exercise in hot weather. Cramps are due to low extracellular sodium caused by the replenishment of water but not salt during prolonged sweating. They can be prevented by increasing dietary salt and responding to combined salt and water replacement.

Heat illness (Heat exhaustion): In high environmental temperatures, particularly with high humidity, vigorous exercise in clothing that inhibits heat loss can provoke a sudden elevation in core temperature. Weakness, exhaustion, dizziness, and syncope, with a core temperature >37°C, define heat illness. Temperature elevation is more important than water and sodium loss. Heat illness may progress to heat injury. Management involves removing oneself from the heat source, cooling with cold sponging and fans, and giving oxygen by mask if possible. Oral rehydration with salt and water (ORS) is given in the first 24 hours. In severe heat illness, IV fluids are needed, and isotonic saline is given depending on serum sodium. Careful monitoring is required. Secondary potassium loss must be corrected.

Heat injury (Heat stroke): Heat injury is an acute, life-threatening situation when the core temperature is >41°C. There is a headache, nausea, vomiting, and weakness. When the skin is hot, sweating is often absent but not invariable, even in severe heat injuries. Brain involvement leads to confusion, delirium, and coma. Heat injury develops in hot, humid, windless climates, even without exercise in appropriate clothing. Old age, diabetes, and certain drugs (alcohol, anticholinergics, diuretics, and phenothiazines) are precipitating factors. The pathogenesis of heat injury includes a fall in cardiac output, lactic acidosis, and intravascular coagulation. Management involves removing oneself from the hot area immediately, cooling with sponging and ice packs, and giving fluids with caution, as hypovolemia is often absent. Prompt treatment is essential and leads to rapid and complete recovery; delay may be fatal. Prevention involves acclimatisation, fluid intake, and common sense.

These problems can be fatal and have grave consequences. Although we cannot change the weather or temperature, we can protect ourselves with the following measures:

- Avoid direct sun exposure; use umbrellas or caps when going out.
- Drink plenty of water, and always carry a water bottle.
- Restrict school children's outdoor activities; ensure well-ventilated classrooms with adequate fans or AC if possible. Teachers should ensure children drink frequently.
- Advise the elderly to stay hydrated and indoors.
- Arrange small water tanks in residential areas for street walkers and rickshaw pullers.
- Encourage affluent individuals to distribute bottled water to passersby in their communities.
- Ensure hospitals and clinics are trained to handle heat stroke cases effectively.

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MANAGING ECZEMA

Essential tips for relief

Dealing with eczema involves adopting specific habits to alleviate symptoms. Here are some essential tips:

1. Keep your nails short: Trim and file your nails smooth to avoid skin damage from scratching. If necessary, use your hand's side or top to scratch.

2. Cool down: Use a refrigerated washcloth to numb itchy skin and reduce redness. For added relief, store moisturising creams in the fridge.

3. Wear natural fabrics: Choose breathable materials like cotton, bamboo, silk, or Tencel. Avoid wool and synthetic fabrics that trap heat and cause sweating.

4. Stay cool at night: Use all-cotton, bamboo, or silk sheets to regulate body temperature and prevent nighttime itching.

5. Choose loose clothing: To avoid rubbing and irritation, wear loose-fitting clothes. Opt for fabric-covered elastic waistbands and simple bra styles.

6. Wash new clothes: To remove irritating chemicals from new garments, wash them with unscented, mild detergent before wearing. An extra rinse cycle helps eliminate residues.

7. Alter itchy clothes: Remove tags and cover seams with silk strips. Turn clothes inside out at home to avoid itchy seams.

8. Nighttime hand care: Soak hands in warm water, apply fragrance-free cream, and wear cotton gloves overnight to lock in moisture.

9. Shower at night: Take a short, lukewarm shower before bed, and apply moisturiser within three minutes to keep skin hydrated.

10. To avoid drying out your skin, use gentle, fragrance-free soaps without alcohol, retinoids, or AHA.

11. Mind where you sit: To protect your skin on rough surfaces like grass or scratchy upholstery, use a towel or blanket.

12. Relax and destress: To manage stress, which can worsen eczema, incorporate relaxation techniques like meditation, walking, or listening to music.

Implementing these tips can help manage eczema more effectively, leading to improved comfort and symptom control.

Understanding and treating hyperpigmentation

Hyperpigmentation is a common skin concern characterised by dark patches caused by excess pigment within the skin due to increased melanin production. Melanin, responsible for skin colour, can become irregularly dispersed, leading to hyperpigmentation.

Post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH) often occurs after skin injury or inflammation, particularly in darker skin tones, lasting longer and being more severe. Melasma, another common cause, manifests as tan patches on sun-exposed areas of the face, often linked to hormonal changes and sun exposure. Photoaging, resulting from cumulative sunlight exposure, presents as sun spots or lentigines on chronically sun-damaged skin.

Treating hyperpigmentation requires patience and sun protection. Sunscreen with SPF30+ is essential to prevent exacerbations from UV exposure. While many hyperpigmentation types resolve over time, fading can take months or years.

Topical treatments like hydroquinone, retinoids, and vitamin C, along with procedures such as chemical peels and laser therapy, aid in resolution. Treatment efficacy varies based on the underlying cause, and prescription-strength management may be necessary in some cases.

Consulting a skincare expert helps determine the most suitable treatment approach and ensures safe and effective management.

Rights of disabled children in Bangladesh

RABEYA FERDOUS

Every child has the right to live independently. In Bangladesh, there is a significant population of disabled children, with 1.7 percent of children living with one of twelve defined disability conditions. However, disabled children in Bangladesh often lack proper facilities and face various challenges in their daily lives.

Security: Children need access to their five basic needs - food, shelter, education, clothing, and medical care.

Stability: A stable environment fosters healthy development in children.

Consistency: Maintaining a consistent routine helps children build confidence.

Emotional support: Emotional support from parents enhances a child's trust, respect, self-esteem, and independence.

Love: Balancing love and discipline is crucial for a child's well-being.

Education: Access to education is essential for a child's growth.

Positive role models: Positive role models provide guidance and support for children.

Structure: A structured environment boosts a child's confidence and development.

In Bangladesh, the Disability Act of 2013 aims to protect the rights of people with disabilities, including children. Despite this, disabled children still face challenges, with estimates ranging from less than 1.4% to 17.5% of children in Bangladesh being disabled.

The Disability Act 2013 outlines various rights for disabled individuals, including:

- Full and thriving life.
- Equal recognition and justice.
- Right of inheritance.
- Freedom of expression, opinion, and information.
- Accessibility.
- Participation at social, economic, and national levels.
- Education facilities and participation.
- Job accessibility.
- Compensation for disability during employment.
- Protection and facilities for a safe environment.
- Proper healthcare facilities.
- Legal and educational accommodations.
- Access to social facilities.
- Dependent care and rehabilitation.
- Participation in culture, entertainment, tourism, leisure, and sports.
- Bengali sign language access.
- Right to confidentiality.
- National identification, enrollment, and voting rights.
- Any other rights granted by the government.

Despite government efforts, disabled individuals still face challenges, including social isolation and stigma. However, there is a growing focus on rehabilitation services and improving the situation for disabled individuals in Bangladesh.

The writer is an occupational therapist at the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospitals (NINS & H).
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What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV AND STAR SPORTS 1,2,3
T20 World Cup
USA vs Canada
Live from 6:30 am
West Indies vs Papua New Guinea
Live from 8:30 pm

SONY SPORTS 2,3,5
French Open
Fourth round
Live from 3:00 pm

USA

USA will be featuring in a T20 World Cup for the first time and also have 12 players in the 30-plus age group.

Corey Anderson, who played the final of the 2015 ODI World Cup for New Zealand, will represent the USA. They also have former Canada captain Nitish Roenick Kumar, who had represented Canada at the 2010 Under-19 World Cup Qualifiers.

CANADA

Like their neighbours, Canada will be making their first ever appearance in a T20 World Cup.

Their squad is packed with experience, with 12 players aged 30 or more. No other team comprise more players in that age category. Discounting the reserves, their 15-member squad contains five players aged 35 or more.

USA promise ‘fearless cricket’ in World Cup debut

AFP, *Dallas*

The USA will make their debut in the T20 World Cup against Canada on Saturday and vice-captain Aaron Jones said they were determined to play a ‘fearless’ brand of cricket.

Both teams are making their first appearances in the expanded 20-team competition but there is particular pressure on the USA, as tournament co-hosts, with the West Indies, to deliver a strong showing on home soil.

The explosive, short format of the game, is seen by cricket’s leaders as being the perfect version to capture the imagination of mainstream American sports fans and Jones, who was born in New York and later moved to Barbados before coming back to the USA, says the team doesn’t want to be afraid of going on the attack.

“Fearless cricket, positive cricket, smart cricket. I think that’s what we’re really and truly trying to do,” Jones told a press conference.

“We don’t want to regret anything. We want to leave everything out there in the park. And then, obviously, if we come out on top, it’s great. If we don’t come out on top, that’s how cricket goes sometimes. But we don’t want to regret anything,” he added.

The two North American teams have been drawn into a tough group however with India and Pakistan the clear favourites to be the two teams who qualify for the Super Eight stage.

However the results turn out, it is a landmark moment for the USA team to be in an elite competition after decades of being stuck in minor tournaments.

“We’ve been speaking over the last couple of years about playing in World Cups, about getting test status, about taking USA cricket to higher heights,” said Jones.

SAMMY at the helm to renew West Indies hopes

AGENCIES

West Indies begin their T20 World Cup mission under Darren Sammy with a Group C fixture against a relatively feeble Papua New Guinea at the Providence Stadium in Guyana on Sunday.

The Windies are now looking for redemption under the guidance of Sammy, a coach who knows what it takes to win the T20 World Cup after he captained them to the title in 2012 and 2016.

The co-hosts will look to bury the heartbreak of failing to qualify for last year’s 50-over World Cup. The glory years of West Indian cricket are long gone as the team that won the first two editions of the 50-over World Cup did not even make the cut for last year’s tournament in India - the first time ever that they had missed the event.

Sammy was appointed as West Indies’ limited-overs coach in May last year after the resignation of Phil Simmons following their first-round exit at the 2022 T20 World Cup.

While the 40-year-old will be desperate to get West Indies back on top of the world, he hopes his bowlers can step up and make the most of home advantage.

“Bowlers have been under the pump,” the former all-rounder told Reuters in a telephone interview from his T20 World Cup trophy tour in Saint Lucia.

“It’s not just the young bowlers, every single international bowler has been under pressure.

“Look at the IPL (Indian Premier League) right now. Teams are scoring 200 and it’s not a safe total. It tells you that the batters are really dominating T20 cricket now.

“The difference will be some X-factor bowlers. Whether that’s pace, whether that’s mystery spin you’d need that in your armoury in order to defend totals or restrict opponents.”

West Indies have never lacked firepower in the batting department and will be able to rely on the experience of Nicholas Pooran, Andre Russell and Shimron Hetmyer, among others.

In the opposite corner, Papua New Guinea come into the contest with an impeccable record of 14 wins in their last 18 games. They are led by the enterprising Assad Vala and are set to appear for the second time at the major event.

PNG maintained an unbeaten record in the qualifiers, winning six consecutive matches. With plenty of all-rounders in the squad, PNG have a versatile unit that can test the bigger teams in the group.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

On their path to ensuring a second appearance, PNG went unbeaten, topping the East Asia-Pacific Qualifier last year by winning six consecutive matches on home soil.

They have 10 survivors, including captain Assad Vala, from the 2021 campaign in which they lost all three matches.

WEST INDIES

West Indies have been the first team to win two T20 World Cups, and their current head coach Daren Sammy is Saint Lucia’s first international cricketer and remains the only player in history to have led the team in two victorious campaigns.

No team have defended the T20 World Cup crown yet but West Indies and Pakistan, as holders, advanced the farthest -- till the semifinals in 2014 and 2010, respectively.

SHORT CORNER

Ronaldo left in tears as Al-Hilal beat Al-Nassr to win Saudi Cup
Cristiano Ronaldo was in floods of tears after his Al Nassr side lost the King’s Cup final 5-4 on penalties to Al Hilal late on Friday, extending his Saudi Arabian trophy drought. Ronaldo, 39, then slowly walked off the pitch and sat in the dug-out with tears streaming down his face. Ronaldo failed to score in 120 minutes of the game which remained 1-1 after the end of extra-time but the forward converted his penalty in the shootout.

Shakib’s talent and two sides of Bangladesh cricket’s coin
Bangladesh’s ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is a veteran of eight T20 World Cups, stepping onto his ninth world event in the shortest format. The mercurial Bangladesh star was only 22 when he played his first T20 World Cup. Now at 37, Shakib is the lone member of the current side that played in the first T20 World Cup in 2007.

Dinesh Karthik draws curtains on long playing career
Dinesh Karthik announced his retirement from all cricket on social media, bringing an end to a professional career that began in the early 2000s.“I officially announce my retirement and put my playing days behind me as I square up for the new challenges that lie ahead,” Karthik said in a statement.

BCB reappoints Nawaz as Under-19 head coach
Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has reappointed Mohammed Naveed Nawaz as the head coach of the new under-19 team and he will also be working as a batting consultant for junior age-group teams, the board said in a press release on Saturday. He has been handed a two-year contract, which will be effective from June 1.

Australia skipper Marsh fit for World Cup opener
Australia skipper Mitchell Marsh has been declared fit for their opening match at the T20 World Cup, but he will not be bowling, coach Andrew McDonald said. The all-rounder headed home from the Indian Premier League in April with a hamstring injury and only made his return this week in two practice matches in Trinidad.

***Read full stories on The Daily Star’s website.*

‘It’s tough to play your best friend’

REUTERS, PARIS

Second seed Aryna Sabalenka temporarily put her friendship with Spaniard Paula Badosa on the back burner to secure a hard-fought 7-5, 6-1 third-round victory at the French Open on Saturday and keep alive her hopes of a maiden Roland Garros title.

The pair have enjoyed a strong bond since 2021 but there was no quarter given in a see-sawing first set as they swapped early breaks before Badosa attacked Sabalenka’s powerful serve in the sixth game, edging ahead with a return that hit the net cord.

“It’s tough to play your best friend. She’s an incredible player coming back after injury and I’m pretty sure she’s going to be back on top very soon,” said Sabalenka, who improved her head-to-head record with Badosa to 5-2.

“On court we’re opponents, I’m trying not to watch on the other side, just trying to focus on myself and just bring my best game, but anyway they’re tough matches against her.”

Sabalenka, who is bidding to become the first player since Serena Williams in 2015 to claim the Australian Open and Roland Garros titles in the same season, next faces American 14th seed Madison Keys or 22nd seed Emma Navarro.

Salahuddin’s masterclass to inspire coaches’ evolution

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Ariful Alam Khaled came to Dhaka from Chattogram’s Sandwip, an island located in the north-east of the Bay of Bengal, to attend a coaching workshop in Mirpur on Friday. Cricket has seeped into Bangladesh’s consciousness so greatly that the sport managed to wash ashore to Sandwip.

Ariful had set his sight on a coaching classas he aims to deliver something better to his students at Sandwip Cricket Academy. Thus he didn’t hesitate to travel by speedboat to Kumira, Sitakunda before boarding a bus to Dhaka.

As many as 12 students, each with a background different from Ariful, attended Prime Bank and Comilla Victorians’ coach Mohammad Salahuddin’s first workshop on Friday – titled Master the game with Mohammad Salahuddin -- organised by PhysioCare Wellness Centre.

It reflected the passion for cricket in the country, for in Sandwip, money and cricket coaching do not go hand in hand, Ariful informed. There are 150 students in the academy where he teaches but participation is sporadic.

“Yes, it’s a risk as a source of income because people there don’t know that in order to learn to play, you also need to pay. I’m doing it out of passion,” he said.

One of the participants involved former women’s national team skipper Jahanara Alam, who had a women’s Dhaka Premier League game on Saturday but took the time to do the evening workshop nonetheless.

Master the Game
with Salah Uddin
ORGANISED BY: PHYSIOCARE WELLNESS CENTRE
How can we get better as A COACH
SANDWIP CRICKET ACADEMY

“It’s a workshop based on level A. As you know, Australian and England players have already completed level 2 and when they finish playing, they go for level 3. When you have undergone courses, it will help make an impact in your game,” Jahanara told The Daily Star regarding taking the class, adding that coaching was an option for her in the future.

A mentor to many such as Bangladesh ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, Salahuddin wanted to pass on his knowledge and passion. His students seemed mesmerised during his three-hour session.

The dearth of local coaches who have been in national setups had been felt. The national team has not had many local coaches in the head coach role due to one reason or the other.

“Having coached for the last 25 years, I feel I have some responsibility so that coaches coming after me are better than me and can do something good for Bangladesh,” Salahuddin said.

“I think coaching education should be looked at seriously since we haven’t had a world-class coach yet. We have to improve the standards of coaches’ education system and if we don’t, we won’t go forward. We have been playing international cricket for a long time and we have a few players of international standard, but we are yet to get coaches of international standards. It’s not like this sector needs a lot of facilities,” he added.

He felt that local coaches have the ability and need guidance.

“We need more talented coaches than just talented players since you need to nurture talented players. Our local coaches are nursing talents at grassroots level and if they improve, these players would also do well,” he said.

The organisers intend to introduce online classes, further ushering hopes that young coaches like Ariful can attend workshops from afar and take Bangladesh forward.

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Noab honours 6 newspapers serving for 25, 50 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newspapers played a key role before the Liberation War and they continue to contribute to the building of the nation, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury said yesterday.

She made the remark at an event where the Newspaper Owners Association of Bangladesh (Noab) honoured six newspapers that have been serving the nation for 25 and 50 years.

The Sangbad, Ittefaq, Azadi, and Purbanchal are in circulation for over 50 years while Manab Zamin and Prothom Alo for over 25 years.

Addressing the event as the chief guest, Shirin said Noab is different from other associations because making profit is not the primary goal of the newspapers.

Newspapers are considered the guardians of democracy, she said.

Mohammad Ali Arafat, state minister for information and broadcasting, said, "We are open to criticisms... We have failures and we

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat and Noab President AK Azad with the editors and representatives of six dailies at a programme in the capital's Gulshan yesterday. The event was organised by Noab to hounur the newspapers for serving the nation for 25 and 50 years since their establishment. PHOTO: STAR

Govt missteps led to economic deterioration

Says Prof Muinul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A series of missteps taken by the government are to blame for the country's deteriorating economy, Muinul Islam, former professor of economics at Chittagong University, said yesterday.

Some quarters, who are now oligarchs by dint of blessings from the ruling class, have played major roles to bring on this crisis, he observed while presenting a keynote paper at a discussion programme.

Bangladesh Workers Party organised the event titled "Economic Reality of Bangladesh: Crisis and Ways of Transition" at the National Press Club in Dhaka.

Some kind of authoritarian rule is going on, and various policies were taken at the behest of some oligarchs, Muinul alleged mentioning some names.

Mentioning the name of one, he

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Benazir withdrew Tk 70-80cr before accounts were frozen

DIPAN NANDY

Former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed and his family withdrew at least Tk 70-80 crore within a month from their 33 bank accounts before they were frozen.

A source in the Anti-Corruption Commission, involved with the investigation of Benazir's illegally accumulated wealth, confirmed the findings to The Daily Star yesterday.

The ACC launched the inquiry into Benazir's alleged illegal wealth on April 18, when a three-member committee was also formed to probe the allegations.

"We've identified the [bank] accounts linked to Benazir, his wife Jissan Mirza and their two daughters Farheen Rishta Binte Benazir and Tahseen Raisa Binte Benazir. They include savings accounts, fixed deposit accounts and special notice deposits [SND].

"Some loan accounts were also found. Cash was withdrawn from the deposit accounts before the freezing took effect," the source said.

He further said some of Benazir's accounts were made "zero balance" but did not specify the number. "He might have anticipated that a directive to freeze his accounts may be issued," the source assumed, adding, "We're yet to learn the exact amount withdrawn from the bank accounts, but it could cross several hundred crores."

ACC Commissioner (Investigation) Md Jahurul Haque confirmed this information to The Daily Star, but he didn't specify the amount withdrawn.

"We've already frozen immovable and movable assets. But we discovered that money was withdrawn from their accounts beforehand."

He added that the investigation officers are working in accordance with legal procedures and following the High Court directives. "We've made significant progress in a

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

The frequent flyer that is the agri secy!

Violating multiple PMO directives, she took 11 trips in 12 months

BAHARAM KHAN *and* **SAJJAD HOSSAIN**

The frequency of the foreign trips taken by Agriculture Secretary Wahida Akhter has sparked discussions among fellow civil servants about her last visit and what could be her next destination.

In just the past year, Wahida went on 11 foreign trips, including six between May and December last year, violating a government directive on foreign visits, according to documents.

From May-December 2023, she went abroad six times, while from January-May 2024, she went five times.

On June 19, 2011, the Prime Minister's Office issued a circular titled "Permission to travel abroad and ancillary matters to be followed", which states that a secretary shall limit overseas travel for official work to a maximum of four times a year.

However, there has recently been a growing trend among civil servants of taking such trips abroad to attend conferences and workshops or to participate in knowledge-sharing programmes. Many of the trips yield little result, as most of the officials who go are not even directly linked to the topics for which the trips are organised.

Of Wahida's 11 trips, two were funded by the government and nine by the trip organisers.

All the trips combined, she spent at least 47 days abroad and was engaged in workshops, roundtables, discussions, bilateral meetings, and contract signings.

The secretary's participation in events other than contract signings and bilateral meetings was also a violation of another PMO directive that says junior or field-level officials shall get prioroty when it comes to events like workshops, roundtables and discussions.

Abdul Awal Majumdar, a former secretary and civil service researcher, said such frequent visits by a secretary was not only a violation of government directives but also sent a wrong message to the junior officials.

"Except for the foreign affairs and ERD [economic relations division] secretaries, I don't think anyone else has work that requires more than three to four foreign trips a year," he told The Daily Star.

Questioning the monitoring in this regard, he asked, "Why is the government giving permission

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Flooding in Sylhet city worsens

MINTU DESHWARA

More areas of Sylhet city are getting flooded.

Parts of the city were flooded Thursday night and the situation was deteriorating. The Surma was flowing above the danger level there.

Sunil Singha of Machimpur neighbourhood in Sylhet city told this paper that he woke up to 2 inches of water in front of his house yesterday morning.

Taltala, Mendibagh, Machimpur, Terorotan, Taltala, Jatarpur, Upashahar and other adjacent areas were yesterday found flooded.

Sylhet city's fire service and civil defence station at Taltala was flooded, and the firemen had to relocate their essential equipment.

Sahadat Hosain, of Taltala area, said water of the Surma was flooding the low-lying areas via the drainage network and canals.

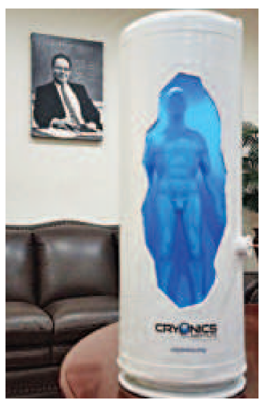
Executive Engineer Deepak Ranjan Dash of Sylhet Water Development Board said Surma was flowing 83cm above the danger level in Kanaighat and the Kushiara was 193cm above at Amalshid, causing the flooding in Sylhet.

According to the district administration, 6,09,733 people in 59 unions of Sadar, Companiganj, Goainghat,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Man frozen after death hoping to return to life

THE INDEPENDENT



A Sydney man has become the first in Australia to have his body cryogenically frozen after his death in the hope that he could be brought back to life in future.

Australian firm Southern Cryonics announced last month that it had successfully frozen its first client at a reported cost of $170,000 in the hope of bringing him back to life.

The man, who died earlier last month in his 80s, is dubbed 'Patient One' by the company.

Immediately after his death, the body was transferred from the hospital's cooling room to a funeral home, packed in ice.

Then a team including clinical perfusionists and a doctor "worked tirelessly for 10 hours" following special protocols to stabilise the body.

"The patient was securely wrapped in a special sleeping bag that stays intact in liquid nitrogen. Patient 1 was then cooled to dry ice temperature and transported to our Holbrook facility," the company said.

Workers are drying soggy rice under the sun in Barishal Fariapatti after barns in the area got flooded during Cyclone Remal late last month. Farmers and people of low-income were affected the most by the storm. PHOTO: TITU DAS

Woman dies by suicide after loan sharks gangrape her

2 suspects held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

Police yesterday arrested two people on charges of raping a woman, who later died by suicide, in Kurigram's Char Rajibpur upazila.

The arrestees are Md Jaynal Abedin, 48, of Jahir Mandolpara village, and Md Alam Hossain, 40, of Tangaliapara village, said Md Ashiqur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Rajibpur Police Station.

The victim's family told police that she and her husband, residents of Collegepara, had taken a Tk 20,000 loan from Jaynal a few months ago.

As they could not repay the loan, he and three others had allegedly been raping the woman for two months.

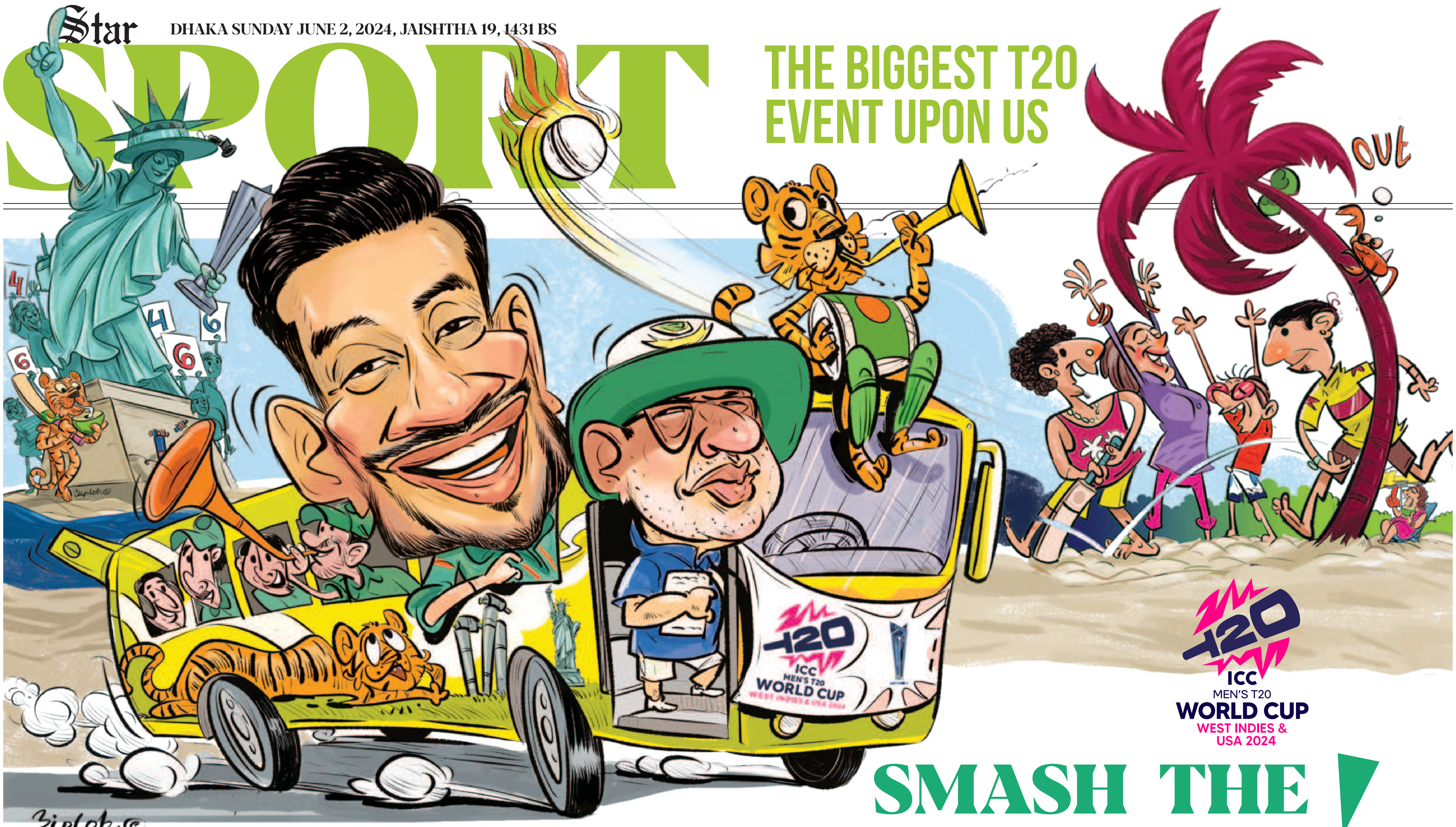
On May 22, the victim, who is the mother of a three-year-old child, told some of her relatives and neighbours and even recorded herself saying, "I was blackmailed, I was gang-raped."

Two days later, the couple ingested poison together, police said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Star
SPORT

THE BIGGEST T20 EVENT UPON US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ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP WEST INDIES & USA 2024
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WEST INDIES &
USA 2024
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'SUPERB FESTIVAL' beckons in unique T20 World Cup

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

The world will take notice as the 2024 T20 World Cup, set to be played in USA and the West Indies, gets to the red carpet in what would be the very first cricket World Cup in the USA.

The USA will be playing their first World Cup in any format, and even though the tournament will only be in the USA for a short time with the majority of the action taking place in the West Indies, the challenges will be numerous for the newest co-hosts. However, there will also be opportunities for associates to showcase what they possess. associate nations are coming up fast in this fast-paced format. Cricket analyst Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, a mentor to many of Bangladesh national team stars along with Bashar, feels that the tournament's associate sides have something unique to offer.

"What's great about this World Cup is that it's a 20-team tournament, and the fact it is logical has been proven by the associate nations since they are not lagging behind," Fahim said, highlighting that "Ireland, Netherlands and Canada are coming at us fast".

The competitiveness is something greatly triggered by the format performance is critical.

"It's a superb festival and people from all around the world would come to watch. It would have an influence on world peace and harmony," Fahim added.

Both Bashar and Fahim pointed out that USA's performance have a crucial part to play in cricket's exposure in the country.

"If their [USA's] performance is above average even if they do not make the second round, it will keep cricket alive. If they make second round, that kind of performance would be very required for getting funding, popularising the sport.

ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP AUSTRALIA
FINAL
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#T20WorldCup

USA's historic T20I series victory over Bangladesh just ahead of the tournament would help get the sparks flying.

As with any World Cup, there will be something unique to look forward to, and experts from Bangladesh believe that this event will have something to offer in terms of greater cultural diversity, team competitiveness, host teams' performance, and cricket's exposure to the USA market.

Modern T20 is a game of batters and runs. Speaking to former national selector Habibul Bashar, now head of operation of Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) women's cricket, he focused on wickets having a great impact.

"This world cup is a bit unique since it's being hosted by a non-Test playing country and a Test-playing country. It's being played in conditions in USA that are unknown to everyone. How the tournament will go will depend on the conditions and the wickets," Bashar said.

The game of T20 has found exposure in different parts of the world and the itself. The Netherlands, for instance, delivered a blow in a warm-up fixture against Sri Lanka.

Bashar believed that T20 cricket has availed opportunities to players from associate nations to upskill and challenge more established counterparts, adding Bangladesh's challenge too would be great in the Group D they were placed in.

"Our group is very open. Netherlands beat South Africa and Bangladesh in the ODI World Cup last year and their players regularly perform well in county cricket. They are experienced than many in the World Cup. They are always playing, same in the case with Ireland players who are not bad in T20s as they play in Vitality Blast and been playing power cricket," Bashar highlighted.

With teams like South Africa and Sri Lanka in Group D, alongside Bangladesh, Nepal and Netherlands, it could make for the most exciting group phase in the entire World Cup.

Cricket's flavour finding a place in USA would help expose the game to a wider audience and the new co-hosts'

"There is a lot of depth in sports that have major foothold in USA. It will be a really difficult thing for cricket to make a space of their own. Cricket is a comparatively complicated game. There is no local interest as such. It will be difficult," Fahim adds.

For Bangladesh too, it would be a unique opportunity to find themselves in a format where the associates challenge for further identity in cricket's latest World Cup that is certainly to add new flavours to the palette.

SMASH THE RECORDS!

MILESTONES IN SIGHT

INDIA
BANGLADESH

- Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and India captain Rohit Sharma are set to make their ninth appearance in the ICC T20 World Cup in the USA and the West Indies, becoming the only cricketers to take part in every edition of the tournament. After Shakib and Rohit, West Indies' Chris Gayle and Dwayne Bravo, and Bangladesh's Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah have taken part in the greatest number of T20 World Cups, as quartet appeared in the first seven editions of the tournament.
- India captain Rohit Sharma holds the record of playing the most number of matches in the ICC T20 World Cup, having appeared in 39 games in eight editions. Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan is hot on Rohit's heels, as the all-rounder has played 36 matches in eight T20 World Cup appearances. Australia's David Warner is third in the list amongst active cricketers, having played 34 games in the tournament.
- India superstar Virat Kohli tops the list for the most runs in T20 World Cups, accounting for 1141 runs in five editions. He was the highest run-getter in the 2014 edition with 319 runs in six matches – the highest by any batter in a single Men's T20 World Cup. Another active player on this elite list is Kohli's teammate and India captain, Rohit. The opening batter is not very far behind Kohli, sitting in fourth spot with 963 runs. A series of explosive innings from him could propel him to a higher rank on this list.
- Among the top five wicket-takers, which mainly consists of four spin-bowling experts, Bangladesh's left-arm spinner Shakib holds a substantial lead. He is the sole active player within this elite group and three more scalps will take his tally to a remarkable 50 T20 World Cup wickets.

RECORDS ON THE BRINK OF BREAKING

- Virat Kohli has scored 103 fours in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup and is just behind Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardena's 111 fours.
- With 47- and 50-ball centuries, Chis Gayle currently holds the top two spots for the fastest century in the Men's T20 World Cup. With the expanded teams in this edition and the high strike-rates witnessed already this year, expect this record to be broken in this edition.
- AB de Villiers currently sits at the top of the table for most catches as a fielder in the Men's T20 World Cup with 23 catches to his name. David Warner is next on the list with 21 catches.
- Pat Cummins led Australia to history last year when they won the ICC Test Championship and ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in 2023. In the Caribbean this year they have the opportunity to become the first team in history to hold the ICC Trophies in all three formats of the game at the same time if they manage to win the 2024 T20 World Cup.

TOURNAMENT'S KEY INFO

- The ninth edition of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup will feature a record number of teams, with 20 different sides represented in a tournament. The 20 teams are separated into four groups of five for the first stage of the event, with each team playing a minimum of four matches against their other group members during that initial group stage.

- The top two sides from each group then progress to the Super 8s stage of the event, with the bottom three teams from each group eliminated.
- The remaining 8 teams are then split into another two groups during the Super 8s phase, with a total of four teams progressing to semis. The semi-finals will be played out between the top two teams from each Super 8s group, with the winners then progressing to the one-off final in Barbados on June 29.
- 41 matches will be played in the Caribbean across six different nations, with semi-finals in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, before the title decider scheduled to be played in Barbados on June 29. Any match that finishes in a tie will see a Super Over be played and if the Super Over is a tie, subsequent Super Overs will be played until there is a winner. There is also additional time available to ensure the completion of the semi-final and final.

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THE BIGGEST T20 EVENT UPON US

ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP WEST INDIES & USA 2024

Cricket is steadily gaining popularity in USA. The ICC is eager to tap into this potential market. Golam Nowsher Prince, Suhrawardi Shuvo, and Aftab Ahmed, three former Bangladeshi cricketers who are now engaged in USA cricket in various roles, shared their experiences with Ramin Talukdar of The Daily Star.

Road to realising ICC's AMERICAN DREAM

STAR SPORTS DESK

It is no surprise that the West Indies will co-host the T20 World Cup 2024, given the Islanders' rich legacy in the sport. But what really adds spice to this ninth edition of the event is that the United States of America (USA) has emerged as the tournament's co-hosts. It is the first time the USA, an associate member in cricket, will organise a major cricket tournament.

When the USA was selected as one of the hosts, there had been sceptics who questioned the International Cricket Council's (ICC) decision, while most viewed it as a masterstroke from the game's governing body in its attempt to tap into the world's wealthiest sports market.

USA has prepared to stage 16 matches, including the highly anticipated India-Pakistan encounter on June 9 at the brand-new 34,000-seat Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in Long Island, New York.

ICC, for its part, is investing big in the sport's future in the USA, particularly the New York region, home to several hundred thousand people with links to cricket-playing countries, notably India and Pakistan.

It's no wonder that the India-Pakistan showdown is already sold out, with each ticket now topping USD 1,000 online.

But once the stadium is dismantled in July, local cricket will likely return to its struggling state. Despite having around 10,000 players, the sport has no dedicated stadium in New York, which will stage World Cup matches alongside Dallas and Florida.

STATEN ISLAND CRICKET CLUB
ESTABLISHED 1872
HOME OF CRICKET IN STATEN ISLAND
BAT 1
TOTAL
BAT 2
000
OVERS
WKT
TARGET
30
6
346

Cricket boasts billions of fans worldwide, but few in the lucrative North American market, where fans are more likely to see New York Yankees slugger Aaron Judge pick up a bat than Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, or Jos Buttler.

"This is the start of a journey," International Cricket Council (ICC) CEO Geoff Allardice told Reuters. "The awareness that we're bringing in more elite cricket to the USA is something that's been a strategic priority for us."

There had been a lot of buzz surrounding the launch of Major League Cricket in the United States last year, and the fact that 2028 Los Angeles Olympics will feature the T20 format for the first time. And therefore, a well-organised 20-team jamboree might help cricket acquire traction in a sporting scene dominated by baseball, basketball, ice hockey, and American football.

The centuries-old English game has a devoted following all around the world, but the USA, which has long preferred American football, basketball, and baseball as its national pastime, has been a stubborn holdout. But the scenario may transform when the USA has its moment in the cricketing sun in co-hosting the World Cup.

ICC chief executive Geoff Allardice said: "The USA is a strategically important market and these venues give us an excellent opportunity to make a statement in the world's biggest sport market."

The tournament, which counts Jamaican track hero Usain Bolt as an ambassador, is a dream come true for the USA immigrants, who comprise much of the sport's USA fan base and are more used to watching the action on television than in their own backyard.

In 1994, the USA hosted the FIFA World Cup when football was much less popular than baseball, American football, and basketball. And yet, 3.5 million fans watched the matches from the stands.

USA Cricket had expressed interest in hosting the T20 World Cup during the ICC cycle beginning in 2023, citing the presence of a sizable South Asian diaspora, which could ensure crowded stadiums around the country.

Everyone is now waiting to see how the marquee event affects USA, an impact that could go on to stretch the landscape of the sport to an even wider panorama.

"Cricket is no longer an unknown game in America. It's gaining popularity, with many boys and girls playing, especially on weekends. There are major and minor leagues here, totalling around 400. Yes, in a country dominated by baseball and basketball, cricket is finding its footing. Immigrants, mostly Indians, are the main architect behind this success. Apart from India, there are players from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal."
Former Bangladesh pace bowler **Golam Nowsher Prince**

"America has started a school cricket tournament similar to our popular Nirman School Cricket Tournament. I believe this will greatly enhance the game's popularity. I expect full galleries during the matches."
Former Bangladesh left-arm spinner **Sohrawordi Shuvo**

"Just let the game be included in the Olympics, and you'll see a huge impact. When explaining cricket to authorities, their first question is if it's an Olympic sport. Inclusion would change the game's dynamics here."
Former Bangladesh batter **Aftab Ahmed**

From fringes to big dance

ASHFAQ-UL-ALAM

It took 28 years, but Frank Nsubaga has finally made it to the big stage.

Nsubaga, an all-rounder of Uganda's T20 World Cup team, has been around for a while. He first ventured into international cricket in 1997 for a team called East and Central Africa, a side that represented Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

His first tournament in international cricket was the 1997 ICC Trophy in Kuala Lumpur, the tournament that launched Bangladesh's ascendency to full membership.

Nsubaga, who was just 16 at the time, played two of the four group-stage matches, all of which ended in defeat for the African side.

That was his first heartbreak in international cricket, the first of many failures in pursuit of a chance to compete in the World Cup.

That team has long disappeared from the face of cricket, but Nsubaga is still here. He resumed his international career for Uganda in 2004 and has been a part of the side for two decades now.

Nsubaga was seemingly destined to join the rank of cricketers who toiled away at the backwaters of cricket for decades, gave their life to the game but never got their moment in the sun.

But then a miracle happened. Well, calling it a miracle may be a stretch, but it certainly was an upset.

Uganda stunned Zimbabwe in the Africa qualifiers, a result no one saw coming, and claimed a spot in the ICC T20 World Cup 2024.

Nsubaga and the spirited Uganda side will compete in their first major ICC event in the forthcoming T20 World Cup, a tournament where for the first time nine associate nations will be on display.

ICC's decision to make the T20 World Cup a 20-team affair opened up more slots for teams like Uganda and players like Nsubaga to experience the high of competing in a World Cup.

Papua New Guinea captain Assad Vala is another such example. A top-order batter, who has been around since 2005, had led his team to their maiden T20 World Cup in 2021.

But in that edition, they were slotted in the first round, an unofficial qualifying phase where associates competed against lower-ranked full members and only the top two teams of each group made it to the second round, where the big boys had automatically qualified.

The ICC has done away with that tournament structure, as in this edition the associates and full members will begin their campaigns from the first round, meaning Vala and his team will finally get to compete in the actual World Cup.

The stories of Nsubaga and Vala are of homegrown players who have worked for decades for an opportunity to represent their country in a World Cup.

But in the world of associate cricket, almost all teams have players from other countries and in many teams, they even outnumber the homegrown cricketers.

Alpesh Ramjani, Nsubaga's teammate, is one such player. Born in Mumbai, Ramjani played for age-level teams in Mumbai but had given up on his cricket dream, taken up a job, and was playing corporate cricket on the side.

But after losing his job during the Covid-19 pandemic, he moved to Uganda for employment and tried out for the national team, hoping to restart his cricketing journey in a different country.

In less than three years, from just another player in the Mumbai circuit, Ramjani has now become a star all-rounder at the associate level, even making it to ICC's T20 Team of the Year for 2023.

Then there are players like ex-New Zealand international Corey Anderson and former South Africa cricketer David Wiese, who now play for USA and Namibia respectively.

Both Anderson and Wiese are past their prime but with a move to the associate level they have extended their international careers and have an opportunity to make a difference in sides that are in pursuit of joining the league of the full members.

From a neutral fan's perspective, the inclusion of nine associates in a World Cup may seem like an overkill, as it increases the odds of seeing dead rubbers.

The associates can spring up surprises in the tournament, as they have done in past editions, but that doesn't change the fact that they are here more to make up the numbers than to compete for the trophy.

But before writing these teams off as unnecessary inclusions, spare a thought for the individuals making up the sides, some of whom have spent decades for this opportunity while others have moved to a different country for a second chance, and applaud from the sidelines as they fulfil their World Cup dreams.

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SPORT

WHO'S NEXT?

YEAR	WINNERS	RUNNERS-UP	HOSTS
2007	India	Pakistan	South Africa
2009	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	England
2010	England	Australia	West Indies
2012	West Indies	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
2014	Sri Lanka	India	Bangladesh
2016	West Indies	England	India
2021	Australia	New Zealand	UAE & Oman
2022	England	Pakistan	Australia
2024	?	?	West Indies & USA

FIXTURE

THE BIGGEST T20 EVENT UPON US

GROUP STAGE

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D
India	England	New Zealand	Bangladesh
Pakistan	Australia	West Indies	South Africa
Canada	Namibia	Afghanistan	Sri Lanka
Ireland	Scotland	Uganda	Netherlands
USA	Oman	Papua New Guinea	Nepal

SUPER EIGHT STAGE

GROUP 1	A1	B2	C1	D2
GROUP 2	A2	B1	C2	D1

The 2024 T20 World Cup will be the tournament's ninth edition, to be co-hosted by the USA and the West Indies. This will be the first time that the USA will host a major ICC event. In another first, the tournament will feature 20 teams – an expansion from the previous 16.

VENUES IN USA

BROWARD COUNTY STADIUM
LAUDERHILL, FLORIDA
Number of matches: 4
Capacity: 40,000

GRAND PRAIRIE CRICKET STADIUM
DALLAS, TEXAS
Number of matches: 4
(including the opener)
Capacity: 15,000

NASSAU COUNTY INTERNATIONAL CRICKET STADIUM
NASSAU COUNTY, NEW YORK
Number of matches: 8
Capacity: 34,000

GROUP STAGE

DATE	MATCH	TIME (BST)	GROUP	VENUE
02-Jun	USA-Canada	6:30 AM	A	Dallas
02-Jun	West Indies-Papua New Guinea	8:30 PM	C	Guyana
03-Jun	Namibia-Oman	6:30 AM	B	Barbados
03-Jun	Sri Lanka-South Africa	8:30 PM	D	New York
04-Jun	Afghanistan-Uganda	6:30 AM	C	Guyana
04-Jun	England-Scotland	8:30 PM	B	Barbados
04-Jun	Netherlands-Nepal	9:30 PM	D	Dallas
05-Jun	India-Ireland	8:30 PM	A	New York
06-Jun	Papua New Guinea-Uganda	5:30 AM	C	Guyana
06-Jun	Australia-Oman	6:30 AM	B	Barbados
06-Jun	USA-Pakistan	9:30 PM	A	Dallas
07-Jun	Namibia-Scotland	1:00 AM	B	Barbados
07-Jun	Canada-Ireland	8:30 PM	A	New York
08-Jun	New Zealand-Afghanistan	5:30 AM	C	Guyana
08-Jun	Sri Lanka-Bangladesh	6:30 AM	D	Dallas
08-Jun	Netherlands-South Africa	8:30 PM	D	New York
08-Jun	Australia-England	11:00 PM	B	Barbados
09-Jun	West Indies-Uganda	6:30 AM	C	Guyana
09-Jun	India-Pakistan	8:30 PM	A	New York
09-Jun	Oman-Scotland	11:00 PM	B	Antigua
10-Jun	South Africa-Bangladesh	8:30 PM	D	New York
11-Jun	Pakistan-Canada	8:30 PM	A	New York
12-Jun	Sri Lanka-Nepal	5:30 AM	D	Florida
12-Jun	Australia-Namibia	6:30 AM	B	Antigua
12-Jun	USA-India	8:30 PM	A	New York
13-Jun	West Indies-New Zealand	6:30 AM	C	Trinidad
13-Jun	Bangladesh-Netherlands	8:30 PM	D	St. Vincent
14-Jun	England-Oman	1:00 AM	B	Antigua
14-Jun	Afghanistan vs Papua New Guinea	6:30 AM	C	Trinidad
14-Jun	USA-Ireland	8:30 PM	A	Florida
15-Jun	South Africa-Nepal	5:30 AM	D	St. Vincent
15-Jun	New Zealand-Uganda	6:30 AM	C	Trinidad
15-Jun	India-Canada	8:30 PM	A	Florida
15-Jun	Namibia-England	11:00 PM	B	Antigua
16-Jun	Australia-Scotland	6:30 AM	B	St. Lucia
16-Jun	Pakistan-Ireland	8:30 PM	A	Florida
17-Jun	Bangladesh-Nepal	5:30 AM	D	St. Vincent
17-Jun	Sri Lanka-Netherlands	6:30 AM	D	St. Lucia
17-Jun	New Zeland-Papua New Guinea	8:30 PM	C	Trinidad
18-Jun	West Indies-Afghanistan	6:30 AM	C	St. Lucia

SUPER EIGHT

DATE	MATCH	TIME(BST)	GROUP	VENUE
19-Jun	A2-D1	8:30 PM	2	Antigua
20-Jun	B1-C2	6:30 AM	2	St. Lucia
20-Jun	C1-A1	8:30 PM	1	Barbados
21-Jun	B2-D2	6:30 AM	1	Antigua
21-Jun	B1-D1	8:30 PM	2	St. Lucia
22-Jun	A2-C2	6:30 AM	2	Barbados
22-Jun	A1-D2	8:30 PM	1	Antigua
23-Jun	C1-B2	6:30 AM	1	St. Vincent
23-Jun	A2-B1	8:30 PM	2	Barbados
24-Jun	C2-D1	6:30 AM	2	Antigua
24-Jun	B2-A1	8:30 PM	1	St. Lucia
25-Jun	C1-D2	6:30 AM	1	St. Vincent

SEMIFINALS

27-Jun
Group 1 Winners-Group 2 Runners-up
6:30 AM (Trinidad)

27-Jun
Group 2 Winners-Group 1 Runners-up
8:30 PM (Guyana)

FINAL

29-Jun
Semifinal 1 Winners-Semifinal 2 Winners
8:30 PM (Barbados)

ALL TIMINGS AS PER BANGLADESH STANDARD TIME (BST)

ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP WEST INDIES & USA 2024

SIR VIVIAN RICHARDS STADIUM
NORTH SOUND, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
Number of matches: 8
Capacity: 10,000

VENUES IN WEST INDIES

KENSINGTON OVAL
BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS
Number of matches: 9
(including the final)
Capacity: 28,000

ARNOS VALE STADIUM
KINGSTOWN, SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
Number of matches: 5
Capacity: 18,000

DAREN SAMMY CRICKET GROUND
GROS ISLET, SAINT LUCIA
Number of matches: 6
apacity: 15,000

BRIAN LARA CRICKET ACADEMY
SAN FERNANDO, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
Number of matches: 5
Capacity: 15,000

PROVIDENCE STADIUM
PROVIDENCE, GUYANA
Number of matches: 6
Capacity: 20,000

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4
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6
6
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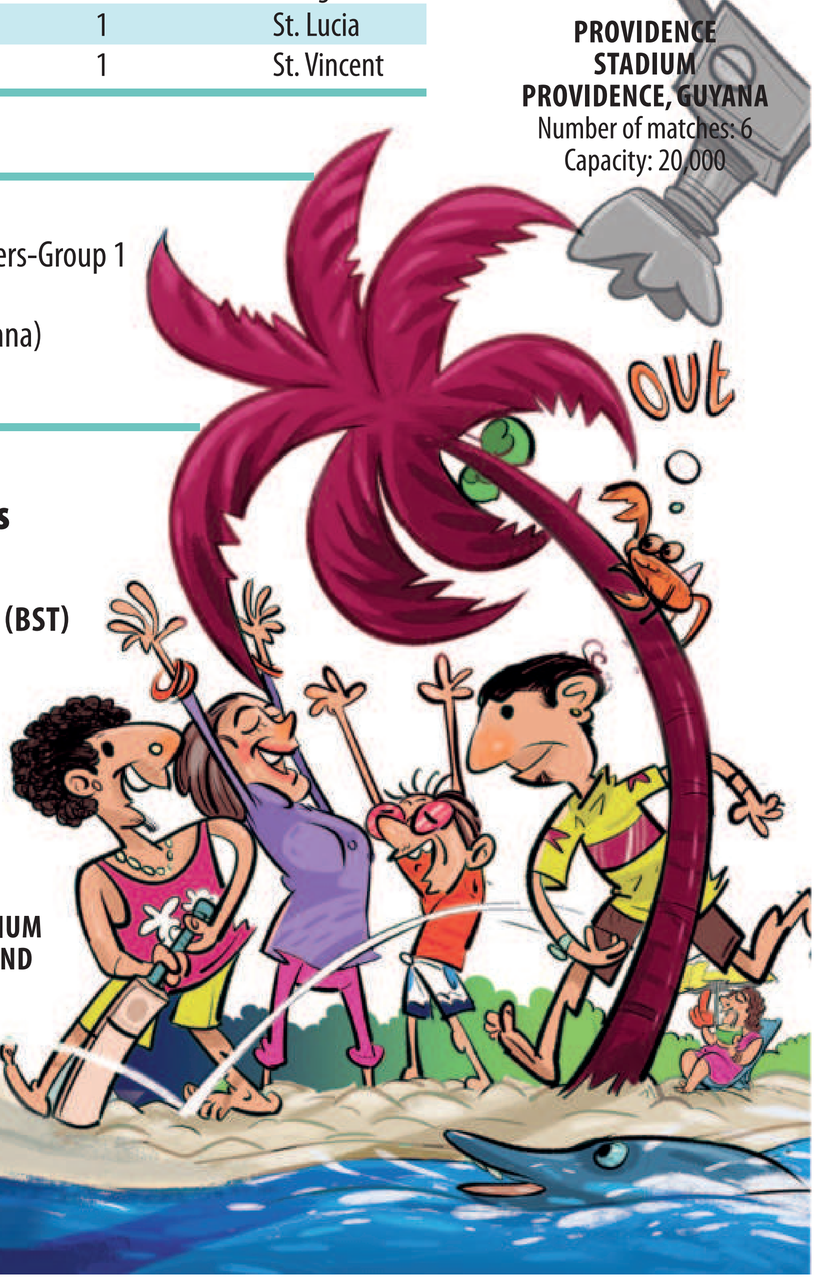

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THE BIGGEST
T20 EVENT
UPON US

SHAKIB, FIZZ
key in Bangladesh's bid to turn fortunes

NABID YEASIN

Ardent followers of Bangladesh cricket might laugh out at the notion that there still lies signs of positivity in the Tigers' recent run of form, especially now that the Test-playing nation have hit the nadir in the shortest format with a deserved series loss to associates USA in the build-up to the ICC T20 World Cup.

However, when trying to map out the chances of how far a team could go in the upcoming T20 mega event, there actually is one thing -- at least statistically -- that propels Bangladesh ahead of most nations. Bangladesh boast a 60 percent win ratio in their last 10 T20Is, a figure that is only bettered by India (70 percent) and matched by Australia.

But in reality, Bangladesh are probably the one team that would not be able to take anything positive even from the positive signs -- the few that could now be unearthed -- into the showpiece T20 event.

While it goes without mentioning that Bangladesh's pedigree in all formats is far off from India and Australia, both of whom will be heading to the USA and the West Indies as title contenders, the Tigers now find themselves fearing yet another subpar outing in the T20 World Cup.

However, if Bangladesh are to recover from the slump, two of their leading performers in T20s -- star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and ace left-arm paceman Mustafizur Rahman -- would need to be at their very best.

Shakib and Mustafizur are the two faces that had the most impact in imprinting Bangladesh's presence in the ever-evolving global T20 landscape -- with them playing almost regularly in lucrative franchise-based T20 tournaments around the world, including the Indian Premier League, the highest revenue-generating project in this regard.

Mustafizur, especially, comes fresh off a successful stint in the recently concluded 17th edition of IPL. The left-arm pacer's 14 wickets in nine matches for Chennai Super Kings (CSK) this season is only bettered by his best-ever showing in the tournament -- 17 wickets in 16 matches -- that came in his maiden IPL appearance in 2016 and had helped Sunrisers Hyderabad win their only title.

With Mustafizur recalled for national duty -- a reality that was deemed as 'disappointing' by CSK coach Stephen Fleming -- compounded by a few injuries and unavailability of other key players, the joint record five-time IPL winners failed to make it to the playoffs for only the third time in the tournament's history despite winning half of their matches this season.

While Mustafizur was a party to Bangladesh's horrendous failure in defending 54 runs off the final four overs that led to the Tigers losing their first-ever T20I played against a feeble USA last month, he did outperform himself with a record six-wicket haul in the third and final T20I.

Although it was in a dead rubber and against a USA side missing four key players, Mustafizur setting a new benchmark for bowling excellence in Bangladesh cricket -- his six for 10 in four overs now being the best-ever bowling figure and the only instance of a six-wicket haul by a Bangladeshi -- will not only act as a morale boost for the player but should also give Bangladesh hopes of seeing the ace pacer carrying on his form into the T20 World Cup.

While Mustafizur's performance with the ball in hand, especially in the death overs, would go a long way in Bangladesh's ability to restrict teams to a total that they find comfortable chasing, it is the experience and the big-name stature of Shakib that would determine at what stage Bangladesh could eventually end up in the T20 mega event.

Shakib, who has been at the summit of all-rounder rankings in at least any of the three formats for the most part of the past decade, had recently been knocked off that pedestal when he was pipped by Sri Lanka's leg-spinning all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga.

The poster boy of Bangladesh, Shakib, has also been far from his usual self with the bat in hand -- his last fifty in T20Is coming back in October 2022, against Pakistan in a tri-nation series including hosts New Zealand.

How Shakib managed to chop one onto his stumps, failing to help Bangladesh to coast to a win when 20 was needed off just 18 deliveries with four wickets in hand in the second T20I against the USA last month raised a lot of questions as to how much he is now invested in the Tigers' stake at any stage of a game.

His quirky replies following that game, including his blatant admission of 'not knowing what's going wrong with the team', only added to those burning queries regarding the current elected lawmaker of Bangladesh.

But come tournament time, when Shakib is involved in the team, a lot of hopes for the side unsurprisingly hinge on the all-rounder. This time will be no different and Shakib will need to be much more involved with the side that has gone into the T20 World Cup under a young captain in Najmul Hossain Shanto and with a number of youngsters like Towhid Hridoy, Tanzid Tamim, Rishad Hossain, Jaker Ali and Shoriful Islam all of whom would largely benefit from the all-rounder's experience in such a grand stage.

The omens might not be all good for Bangladesh, but if there is some hope, it is that both Shakib and Mustafizur would be able to make their presence felt come June 8, when the Tigers open their World Cup campaign against Sri Lanka in Dallas.

MEET THE T20 WORLD CUP 2024 CAPTAINS

INDIA
ROHIT SHARMA
Skipper Rohit Sharma believes India's powerful middle order can end their global title drought at this T20 World Cup. India have not secured a global title since the 2013 Champions Trophy.

PAKISTAN
BABAR AZAM
Pakistan, dangerous in major tournaments, may struggle to win their first T20 World Cup since 2009 after recent changes. But with their pedigree in the shortest format, don't yet just rule them out.

ENGLAND
JOS BUTTLER
No team have ever defended the T20 World Cup title, and England do not have to go far back in the record books to understand the magnitude of the task facing them in the West Indies and USA.

AUSTRALIA
MITCHELL MARSH
Australia enter the tournament with an aging squad but retain the confidence that won them last year's Test and ODI championships. If they win, they would be the first to hold all three major trophies.

NEW ZEALAND
KANE WILLIAMSON
Kiwis excel at handling challenges one at a time, a strategy that has proven effective in major tournaments. The Black Caps have reached the semifinals in four of the eight T20 World Cups and lost the 2021 final.

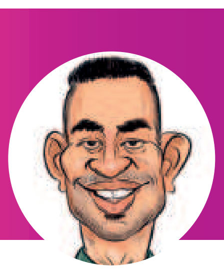
WEST INDIES
ROVMAN POWELL
Co-hosts West Indies aim for a third title and to redeem themselves after missing last year's 50-over World Cup. Having won it in 2012 and 2016, they seek to be the first to win three T20 World Cup titles.

SOUTH AFRICA
AIDEN MARKRAM
South Africa's power hitters could make them contenders for this T20 World Cup, but their bowling remains a concern. Their World Cup struggles in both formats are well-known, tempering expectations.

SRI LANKA
WANINDU HASARANGA
Sri Lanka won the 2014 edition after being runners-up in 2009 but since then the islanders have been underachievers. But as they so often do in major tournaments, they can surprise anyone.

AFGHANISTAN
RASHID KHAN
Afghanistan's presence with nine players in this season's IPL underscores their reputation in T20 cricket. Led by Rashid Khan, their team is packed with versatile players and game-changers.

BANGLADESH
NAJMUL HOSSAIN SHANTO
Bangladesh aim to rewrite their T20 World Cup history. Bangladesh had lacked notable achievements in T20 World Cups, with their most memorable victory against Windies in 2007.



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ZAFAR

IRELAND
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NAMIBIA
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SECOND EDITION
DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 3, 2024
REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 134 | JAISHTHA 20, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | ZILQAD 25, 1445 HIJRI | 16 PAGES: TK 15.00

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Essentials now luxuries as the poor reel from price shock: CPD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People in Bangladesh have been forced to spend more on food compared to consumers in other countries, and the prices of essentials have surged to such an extent that they have become luxury items for many, the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) said yesterday.

It lists 16 countries where GDP (gross domestic product) per capita is higher than that of Bangladesh, yet consumers in those nations spend less on food compared to the latter.

The countries are Algeria, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Laos, Morocco, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

The average annual expenditure on food per person was $924 in Bangladesh in 2022 whereas it was $882 in Brazil and $874 in Colombia. Their GDP per capita is more than twice that of Bangladesh, according to an analysis of the CPD.

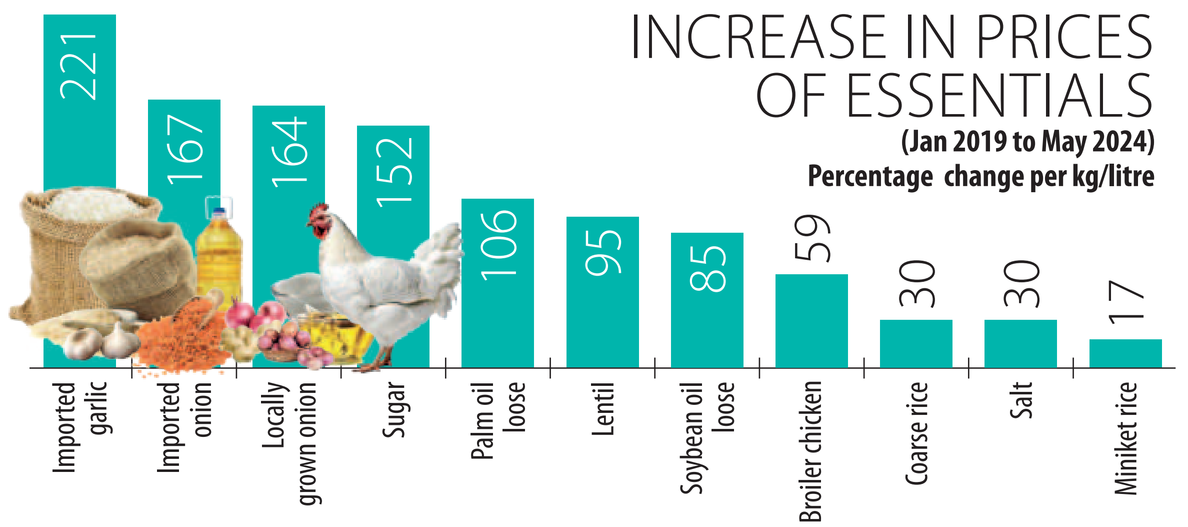
"We are a lower-middle-income country, yet we are spending more on food. It shouldn't be. What kind of economy do we live in?" asked CPD Research Director Khondaker Golam Moazzem at a media briefing on the state of the economy at the office of the think-tank in the capital.

Bangladesh has been experiencing higher inflation for nearly two years, exceeding inflation rates in many developed and developing economies. The burden falls heavily on poor and low-income households because of the erosion of purchasing power.

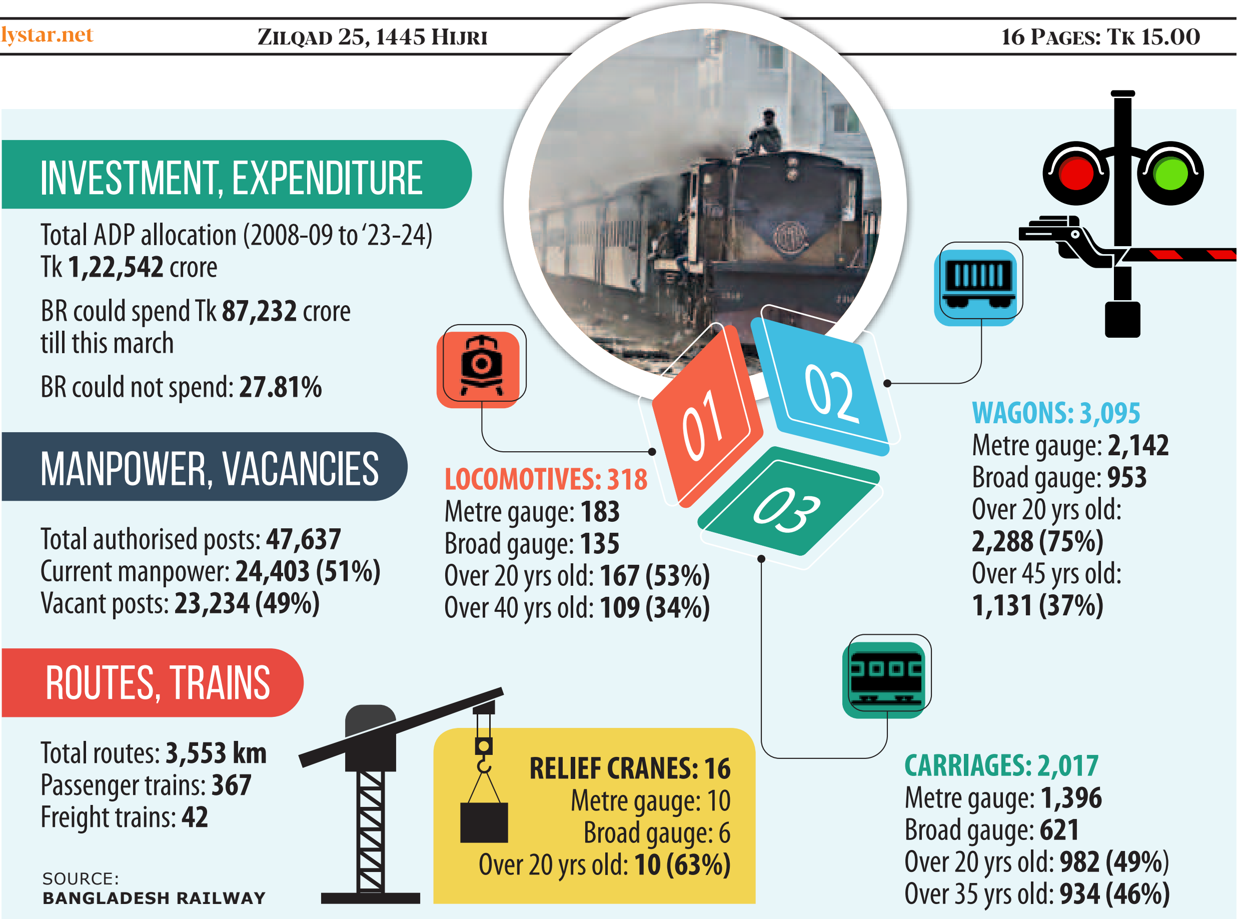
In 2022-23, the average inflation rate was 9.02 percent, far higher than the average of 6 percent in recent years. The Consumer Price Index grew by an average of 9.73 percent in the first 10 months of the current financial year.

In Bangladesh, food prices have

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



BUDGET SPECIAL
Read pre-budget special stories in a 4-page supplement brought out by Star BUSINESS



INVESTMENT, EXPENDITURE

Total ADP allocation (2008-09 to '23-24)
Tk **1,22,542** crore

BR could spend Tk **87,232** crore
till this march

BR could not spend: **27.81%**

MANPOWER, VACANCIES

Total authorised posts: **47,637**
Current manpower: **24,403 (51%)**
Vacant posts: **23,234 (49%)**

ROUTES, TRAINS

Total routes: **3,553 km**
Passenger trains: **367**
Freight trains: **42**

LOCOMOTIVES: 318
Metre gauge: **183**
Broad gauge: **135**
Over 20 yrs old: **167 (53%)**
Over 40 yrs old: **109 (34%)**

WAGONS: 3,095
Metre gauge: **2,142**
Broad gauge: **953**
Over 20 yrs old:
2,288 (75%)
Over 45 yrs old:
1,131 (37%)

RELIEF CRANES: 16
Metre gauge: 10
Broad gauge: 6
Over 20 yrs old: **10 (63%)**

CARRIAGES: 2,017
Metre gauge: **1,396**
Broad gauge: **621**
Over 20 yrs old: **982 (49%)**
Over 35 yrs old: **934 (46%)**

SOURCE:
BANGLADESH RAILWAY

RAILWAY OFF TRACK

Despite Tk 1.22 lakh crore allocation in 16 years, BR struggles to expand services

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A whopping Tk 1.22 lakh crore was poured into Bangladesh Railway for its development over the last 16 years, but the agency still faces a crippling crisis brought by ageing locomotives, carriages, and a shortage of staff due to what experts say are poorly planned and delayed projects.

More than half the locomotives, carriages and freight wagons are over 20 years old, which affects railway's reliability.

Railway's fleet of 318 locomotives is far smaller than needed and 43 percent percent of it is over 40 years old. The shortage is so severe that the state-run transport agency has not been able to launch two new trains named and approved by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in December last year.

The crisis is only going to deepen because no new locomotive is likely to arrive in at least the next three years, officials said.

The Dhaka-Jashore rail line via the Padma Bridge is set to open in July, but BR is not likely to be able to fully utilise the expensive infrastructure due to lack of staff and carriages.

In 2023, the BR opened four new routes with a combined length of over 250km, but there is not enough trains to operate on the tracks.

Requesting anonymity, several BR officials said the government's main focus in recent years has been expansion of lines while

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

'I've reached worst point of my cursed life'

Says Prof Yunus after court appearance

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said he was at the worst point of his cursed life because of the will of the gods and goddesses.

"It's been a long time since I was thrown out of Grameen Bank. A probe body has been formed to investigate me. There is no respite, one thing is coming after another," he told reporters after appearing in court for a hearing in a case filed over misappropriation of Tk 25.22 crore of Grameen Telecom Workers' profit participation fund.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

MIGRANT WORKER EXPLOITATION

The agencies picked by KL to blame

Say industry insiders; Dhaka tells UN experts it wanted more competition

PORIMOL PALMA

Dhaka wanted to allow all 1,520 licenced recruiting agencies to send manpower to Malaysia, but Kuala Lumpur selected only 101 agents, which industry insiders say are involved in manipulation and exploitation of migrants.

In response to a letter by four UN experts on March 28, Bangladesh's Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva said Bangladesh and Malaysia signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on December 19, 2021, for labour recruitment.

In pursuance of the MoU, the Malaysian human resources ministry wrote to the Bangladesh's expatriates' welfare ministry on January 14, 2022, regarding selection of 25 Bangladeshi recruiting agencies.

In response, the expatriates' welfare ministry on January 18, 2022, wrote to the Malaysian ministry requesting it to keep the opportunity open for all the licenced Bangladeshi recruiting agencies.

"The hon'ble minister flagged that this open opportunity would ensure transparency and fairness compatible with the relevant International Labour Organization (ILO) standards as well as the Competition Commission Act, 2012, of Bangladesh," said the letter from Bangladesh permanent mission.

In a joint working group meeting on March 20, 2023, Bangladesh stressed the same request. In reply, Malaysia increased the number of recruiting agencies from 25 to 101 as per their choice and mandate, including state-owned Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Ltd, it added.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4
16,970 WORKERS MISSED DEADLINE FOR REACHING KL -- PAGE 12

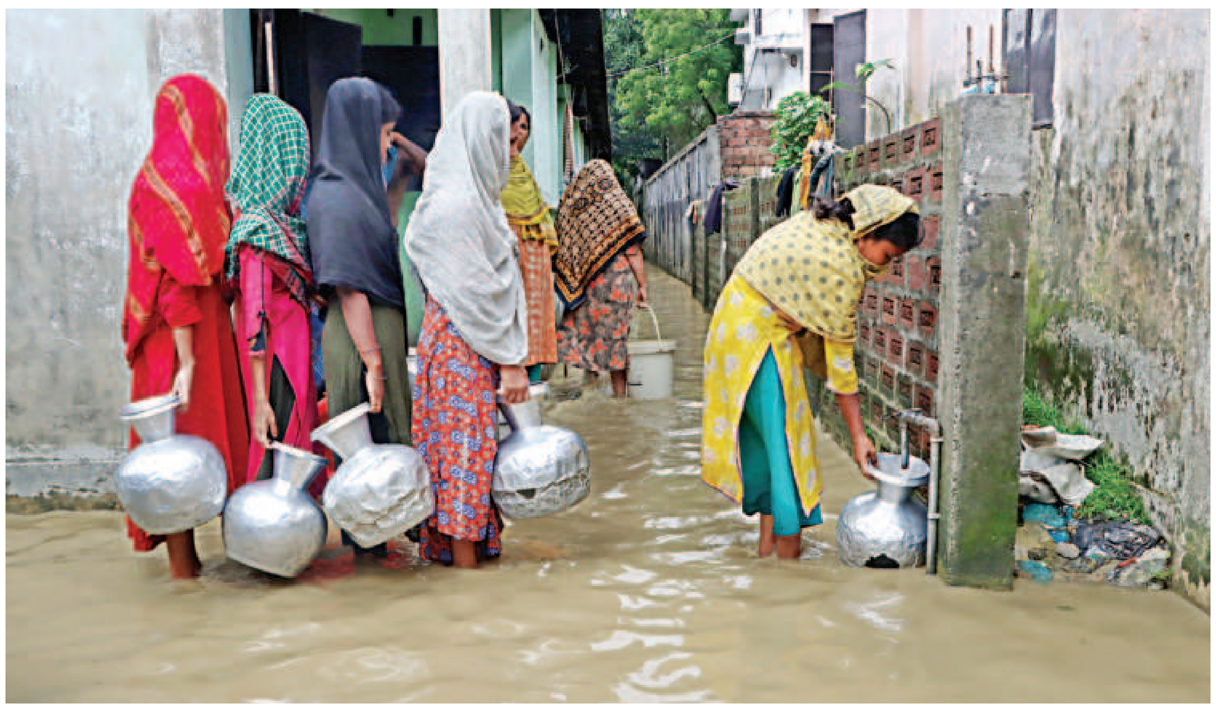


PHOTO: **SHEIKH NASIR**

A woman collects tap water while others wait for their turns in Sylhet City Corporation's flooded Masimpur area around 11:00am yesterday. Locals say the tap water was not safe for drinking after several city neighbourhoods went under water. They said they use this water for household work and fetch drinking water from elsewhere.

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MY DHAKA

PHOTO: **STAR LIFESTYLE**

An ode to Jaishtha

RBR *and* **MANNAN MASHHUR ZARIF**

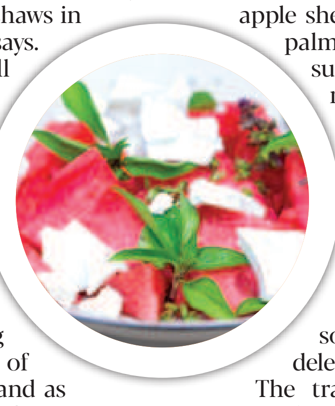
On any given Jaishtha or high summer day, fruit vendors ply the streets of the city selling delicious seasonal fruits. Jaishtha -- the second month of the Bangla calendar, is also called "mishtimash" or "madhumash" because of the wide array of fruits available during this time. It is as if the season compensates for the discomfort of the hot and humid climate with the sweetness of *deshi* fruits.

The season's first harvest of mangoes, jaam, jamruls, and litchis have already made their "red carpet" appearances in bazaars, roadside vans, and super shops. The creamy bites of ripe jackfruit, citrusy kagoji lebu or limes, various kinds of melons boasting a triad of flavour like our patenga watermelons and muskmelons or banggi, and other seasonal deshi fruits are all making their short seasonal rounds.

Fruit vendors are seen at the turn of every lane, their dexterous hands cutting juicy pineapples. The small pieces, mixed with some rock salt and *kasundi,* makean unmatched treat!

"This is a seasonal business for me," says Abdul Mutalib, a vendor seen selling a van full of pineapples in Kakrail. A rickshaw puller by profession, Mutalib has amassed a small amount which he chose to invest in the trade.

"I hope to earn significantly more by selling fruits this summer. Besides, I get to avoid pulling rickshaws in the summer heat," he says. When asked what he will do when the season is over, he said "I really do not know!" with a smile. "Pull rickshaws maybe."



Mangoes may be the most craved fruit of the season but taal (toddy palms or ice apples) are not lagging either. The jelly-like flesh of raw taal is scooped out and as one bites onto them, the fruit spritzes out a sugary sap that takes down a few degrees off your body temperature, it seems. Rich in antioxidants, this pulp makes its way to our city kitchens and is used to prepare various desserts.

When fully ripe, raw taal transforms into a fruit with a pulp that has a slight hint of bitterness to its otherwise sugary, dense edible mash. Dollops of crude, palm-sugar jaggery rolled in flour tortillas is the best breakfast of summer mornings! Palm rice flour fritters are as easy to make as banana fritters and can be munched hot from the wok. Coolers like a glass of ice apple sherbet and a spoonful of palm rice pudding are what summer vacations were made of at grandparents' home.

Supriya Das, a resident of Shantinagar, looks forward to the season for a special reason. "We have an age-old ritual of treating our sons-in-law with the most delectable fruits," says Das. The traditional Hindu ritual, Jamai Sasthi, ends with an elaborate Bengali feast which will be celebrated on June 8.

"There was a time when I used to buy fruits from the local bazaars and street vendors. Now, everything has become easier due to Facebook and I order directly from the traders of Rajshahi. The fruits get delivered to my daughter's in-laws in cane baskets. It's a hassle-free arrangement for me," Das adds.

The mango dealers of Chapainawabganj have adjusted to the needs of the time, and rather than relying on vendors in Dhaka, have set up seasonal, online businesses selling mangoes directly. They make promises of delivering only the best from the harvest.

And, this is just the beginning. Soon makeshift stalls on footpaths will start dealing in mangoes -- "chemical free and fresh from the gardens". Whether they sell the real stuff or is this just another gimmick, one cannot say with certainty.

Mangoes, litchis, jaams -- we all have our personal favourites. There was a time when people used to visit their ancestral homes to get a taste of the delectable fruits of the seasons, straight from the trees. People used to bring fruits like mangoes in sacks as they returned to the city.

Those days seem to be gone now. Our lives are now seemingly easier, and experiencing the proverbial "Mamar Bari" is now only a poem found in school textbooks!

CHEQUE FRAUD

Evaly's Rassel, Nasrin get one year in jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A Chattogram court yesterday sentenced former CEO of the controversial e-commerce platform Evaly, Mohammad Rassel, and his wife and Evaly co-founder Shamima Nasrin, to one year in jail in a cheque fraud case.

Chattogram Seventh Joint Metropolitan Sessions Court Judge Mohiuddin handed down the verdict in the absence of the accused, said plaintiff lawyer advocate Shahriar Yasir Arafat.

He said the court also fined the couple Tk 1.80 lakh and issued arrest warrants against them as they are absconding.

According to the case statement, Jasim Uddin, a resident of the Panchlaish area of the city, paid Evaly Tk 1.10 lakh in April 2021 for the purchase of a motorcycle.

However, Evaly did not deliver the bike. Later, Evaly gave him a cheque, which was rejected by the bank.

Following that, the victim filed a case against Rassel and his wife with the Chittagong court on October 2, 2021.

On September 16, 2021, Rassel and Shamima were arrested from their Mohammadpur residence in the capital in a case filed over fraud and embezzlement.

Shamima was released on bail in April 2022, and Rassel was released on bail on December 19, 2022.

NHRC demands probe, punishment for rape of woman, her suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has ordered an investigation into the gang rape and subsequent suicide of a woman in Kurigram following her family's inability to repay a loan.

This directive was given in a press release issued by the NHRC yesterday.

According to a complaint filed by the victim's uncle at Rajibpur Police Station in Kurigram on May 31, the woman and her husband, residents of Collegepara, had taken a Tk 20,000 loan from one Jaynal Abedin a few months ago. As they could not repay the loan, Jaynal and three others raped the woman for two months.

On May 22, the victim, who is the mother of a three-year-old child, told some of her relatives and neighbours and even recorded herself saying, "I was blackmailed, I was gang-raped."

Two days later, the couple ingested poison together, police said.

On information, locals came to their aid and took them to the hospital. On May 29, the woman died but her husband survived.

Railway off track

FROM PAGE 1

procurement and maintenance of trains were neglected.

Since most of the BR's workshops and loco sheds are very old and lack staff, the regular maintenance and repair jobs take longer than usual, and the standard of work is subpar.

Amid Covid-19 pandemic and a few years prior to that, the BR suspended operations of at least 99 local, commuter and mail trains due to shortage of locomotives, carriages and staff. Very few of the services resumed after the pandemic.

Currently BR is implementing 32 projects of which deadline for 22 have been extended at least once. Some of the other 10 projects are also running behind schedule, BR documents show.

Deadlines for some projects were extended by over 10 years.

MONEY PIT

Between 2008-09 and 2023-24 fiscal years, the BR received Tk 1,22,542 crore under the Annual Development Plan, according to documents.

As of March this year, the BR spent Tk 87,232 crore, meaning the agency could not utilise 27.81 percent of the allocated money.

The economic life of a locomotive is 20 years, officials said. But 167 (53 percent) of its engines are over 20 years old.

Out of 2,017 carriages, 982 are over 20 years old and 934 are over 35 years old.

BR's workforce size is roughly half of what is needed to ensure proper service. The agency employs 24,403 people against 47,637 authorised posts, according to BR data from March.

Of the 23,234 vacant posts, 20,666 are for third- and fourth-grade employees.

After years, BR began hiring in third- and fourth-grade positions in 2022, and has recruited 5,342 people so far.

CHRONIC SUFFERING

The prime minister in December 2023 approved new intercity trains between Dhaka and Noakhali, Lalmonirhat and Sylhet.

The BR launched the Dhaka-Lalmonirhat Burimari Express in March, but the Dhaka-Sylhet Tanguar Express and Dhaka-Noakhali Subarnachar Express services have not been started.

The scarcity of locomotives and carriages was there when the plans were made. But the aim was to launch the new trains ahead of the general election because of the demand from local representatives.

The two new train services on the Dhaka-Cox's Bazar route following the inauguration of Chattogram-Cox's Bazar line intensified the scarcity. As a result, the BR could not launch new trains.

Besides, the BR had a plan to introduce three more intercity trains on Dhaka-Cox's Bazar route, but it could not do that due to the shortage of metre-gauge locomotives.

Rather, the railways suspended operations of commuter trains on Chattogram-Cox's Bazar route, which was launched just before the Eid in April, on Thursday due to locomotive and manpower crises.

The BR is expected to open Dhaka to Jashore rail line via Padma Bridge next month.

According to a feasibility study on the project, at least 24 pairs of trains can be operated on the line daily once the entire 169km line is ready. But only five pairs of trains are operating on the partially opened line between Dhaka and Bhanga.

The BR wants to introduce new trains or increase frequency of the trains in the south-western region, and operate more freight trains, particularly from India, to effectively utilise the line.

But BR will face a manpower and carriage crisis, officials said.

LOCOMOTIVE CRISIS PERSISTENT

In the 1969-70 fiscal year, the BR had 486 locomotives. The number came down to 268 in 2019 when 72 percent of the engines were over 20 years old.

The crisis was so serious that BR in April 2019 sought to "hire" or "get as courtesy" 20 locomotives from India.

Between 2019 and 2023, BR added 40 broad-gauge and 30 metre-gauge locomotives under three projects and 30 "little used" Indian broad-gauge ones to its fleet.

But the addition could not give enough respite as BR had to replace many ageing locomotives.

Besides, the authorities have launched around 11 pairs of new intercity trains in the last five years, intensifying the scarcity.

Last year, the BR had to cancel two of its projects -- one to buy 70 metre-gauge locomotives and another for overhauling 21 metre-gauge locomotives.

Currently, it has only one project under which 30 metre-gauge locomotives will be procured. The deadline of the project is June 2028, meaning BR may not get those within the next three-four years, an official said.

In the last five years, it collected 350 metre-gauge and 150 broad-gauge carriages under three projects and overhauled 90 carriages, BR document shows.

A project for procuring 200 metre-gauge carriages was cancelled due finance related problems.

Despite the addition of around 600 carriages, the crisis is holding back BR from operating more trains, they said.

Currently, it has one project for procuring 200 broad-gauge carriages. The BR on May 19 signed a contract to procure the carriages, and as per the contract, it would get the carriages in between 20 to 36 months.

AUTHORITIES' SAY

Addressing a programme at the Rail Bhaban on May 28, Railways Minister Zillul Hakim said railway service could not be expanded due to shortage of manpower and carriages.

When this correspondent asked why they cannot do this despite receiving a huge allocation, he said, "We are working...We are working fast and cordially."

The government is going to import 460 carriages soon and existing carriages are being repaired, he added.

The minister said they were building a workshop in Rajbari with a capacity to repair and maintain 2,000 carriages a year.

Recruitment is taking a long time due to many obstacles, and it takes two to three years to complete the procedure, he added.

"We are not sitting idle," he said.

Siam texted

FROM PAGE 12

Police's NCB wing, Siam was arrested in Nepal.

According to police sources, Kathmandu police want to hand Siam over to Bangladesh police.

A three-member team led by Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (DB) of the DMP, went to Nepal on Saturday after learning that Siam was in custody.

However, there is no extradition treaty between Bangladesh and Nepal.

Sources said that since Siam used a Bangladeshi passport to enter Nepal, efforts were being made to have him deported.

Meanwhile, a special team of West Bengal CID investigating the murder case filed in Kolkata went to Nepal following Siam's arrest. India has an extradition treaty with Nepal, and the West Bengal police want to take Siam into its custody, said sources.

Investigators said Siam made his journey to Nepal on the instructions of Aktaruzzaman, the absconding alleged mastermind of the murder.

Aktaruzzaman, who is believed to be in the US, also went to Nepal before returning to the US.

Meanwhile, ADC Shahidur Rahman, a member of the Bangladesh police team in Nepal, was transferred yesterday with 11 other ADCs.

He was the supervising officer of the investigation into MP Azim's abduction case.

The Police Headquarters issued a circular in this regard without mentioning any reason for the transfer.

Essentials now luxuries as the poor reel from price shock: CPD

FROM PAGE 1

remained volatile. In April 2023, food inflation was 9 percent and soared to 13 percent in August last year before slipping to 9 percent in February this year. It went up to 10 percent in April.

This means many households in the low-middle-income nation have been struggling to make ends meet since food costs consist of a much higher share in their total consumption basket.

"Daily essentials have now become luxury goods," said Moazzem.

The CPD analysed the average daily prices of 34 essential food items in Dhaka from January 1, 2019, to May 19, 2024, and found that the price increase ranged between 10 percent and 310 percent.

The price of the fine variety rice has gone up by 17 percent and the medium-sized grain by 15 percent during the five-year period. The price of coarse rice, mostly consumed by the poor, has climbed 30 percent.

"The price of coarse rice has increased more than the varieties consumed by the rich. As a result, businesses are making more profit from the larger segment of consumers," Moazzem said.

Citing its previous reports, the CPD said the price of three common types of rice sold in the markets of Dhaka has been consistently higher than that of Thai and Vietnamese rice.

Similarly, the price of lentils has gone up by as much as 95 percent since January 2019. Loose flour was up 40 percent and packaged flour witnessed a price increase of 54 percent.

The price of unprocessed flour and processed flour has jumped 60 percent and 45 percent, respectively.

According to the CPD, both unprocessed and processed flour started rising in Dhaka before the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war.

"This indicates that there may be other domestic causes behind the increase, which warrants a comprehensive investigation by the Bangladesh Competition Commission."

Unrefined soybean oil price shot up by 84 percent to Tk 150 per litre while bottled soybean oil increased by 56 percent to Tk 163.

The CPD said prices in Dhaka's markets are higher than that in the world market. In April, the price of soybean oil in the international market was Tk 105 per litre.

"We don't understand why there is such a big difference in prices, and the inflated prices don't make sense even after considering import duties," said Moazzem.

"There needs to be a probe to see if there is any involvement of big importers or groups which control many segments of the market."

The price of palm oil more than doubled between 2019 and May this year.

The CPD also cited the yawning gap in sugar prices.

In Dhaka, sugar is selling at Tk 130 per kg, an increase of 152 percent from Tk 52 five years ago.

In April, the price of sugar in European countries was Tk 39 per kg while it cost Tk 96 in the US and averaged Tk 50 in the global market.

"We can't comprehend how the price of sugar can rise by 152 percent in five years," said Moazzem.

The price of local and imported onions rose by 164 percent and 167 percent, respectively. Likewise, the price of local garlic shot up by 310 percent, imported garlic by 221 percent, and ginger by 205 percent, according to the analysis.

'I've reached worst point of my cursed life'

FROM PAGE 1

Prof Yunus said, "I have nothing to do here. The gods and goddesses determine who should be cursed ... We have to appease them through a lot of hard work."

He did not say whom he meant by gods and goddesses.

Earlier, Judge Syed Arafat Hossain of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka set June 12 for issuing an order on charge framing against Prof Yunus and 13 others, said Belal Hossain, bench assistant of the court.

Before the charge-framing hearing yesterday, Prof Yunus, following some of his colleagues, entered the dock, an iron cage-like enclosure for the accused inside the courtroom.

He stayed there for a while and came out and sat on a bench. He was in the courtroom for the entire hearing, which lasted over three hours.

"For the first time, I had to stand in an iron-cage court dock ... I'll never forget this ... It is a part of this cursed life," said Prof Yunus.

"Two Nobel prizes -- one in my name and another in the name of Grameen Bank -- were given. Both have equal dignity. It was not awarded jointly, rather both are independent [awards]. There is no precedence in world history of one Nobel laureate filing a case against another ... It's written in our destiny, it's a part of the curse we have been carrying," he said.

" ... There might be complaints, but the complaint they filed using harsh language to attack me is baseless ... I have been accused of misappropriating the money which I have paid," he said.

"All the allegations against me and my colleagues have left a deep scar in my heart. It hurts because my family has been attacked. Our lawyer will say why we have to bear this curse," Prof Yunus said.

"As a citizen of the country, I want to ask why false cases are filed against anyone. My colleagues have dedicated their lives for the betterment of the humanity, why should they be harassed? Why should they enter the iron cage [court dock]?" he added.

Yesterday, the 14 accused, including Prof Yunus, also filed petitions with the court seeking discharge.

During yesterday's hearing, ACC Public Prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kazol argued for framing charges against the accused, while defence lawyers, including Abdullah-Al-Mamun and Mohammad Shaheenoor Islam, asked the court to discharge the accused.

On April 2, the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka transferred the case to the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka after accepting the charges pressed against the 14.

On May 2, the special judge's court granted them bail.

On February 1, Investigation Officer Gulshan Anwar Prodhan, a deputy director at the ACC, placed the charge sheet before the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court.

The 13 other accused include Grameen Telecom Managing Director Nazmul Islam, directors Ashraful Hassan, Naznin Sultana, Parvin Mahmud, M Shahjahan, and Nurjahan Begum.

On May 30 last year, Gulshan filed the case with the ACC's integrated district office in Dhaka.

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BUDGET 2024-25

Focus on economic stability: CPD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The primary focus of the government in the fiscal year 2024-25 budget should be on austerity measures and stabilising key macroeconomic indicators, particularly inflation and the exchange rate, according to Centre for Policy Dialogue.

Bangladesh Bank introduced policy measures like market-based interest rates to manage inflation and bolster reserves.

"The success of these policies will depend on consistent contractionary fiscal policies," said Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the CPD.

CPD recommended focusing on fiscal space, prioritising expenditure, ensuring good governance, and protecting vulnerable groups in public finance management for the next fiscal year.

At a CPD briefing titled "State of the Bangladesh Economy in FY2023-24," Moazzem said if the government doesn't reduce fiscal spending, monetary policies won't effectively control inflation or bolster forex reserves.

However, increased spending on social safety nets is necessary due to inflation's impact on the poor and fixed-income groups.

The lack of alignment between fiscal and monetary policies hampers their effectiveness in Bangladesh, he noted.

On the other hand, contractionary monetary policy causes sufferings for the private sector as it makes their business, and lifestyle costly and tougher, the economist said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

EXPANSION OF JHENAIDAH-JASHORE HIGHWAY

Progress slow, still Tk 2,912cr more sought

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Although the expansion work of Jhenaidah-Jashore Highway is yet to gain momentum, the project authority has sought a 70 percent hike in project costs.

The project deadline, which originally was December 2023, has already been extended to June 2026. Now, the project authority has again sought a six-month extension.

If approved, the project cost will rise to Tk 7,100.31 crore from Tk 4,182.05 crore, while the deadline will be December 2026, shows official documents.

The project authority said the rise in land prices and adding an interchange in Jashore's Chachra area are the main reasons behind cost rise.

The Project Evaluation Committee of the Planning Commission is scheduled to hold a meeting over the revised proposal on June 6, sources said.

Till March, the project saw physical progress of 12.25 percent.

In November 2020, the government approved the project to turn the 48.5km Jhenaidah-Jashore highway into a four-lane highway with service lanes on both sides. World Bank will provide the lion's share of the cost as loan.

The highway is part of a 260km road corridor -- Hatikamrul-Banpara-Kushtia-Jhenaidah-Jashore-Navaran-Satkhira-Bhomra -- that would be developed into a four-lane one aiming to improve cross-border connectivity.

When the Jhenaidah-Jashore expansion project was placed before Ecnec in November 2020, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed serious discontent after the road authority proposed the project's tenure to be five years.

Following her directive, the project period was cut to three years and December 2023 was set as the deadline.

In a rare move, the authorities appointed a project director within five days of the project's approval. However, the authority could not start project work within 2023.

Project Director Zabid Hasan said, "We could not complete the project due to ground reality."

The project was taken based on a feasibility study done in 2015, but there was no detailed design, he said, adding, "So, we had to hire consultants, draw detailed designs, and hire contractors to start the work."

He said they have already hired contractors for three packages and the contractors have already mobilised their workforces.

He hoped to get all the land for the project within this year.

WHY THE COST HIKE?

Planning Commission document shows to complete the project, the project authority has asked for an additional Tk 2,912.1 crore, of which Tk 1,831.81 crore is for land acquisition, even though no additional land would be procured.

Zabid Hasan mentioned that the land acquisition cost outlined in the approved Development Project Proposal (DPP) in November 2020 was calculated using the market prices from 2015.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

The highway is part of a 260km road corridor that would be developed into a four-lane one aiming to improve cross-border connectivity.

Original deadline Dec 2023
Extended till June 2026
Proposed new deadline Dec 2026

Original cost Tk 4,182.05cr
Proposed new cost Tk 7,100.31cr

Major reasons for cost hike
Increase in land prices
Addition of an interchange

Ensure gender balance in the newsroom

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Challenges for women journalists are increasing even with the proliferation of mass media, said Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury at an event yesterday.

Ensuring cyber security for female journalists is one of the major challenges, and technical skills are required for that, she said.

"Organisations working for the rights of women journalists should play a pivotal role in addressing all the challenges women face," she added, urging the Bangladesh Women Journalist Centre to focus on cyber security training for female journalists.

The Speaker made these remarks as the chief guest at the 4th National Conference of the Bangladesh Women Journalist Centre at the International Mother Language Institute in the capital.

With the theme "Pen as a Tool to Achieve Equality Between Women and Men," the conference was organised by BWJC.

Presiding over the event, BWJC President Nasimun Ara Haque Minu said despite the visibility of women journalists, their numbers are not increasing as they should.

She emphasised that women journalists still encounter challenges such as job loss and professional discrimination.

She also presented a 14-point demand that included ensuring that at least 30 percent of journalists in all media houses are women, promotion opportunities

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with an awardee of the national level competition on making a one-minute video documentary titled "Amar Chokhe Bangabandhu" at Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: **PID**

Will work with countries that support our dev: PM

BSS, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government will work with countries that support Bangladesh's development and prosperity, regardless of their involvement in conflicts.

"I first consider the development of my country. I will move ahead with those who will help us in our country's development," she said.

The prime minister was distributing awards among the first, second and third winners in several categories in the national level competition of making a one-minute video documentary titled "Amar Chokhe Bangabandhu" (Bangabandhu in my eyes) at Gono Bhaban.

Hasina also reiterated that Bangladesh does not want war, but peace.

75pc slum dwellers use firewood for cooking

Shows study; it affects health and environment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 75 percent of households in Dhaka slums rely on firewood for cooking, according to a recent study by Bangladesh Resource Center for Indigenous Knowledge, a non-profit organisation.

Slum residents also use plastic, polythene, wood dust, garment waste, kerosene, and tree leaves as cooking fuel, which impacts their health and pollutes the environment, the study said.

Among 469 households in 18 Dhaka slums, 42 percent have access to pipeline gas. Of the pipeline gas users, only 53 percent have formal connections, it also said.

Twenty-eight percent of households use cylinder gas. The average expenditure of a family on cooking fuel is Tk 1,514 per month -- 11 percent of their average monthly income.

Also, 57 percent of urban poor in Dhaka use a common cooking facility.

Regarding health risks, 14 percent of households link cooking smoke to coughing, while 25 percent connect it with symptoms such as cough, asthma, and chest discomfort.

Furthermore, 11.73 percent associate both asthma and coughing with cooking smoke, while 49 percent link health issues beyond respiratory ailments to it, the study revealed.

The study titled "Present Energy Use by Urban Poor and Challenges for Adoption of Renewable Energy: Situation in Dhaka City" was presented at a national dialogue yesterday, at The Daily Star Centre.

BARCIK, and Center for Atmospheric Pollution Studies and Coalition For The Urban Poor jointly organised the event.

Speakers said the urban poor should get access to cooking fuel and electricity at a cheaper cost. Besides, there should be opportunities for them to get renewable energy like solar power and community-based biogas plants in the slums, they added.

Speaking as the chief guest, Dhaka University Emeritus Prof Nazrul Islam criticised Rajuk for neglecting the urban poor in its plans.

Mohammad Ali Naqi, vice president

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

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Star report saves rural library

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

The Sarpukur Jubo Forum Pathagar, a library located in Tiparbazar area of Sarpukur union in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila, has recently been renovated.

Previously in a dilapidated condition, the library, which houses 15,000 books, was in danger of collapsing.

Following a report titled "Library with 15,000 books on verge of collapse" published in The Daily Star on May 20, Shaheen Hussain, director of Robin Printing & Packages Ltd in Dhaka, donated Tk 50,000 for the renovation.

Jamal Hossain, 24, founder president of the library, said, "We have been trying to build a permanent structure for our library. Over the past four years, we have constructed 13 pillars for a three-story library building on five decimals of land. However, due to a lack of funds, we have been unable to construct the roof."

The land for the library was donated by Abdul Sattar, a farmer from Tiparbazar village.

Shaheen Hussain, donor from Dhaka, said, "I will do my best to support the construction of the library's permanent structure."

The library, initiated by Jamal and a group of schoolchildren in 2014, started with 10 books. It now serves as a vital resource for the local community.

UNIVERSAL PENSION SCHEME

MPO-listed teachers, staff to be included

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken the initiative to include teachers and staff of Monthly Payment Order (MPO)-listed private educational institutions in the universal pension scheme.

To implement this initiative, the government formed a 14-member committee, its convener Additional Secretary of Secondary and Higher Secondary Division (Secondary-2) Rabiul Islam told this newspaper.

He said the committee was formed to prepare recommendations to permanently resolve the existing complexities of the welfare fund and retirement benefits for MPO-listed teachers and staff, and to bring them under the universal pension scheme.

"We already had a meeting regarding the implementation of the initiative today. Initially, we discussed identifying problems and looking for possible solutions in incorporating these teachers and staff into the pension scheme," he added.

The government will take steps accordingly based on those recommendations. If everything goes well, private school teachers will also receive pensions like those of government employees, he added.

Asked if the existing retirement and welfare trusts will be dissolved if the pension scheme is implemented, Rabiul replied, "We are not discussing it in our committee. The government will decide."

In April, the issue of including private teachers and staff under the universal pension scheme was raised at the second meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Education Ministry.

Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury instructed that a report be prepared and presented to the parliamentary committee. On May 6, the ministry formed the committee.

The committee also includes representatives from the Ministry of Finance, the National Pension Scheme, and officials from various educational departments. They are instructed to submit a comprehensive report within a short period.

Asked about any possible date for submitting the report, Additional Secretary Rabiul Islam said, "We just held our first meeting today. We will try to submit the report and recommendations as soon as possible."

Currently, there are nearly 30,000 MPO-enlisted schools, colleges, madrasas, and technical educational institutions. These institutions employ over 5 lakh teachers and employees. Since 1990, they have been receiving benefits from the welfare trust and retirement benefits from 2005. Under these two schemes, teachers receive a lump sum payment based on their length of service.

The government rolled out the universal pension scheme in August 2023 with an aim to bring all citizens aged above 18 under the coverage.

Progress slow

FROM PAGE 3

In the meantime, new land acquisition law came into force in 2017, which stipulates that landowners will get three times the actual price, which was twice the price in previous law.

Moreover, land prices have increased in the last few years, resulting in a hike in land acquisition costs, he said yesterday.

He said their project was supposed to end some 100 metres away from Chachra intersection on Dhaka-Bhanga-Narail-Jashore Benapole highway.

"RHD is going to turn the Bhanga-Benapole highway into a four-lane highway but it would take some more time. So, we will build an interchange at Chachra point for seamless vehicular movement at this intersection," he said.

If the interchange has to be built under Bhanga-Benapole highway expansion project, it will take some more time, which will increase the construction cost of the interchange, he said.

"So it was decided that the interchanger would be constructed under our project and it would cost around Tk 500 crore," he said.

Consultants are now designing the interchange, whose length would be around 3km, he said.

An interchange, also known as a grade-separated junction, is a set of roads usually designed on several levels. It allows vehicles to move from one highway to another without having to stop.

He said incorporating the interchange is the reason behind seeking six months more time for the project.

Besides, hike in dollar rates, increase in the height of some bridges following the vertical limit set by Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, and construction of a flyover near Jashore cantonment are other reasons behind the cost hike, show project documents.

Sundarbans: no time

FROM PAGE 5

lizards have been swept away by an 8 to 12-foot tidal surge.

SALINITY INTRUSION

Saline water intrusion into freshwater ponds in the Sundarbans has led to a crisis of fresh water, impacting both wildlife and human communities.

Dr Abu Naser Mohsin Hossain, divisional forest officer of Sundarbans West Forest Division, said 14 ponds in the division are now submerged in saltwater. "Desalination will be a major challenge," he added.

Mihir Kumar Doe, conservator of forest in Khulna circle, echoed him.

INFRASTRUCTURAL DAMAGE

The Forest Department estimates infrastructural damages at over Tk 6 crore. Sundarbans West suffered Tk 2.15 crore in losses, while Sundarbans East incurred Tk 3.50 crore in damages, according to Nurul Kabir, DFO of East Sundarbans.

The nipa palm forests spanning 11km were severely affected by the cyclone, with a tidal surge of up to 12 feet for nearly 36 hours. Eleven kilometers of Golpata forest in Burigoalini, Nalian, and Baniakhali areas of the west forest department sustained severe damage.

Naser reported damages to one pontoon gangway, 18 jetties, roads, barracks, solar plates, wireless towers, and generators.

Nurul Kabir mentioned damages to forest offices, patrol posts, freshwater ponds, and jetties, with 20 forest stations and 50 ponds affected, making quantification difficult.

Estimates on the number of trees uprooted were not made as of filing this report, but forest officials say it was not as much as previous super cyclones.

WHEN WILL SUNDARBANS RECOVER

Naser said while infrastructural losses can be recovered, the damage to the forest's biodiversity is irreparable and difficult to quantify.

"The Sundarbans might need 30-40 years to restore its natural balance," he added.

Dr Wasiul Islam, a forestry professor at Khulna University, expressed confidence in the Sundarbans' ability to recover within its ecosystem if left undisturbed.

He suggested employing scientific methods in post-disaster management.

Islam also suggested that effective protection against poachers and providing a conducive environment could help replenish animal populations like deer in the Sundarbans.

Benazir must return

FROM PAGE 5

that. Now, you are blaming the government. You can't do that," he said.

He said it's important to look at whether the government provides impunity to anyone after the allegation of corruption proves true.

Quader said the government does not interfere in the operations of the Anti-Corruption Commission and fully supports the investigation into the corruption allegations against Benazir.

Asked if it was a failure of the law enforcement or intelligence agencies for not finding out about Benazir's corruption, Quader said, "If there was any failure [on their part], they would also be brought to book. Every criminal will be tried. No leniency will be shown," he said.

Situation

FROM PAGE 5

circular that 400 tonnes of rice and 1,250 sacks of dry food have been allocated for the flood-affected areas.

Sheikh Russell Hasan, deputy commissioner of Sylhet, said, "Around 5,000 people had been staying in 550 shelters across 13 upazilas in Sylhet district during the flood. At present, around 1,806 people are still staying at the shelters [figure reported till Sunday]."

75pc slum dwellers

FROM PAGE 3

of Institute of Architects Bangladesh, said without the slum residents, it is impossible to achieve the clean energy goal of 2030 or 2040.

Prof Adil Mohammed Khan, president of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, advocated for shifting slum residents to formal housing and integrating them into urban plans.

Prof Khosru Mohammad Salim, director of Green Energy Research Center, suggested bio-plants as a viable energy solution for slums.

Chairman of CAPS Prof Ahmad Kamruzzaman Majumder presided over the programme, where pro-Vice Chancellor of State University Prof Nawzia Yasmin, DNCC Chief Town Planner Maksud Hashem, and Joint Secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon Aminur Rasul also spoke.

Focus on economic

FROM PAGE 3

CPD noted that the employment elasticity of GDP is declining, indicating that economic growth in Bangladesh isn't creating enough jobs. They observed a shift in employment from agriculture to industry and services sectors, with a reversal during the pandemic.

CPD recommended focusing on fiscal space, prioritising expenditure, ensuring good governance, and protecting vulnerable groups in public finance management for the next fiscal year.

The government must prioritise curbing illicit financial flows to prevent leakages. Efforts to reduce tax evasion should also be intensified, CPD said.

It also recommended continuation of directives to limit "unnecessary and luxury" public expenditure, including government vehicle purchases and international travel.

Additionally, the focus should shift towards improving factors like labour and capital productivity, skills, technology incorporation in exports, and the overall business environment to enhance competitiveness, as export earnings growth has been slowed despite currency depreciation incentives, CPD added.

Muntaseer Kamal, a CPD research fellow, warned that rising loan repayment and interest payments are increasing pressure on the external sector. He emphasised that controlling imports alone won't effectively boost foreign exchange reserves without addressing hundi and capital flight.

Kamal stressed the need for strong political will to halt capital flight.

Ensure gender

FROM PAGE 3

without gender discrimination, maternity leave with job and promotion security, and facilities such as toilets, restrooms, breastfeeding corners, childcare centres and safe transport for women journalists.

The demands also included presence of anti-sexual harassment committees, a code of conduct for interactions with female staff, a gender policy, and active measures to prevent online harassment.

Parveen Sultana Jhuma, general secretary of BWJC, Akhter Jahan Malik, finance secretary of BWJC, journalist leader Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, Jatiya Press Club general secretary Shyamal Dutta, Dhaka University Prof Robayet Ferdous, and Prof Dr Md Habibullah Talukder Ruskin, project director of Gonoshasthaya Samaj Vittik Cancer Hospital and Research Centre, among others, spoke at the event.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 3

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-45	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-50	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

খুলনা প্রকৌশল ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
খুলনা-৯২০৩

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

অত্র বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বিভিন্ন বিভাগের পার্শ্বে বর্ণিত তারিখ ও সময়সূচী অনুযায়ী উল্লিখিত সংখ্যক পদে বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় বেতন ও অন্যান্য আর্থিক সুবিধাদিসহ সম্পূর্ণ অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে সহকারী অধ্যাপক পদে নিয়োগের নিমিত্তে প্রার্থীদের সাক্ষাৎকার গ্রহন করা হবে। সহকারী অধ্যাপক পদের বেতন স্কেল ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/- (গ্রেড-৬) (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল ২০১৫ অনুযায়ী)।

Walk-in-interview

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম	বিভাগের নাম	পদ সংখ্যা	লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষার জন্য উপস্থিত হওয়ার তারিখ ও সময়
১।	সহকারী অধ্যাপক (সহযোগী অধ্যাপকের বিপরীতে)	কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিভাগ	২টি	তারিখ- ১০/০৬/২০২৪ইং সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকা

Walk-in-interview ক্ষেত্রে প্রার্থীগণকে উল্লিখিত সময়সূচী অনুযায়ী ভাইস-চ্যান্সেলর এর দপ্তরে উপস্থিত হয়ে তথায় দায়িত্বরত কর্মকর্তার নিকট পূর্ণাঙ্গ আবেদনপত্রের ৬টি সেট জমা দিতে হবে যার মধ্যে ১ সেটের সাথে ২ কপি সত্যায়িত ছবি এবং ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা অত্র বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের হিসাব বিভাগে নগদ জমা দিয়ে জমা রশিদ আবেদন পত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে।

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রেজিস্ট্রার
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GD- 922

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Phone No: 02-223360276
e-mail: ee_ajmpr@pwd.gov.bd

INVITATION FOR TENDER (OTM)

Memo No-25.36.2600.142.07.009.24-1293
1431 Bang.
Dated:------------------------
02/6/ 2024 Eng.

e-tenders are invited in e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by the Executive Engineer, Azimpur PWD Division, Newmarket, Dhaka.

Tender ID No.	Brief Description	Tender Documents Publication Date & Time.	Tender Documents Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Documents Closing/Opening Date & Time
993991	Construction of Multi storied residential flat for Government Officers in Azimpur Govt. Colony Zone-A, Dhaka. (Package no. W-8/A: Remaining works for Construction of 2 nos. 1500 sft. 20 storied building i.e. facing bricks, shower enclosure, granite, kitchen cabinet, kitchen hood, aluminum louver, WPC door shutter, MS gas pipeline related internal electric works & other finishing works). FY: 2023-2024	02-Jun-2024 17:00	12-Jun-2024 15:00	12-Jun-2024 17:00

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(Mohammad Moniruzzaman)
Executive Engineer,
Azimpur PWD Division,
Newmarket, Dhaka.

GD - 920

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Livestock Officer
Govt. Goat Development Farm, Sylhet
Department of Livestock Services (DLS)
Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
Phone: 0821-760867
www.dls.gov.bd

Dated: 02/06/2024

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SL no	Tender ID and Ref. no.	Name of Tender	Last Selling Date and Time	Closing Date and Time
1	**990948** 33.01.0000.344.07.001.24-366 Date: 02.06.2024	Procurement of Wheat Bran, Gram, Soyabean Meal and Vitamin Minerals Feed Premix (DB) under Government Goat Development Farm, Tilagor , Sylhet.	20-June-2024 12:00	20-June-2024 14:00
2	**990949** 33.01.0000.344.07.001.24-367 Date: 02.06.2024	Procurement of Khashari Bran, Maize, Di-Calcium Phosphate and Salt (Iodine Mix) under Government Goat Development Farm Tilagor, Sylhet.	20-June-2024 12:00	20-June-2024 14:10

০২/০৬/২৪
Dr. Mohammd Abdus Shahid Hossain
Livestock Officer (Addl. Charge)
Govt. Goat Development Farm, Sylhet
Telephone: 0821-760867
Mobile: 01319021872
e-mail: logfsylhet@gmail.com

GD-920

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Phone: 01799-990343,

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Date: 30-05-2024

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for procurement of the following works:

Sl No.	Description of works	Tender ID	Last selling of tender (date & time)	Tender closing & opening (date & time)
01.	Design, Engineering, Procurement, Supply, Construction, Installation, Hook-up, Testing, Commissioning, Startup and Hand Over of one 100 cubic meter/day capacity Water Treatment Plant (WTP) with 300 cubic meter RCC water storage tank & associated facilities at 4000 BPD CFP, Bahubal, Habiganj under Sylhet Gas Fields Limited.	Tender ID: 895272	26-June-2024 16:00 Hours	27-June-2024 14:30 Hours

1) This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
2) To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
3) The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited through any registered bank's branch.
4) Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

30.5.2024
Engr. Md. Kamrul Islam Sarder
General Manager (P&D)
E-mail: gmpnd@sgfl.org.bd

GD-917

PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

Sundarbans: no time to heal between cyclones

Remal claims 138 animal lives, causes infrastructural damages, contaminates ponds

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

In 2007, Cyclone Sidr ripped through the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest. The forest took the brunt of the storm, saving human lives by slowing down its destructive force.

However, it paid a heavy price. One-fourth of the forest area was damaged, with 8-10 percent completely destroyed and 15 percent partially damaged. Infrastructure within the Sundarbans was severely impacted, with offices, communication towers, and watercraft destroyed. Wildlife suffered immensely, with loss of habitat, displacement, and scarcity of food and water.

Two years later, Cyclone Aila struck. Around 40 percent of the forest's vegetation was destroyed, and 30-35 percent of the mangrove cover was damaged. The impact on wildlife was devastating, with endangered species such as tigers facing habitat disruption and food scarcity.

The Sundarbans continued to face the wrath of cyclones like Bulbul and Amphan. Each time the forest began to recover, another cyclone hit.

Then came cyclone Remal. Trees were uprooted, and a 10-12 ft tidal surge submerged the forest for nearly two days.

As the water recedes, the full extent of the damage is becoming clear. Carcasses are being recovered while the forest floor is littered with uprooted trees.

The Sundarbans is already grappling with the negative impacts of climate change, including rising salinity and extreme weather events like cyclones.

Given the repeated battering by cyclones and the ongoing effects of climate change, experts wonder how long it will take for the Sundarbans to recover. The answer? Maybe decades.

And before it fully recovers, there might be another cyclone waiting to strike... maybe next year or the year after.

DAMAGE TO WILDLIFE

According to the Forest Department, a total of 138 animals were found dead, including 134 deer and 4 wild boars. Additionally, 18 deer and one python were rescued and released back into the forest.

Experts said the actual number of dead animals could be higher. Countless wildlife, particularly deer, boars, snakes, and monitor

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Over 200 fishing trawlers damaged

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *from Barguna*

Tidal waves and strong winds under the influence of Cyclone Remal damaged more than 200 small and medium fishing trawlers in Barguna's Patharghata.

The trawlers sustained partial and complete damage despite taking shelters in different canals in the upazila during the cyclone. More than 400 fishermen are facing difficulties due to that.

Golam Mostafa Chowdhury, president of district fishery trawler owners' association, and Dulal Hossain, general secretary of district fishing trawler workers' union, confirmed it.

During the cyclone, the big trawlers from the district, which go fishing in the Bay, were anchored at different wharves amid the ongoing 65-day ban on fishing since May 20.

The small and medium-sized trawlers were used in fishing in Bishkhali and Baleshwar rivers and sought shelter in canals during the cyclone, they said.

The tidal surge and strong winds over a 30-hour long span during and after the cyclone left more than 200 of those trawlers damaged.

"I was along with two others on our small trawler to catch fish near the coast. The trawler got completely damaged in the cyclone, leaving us destitute," said Faruq Hossain, a fisherman from Chhonbunia.

Patharghata UNO Roknuzzaman Khan said, "I will discuss with the higher authorities on how to help the affected fishermen."

FLOOD IN SYLHET

Situation improves but many areas still waterlogged

MINTU DESHWARA, *from Sylhet*

While the rivers in Sylhet continue to flow above the danger level at different points, the flood situation in the district has shown signs of improvement, with water levels in the Surma and Kushiyara gradually receding.

Visiting Gowainghat, Companiganj, Kanaighat and Zakiganj upazilas, the most affected areas in the flood caused by downhill runoff of water from the hills, it was seen that the floodwater was receding.

"Between May 27 and May 29, there was more rain than usual due to the influence of Cyclone Remal. Also, there was heavy rain in Cherrapunji of Meghalaya, India on May 30. This resulted in flashflood and a rise in the water levels of the rivers in the district," said Deepak Ranjan Dash, executive engineer of Water Development Board in Sylhet.

"However, since then the rains reduced significantly. Cherrapunji received no rainfall in last 24 hours, and 54mm rain the day before. So, the flood situation is gradually improving. If it does not rain heavily, the situation will improve further in the next 3-5 days," he added.

According to BWDB sources, Surma river was flowing above 71cm in Kanaighat yesterday, down from 83cm on Saturday, while Kushiyara was flowing about 129cm above Amalshid Point yesterday compared to 193cm on Saturday.

Meanwhile, erosion and potholes on different roads have been becoming visible as water receded in some areas, including Raigarh section of Darbast-Kanaighat road and Kanaighat-Surighat road in Kanaighat upazila, and Gowainghat-Salutikar, Gowainghat-Jaflong and Radhanagar-Jaflong roads in Gowainghat upazila.

Local representatives said numerous mud houses in many villages collapsed, fish got washed away from ponds, and the crops were damaged in inundated fields due to flood.

"Upazila level officials of different departments concerned are on the ground in flood-affected and risky areas. Residents are being warned to safely evacuate their homes, markets and shops in flood-prone areas. A total of 56 shelters are ready in 13 unions of the upazila," said Md Towhidul Islam, UNO of Gowainghat upazila.

Meanwhile, the district administration said in a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Benazir must return home if found guilty

Says Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said former IGP Benazir Ahmed has to return home if found guilty of corruption, and the government will not compromise on the issue.

"Will there be no trial if he is not here [in Bangladesh]? Was a tax evasion case not filed against Tarique Rahman [BNP acting chairman] because he is abroad? Was the verdict not delivered?" said Quader.

He made the remarks at a press briefing held at the AL president's Dhanmondi political office.

In response to a journalist's query, Quader said it would not be appropriate to blame the government for the corruption committed by Benazir.

"Did any media write about Benazir's corruption before Kaler Kantha did it? No one [before] dared to do

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Two children die in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Two children were killed in road accidents in two districts yesterday.

In Rangpur, a four-year-old girl was killed and her grandmother injured as a truck ran them over at Hajirhat.

The deceased is Shefa Akter, 4, daughter of Saddam Hossain of Sadar upazila. The injured -- Bilkis Begum -- received treatment at a hospital.

The accident happened when Bilkis was taking Shefa to a grocery shop, said OC Rajib Bosoniya of Hajirhat Police Station.

In Thakurgaon, a four-year-old boy was killed as an easy bike hit him while he was crossing a road at Shingia village in Sadar upazila.

Agrani Bank PLC
Establishment & Engineering Division
Head Office
9/D, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka

Invitation for Tenders

1	Procuring entity name	Agrani Bank PLC, Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000.	
2	Procuring entity district	Dhaka	
3	Invitation for	Supply, Installation and Upgradation of CCTV System, Agrani Bank PLC, 14 Branches of Khulna Circle.	
4	Invitation Ref No.	ABL/E&ED/Eng/Mecha-195/2024	
5	Date	30/05/2024	
KEV INFORMATION			
6	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method.	
FUNDING INFORMATION			
7	Budget and source of funds	Own fund of Agrani Bank PLC.	
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
8	Tender publication date	30/05/2024	
9	Tender last selling date	23/06/2024	
		Date	Time
10	Tender closing date and time	24/06/2024	3.00pm
11	Tender opening date and time	24/06/2024	3.15pm
12	Name & address of the tender document selling office	Agrani Bank PLC, Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000.	
13	Receiving tender document	Agrani Bank PLC, Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000.	
14	Place of tender opening	Tender Opening will take place at the Primary Place	
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
15	Brief eligibility and qualification of tenderer	Tenderers who have: a) Not been prevented by order of any judicial court from entering into and/or signing contract with the procuring entity. b) Tenderers shall have at least 03 (three) years of overall business experience in similar works preceding the date of publication of IFT. c) Bidder must be the sole agent/commercial distributor of the proposed brand CC Camera or the contract and he/she must submit its all supporting documents. d) Certificate by the bidder stating that he/she had successfully completed CCTV installation, testing and commissioning works at govt/semi-govt autonomous organizations/ reputed limited company. e. No joint venture company is allowed.	
16	Tenderer to attach copies of the following documents	i) Up-to-date valid trade license ii) Up-to-date income tax paid certificate iii) Valid VAT registration certificate iv) TIN certificate v) Minimum amount of liquid asset i.e. working capital or line of credit certificate of the tenderer shall be Tk. 10.00 lac only. vi) Catalogue/ brochure. vii) The minimum specific experience as supplier in supply of similar goods of at least 2 contract(s) successfully completed within the last 3 years, each with a value of at least Tk. 7 lac. viii) Tender Submission Letter (Form PG3-1) ix) Bidder must be the sole agent/commercial distributor of the proposed brand CC Camera of the contract and he/she must submit its all supporting documents. x) International Standard Conformity Certificate and every other documents mentioned in TDS.	
17	Price of tender document (Tk)	1500/- (Tk one thousand and five hundred only) non-refundable Pay-Order from any branch of Agrani Bank PLC in favor of Agrani Bank PLC, Head Office, Dhaka.	
19	Name of official inviting tender	Md. Abdur Rahman.	
20	Designation of official inviting tender	Deputy General Manager.	
21	Address of official inviting tender	Agrani Bank PLC, Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000.	
22	Contact details of official inviting tender	02223381674	dgmeed@agranibank.org
23	a) The tenderer shall furnish registration certificate and evidence of being managed by Bangladeshi nationals in original and certificates of satisfactory completion of previous work for proposed brand CC Camera of above magnitude from the owner at the time of dropping the Tender documents. b) If communication is disrupted on the date of receiving and opening the Tender(s), the same will be received at the same time on the day after next working day. c) Furnishing of any false, misleading documents may result in rejection of tender and may lead to action under Reg. 127 of PPR 2008. d) The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever. No claims will be entertained in this regard.		

Md. Abdur Rahman
Deputy General Manager

GD- 914

প্রধান প্রকৌশলীর অফিস
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

Fax: 88-02-55167810
E-mail: vcoffice@du.ac.bd
registrar@du.ac.bd

টেন্ডার বিজ্ঞপ্তি (উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি)

মেমো নং ৮০৮(২)/প্রকৌঃ

তারিখঃ ১৯ জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৪৩০ বাংলা
২/৬/২০২৪ইং

ক্রঃ নং	কাজের নাম	টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ	টেন্ডার বক্স বন্ধের তারিখ ও সময়	টেন্ডার খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্য সংগ্রহের স্থান
১	ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ১০০০ ছাত্রের জন্য ১১-তলা বিশিষ্ট জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান হলের ডাইনিং ও ক্যান্টিনের জন্য তৈজষপত্র সরবরাহ।	১২/০৬/২০২৪ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।	১৩/০৬/২০২৪ সময়ঃ ১.৩০টা	১৩/০৬/২৪ইং সময়ঃ ২.১৫টা	প্রধান প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর, ঢাঃবিঃ।

উল্লেখিত কাজের সিডিউল মূল্য টাঃ ৪,০০০/- টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) জনতা ব্যাংক, টি.এস.সি. শাখায় একাউন্ট নং ৩৬০০০৩৯২ তে জমা দিয়া উল্লেখিত অফিসসমূহ হইতে দরপত্র দলিল সংগ্রহ করা যাইবে।

৩০.৫.২৪
মোহাম্মদ ইব্রাহীম
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, জোন-৩
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

GD-921

মসজিদ পাঠাগার সম্প্রসারণ ও শক্তিশালীকরণ প্রকল্প (৩য় পর্যায়)
ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন
[প্রতিষ্ঠাতাঃ জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান]
সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলা কার্যালয়
জেলা মডেল মসজিদ ও ইসলামিক সাংস্কৃতিক কেন্দ্র, সিরাজগঞ্জ
Email: islamicfsrj@gmail.com

স্মারক নম্বরঃ ১৬.০১.৮৮০০.০২২.০৭.০২.১৬.৫৯৬(৪)

তারিখঃ ০২ জুন ২০২৪খ্রিঃ

উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

০১	সংস্থা/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম	ঃ	ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন, সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলা কার্যালয়
০২	প্রকল্পের নাম	ঃ	মসজিদ পাঠাগার সম্প্রসারণ ও শক্তিশালীকরণ প্রকল্প (৩য় পর্যায়)।
০৩	দরপত্রের বিবরণ	ঃ	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি
০৪	মালের বিবরণ	ঃ	স্টীলের আলমারী
০৫	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের স্থান	ঃ	হিসাব শাখা, ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন সিরাজগঞ্জ
০৬	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	১২/০৬/২০২৪ তারিখ, অফিস চলাকালীন সময়
০৭	দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	১৩/০৬/২০২৪ তারিখ, বেলা ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
০৮	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	১৩/০৬/২০২৪ তারিখ, বেলা ১২:৩০ ঘটিকায়, দরপত্রদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)
০৯	দরপত্র গ্রহণের স্থান	ঃ	ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন সিরাজগঞ্জ
১০	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	ঃ	ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন সিরাজগঞ্জ
১১	দরপত্রের মূল্য	ঃ	১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা
১২	দরপত্রের জামানত	ঃ	৩৫,০০০/- (পঁয়ত্রিশ হাজার) টাকা
১৩	দরপত্র জামানত ধরণ	ঃ	দরপত্রের সাথে যে কোন তফসীল ব্যাংক হতে জামানতের টাকা পে-অর্ডার/ ব্যাংক ড্রাফট-এর মাধ্যমে উপপরিচালক, ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন, সিরাজগঞ্জ বরাবর জমা দিতে হবে।
১৪	দরপত্রদাতার অংশগ্রহণের যোগ্যতা	ঃ	দরপত্রের সহিত দরপত্র দাখিলের সময় প্রতিষ্ঠানের হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন সনদ, টিআইএনসহ আয়কর পরিশোধ সনদের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি ও দরপত্র দলিল অনুযায়ী অন্যান্য সকল যোগ্যতা।
১৫	দরপত্রের অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী এবং মালামালের বর্ণনা সিডিউলে উল্লেখ থাকবে। প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্বার্থে কর্তৃপক্ষ মালামালের সংখ্যা কম/বেশি করতে পারবেন। দরপত্র পিপিআর-২০০৬ এবং ২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) অনুসৃত হবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র অথবা সকল দরপত্র বা আংশিক দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।		

মোহাম্মদ ফারুক আহামেদ
উপপরিচালক
ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন সিরাজগঞ্জ

GD-919

The state should be more respectful towards filmmakers:

KAMAR AHMAD SIMON

PHOTO: **SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL**

Internationally acclaimed director Kamar Ahmad Simon is rather well-versed in the art of dealings on the international film festival scale. Over the years, he has accumulated numerous awards. To add to his repertoire, his fourth and much-awaited film 'Shikolbaha' (Silence of the Seashell) has recently been nominated for the prestigious Golden Goblet Award in the main competition of the Shanghai International Film Festival, which is Asia's largest film festival.

SHUCHISMITA TITHI

Following the release of ***Shunte Ki Pao! (Are you Listening!)***, the director patiently has been waiting for censor clearance for a year for ***Anyadin... (Day After...)***, the second film of his ***Water*** trilogy series. The unfortunate turn of having to wait for clearance came after he had already toured the film at various international festivals, back in 2022.

Kamar Ahmad Simon recently visited The Daily to speak about himself, his water film trilogy, filmmaking techniques, and other related subject matter.

Tell us about the journey of constructing your famed 'water trilogy'.

The water trilogy is made up of ***Shunte Ki Pao!***, ***Anyadin...***, and ***Aro Kichu Jibon***. The first film premiered in 2012, followed by ***Anyadin...***. Filmed from 2013 to 2019 – it debuted at International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) in 2021 after a two-year post-production. The film received grants from IDFA and Sundance and won awards at Locarno. In 2022, ***Anyadin...*** was showcased at various festivals, earning a Golden Eye nomination in Zurich and a Harrell Award in Camden.

In our country, viewers often look for stars on movie posters before deciding to watch a film and since my films don't feature any stars, I've always focused on making the film itself the star.

The language of your films has a distinct feature, which in hindsight might make many refer to them as documentaries. Is this language your own, or inspired by someone else's work?

Adwaita Mallabarman's novel, ***Titash Ekti Nodir Naam***, inspired by seaside life, feels real yet is celebrated as literature, not non-fiction. Individuals are continually driven, inspired, and influenced by various factors on a subconscious level. For me, a pure source of inspiration is Bengali literature. I consider myself a dedicated student of Bengali literature since I first began reading novels in the seventh grade, although I can no longer make time for it.

Apart from that, if anything has moved me, it is SM Sultan's paintings. During my time as a Buet student, I visited an exhibition featuring SM Sultan's paintings. Standing before a towering 30-feet canvas of his work remains a vivid memory, leaving an indelible impression on me. Since then, I immersed myself in Sultan's life and art, finding great inspiration.

For instance, the inception of the movie ***Shunte Ki Pao!*** was sparked by an image on the front page of The Daily Star, depicting people using their bare hands to block a broken dam—a scene reminiscent of Sultan's paintings.

I craft my films with a specific purpose: to immerse the audience so deeply that they forget they're watching a movie. For example, during the filming of ***Shunte Ki Pao!*** I experimented with multiple cameramen before picking up the camera myself to create haunting, unsettling frames with a slightly shaky quality. I aimed to evoke unfiltered emotions that viewers couldn't access directly but could experience through the film.

In your film, characters exist under their real names, resembling real individuals on-screen. For example, in 'Shunte Ki Pao!', there's a scene where a mother teaches her child at home. How did you familiarise the people of a region like Sutarkhali with being filmed? How long did it take, and what challenges did you face?

I prefer creating films directly on the location with the people involved, rather than hiring outside actors and constructing sets. ***Shunte Ki Pao!*** was a lengthy process of about three and a half years. After exploring various locations, I settled on Sutarkhali. It took around six months to acclimate the locals to the camera, requiring multiple visits back and forth.

Initially, when I arrived, everyone was dressed up, expecting a fancy arrangement. But I'd turn off the camera and engage in conversation instead of filming. After repeating this process several times, they began to think, "He talks about movies but doesn't make them." Once they relaxed and got used to my approach, I began shooting. It demands patience, strategy, and a lot of learning. It's a form of practice.

Is there an update on the clearance situation of 'Anyadin...'? Numerous directors opt to release movies on OTT platforms due to censorship hurdles or prolonged waiting periods. Would you tread that way?

I have directed ***Shunte Ki Pao!*** and ***Anyadin...*** for the big screen, not tailored for small screens. I aim to showcase the films in theatres, hence keeping my patience with censorship. Regarding the complexity faced by directors, the state should be more respectful towards filmmakers. This isn't just about me, it's about all directors. Removing a movie from its timely narrative is akin to erasing time itself and, in a way, erasing the filmmaker.

Are our independent and young filmmakers turning more to festivals?

I think a person only steps out when the local audience fails to appreciate their [filmmakers'] talent and understand their message. If someone wants to express themselves through a film but faces obstacles, they seek alternative avenues. Think about it, attending events organised by the likes of the IDFA Institute might become the reason why someone like me gets noticed by the media. In retrospect, this highlights our cultural issue of neglecting local creatives otherwise. Whenever a Bangladeshi film reaches a globally respected platform, it becomes a representation of Bangladesh itself.

The world is inherently Eurocentric, and for those of us from post-colonial nations, it feels like we're still in a heavily colonised environment. By screening my films in major local theatres, I can connect with audiences within my own country. Once a person receives the appropriate acknowledgement from local audiences, they can never really leave the domain. Even then, my audience still values my international reach.

However, I do hold certain criticisms — directors nowadays are less concerned about the type of film they create, why they create it, or what message they try to convey. Personally, I believe that art has never existed, nor will it ever exist, solely for its own sake. Art always has a purpose.

Translated by Zareen Nawar.

NEWS

US masterclass a lesson for Tigers

FROM PAGE 12

the board for the loss of two wickets.

But then began the Aaron Jones show, as the USA batter along with his partner Andries Gous lit the Grand Prairie Stadium on fire, as the hosts made 120 runs off the next six overs to flip the script on the Canadians.

Jones, especially, wreaked havoc against the Canadians, hitting as many as 10 sixes and remaining unbeaten on 94 off 40 balls, powering the hosts to the target with seven wickets and 14 balls to spare.

The USA-Canada game was a clash between two sides who played the game with the same positive intent, with the Americans outdoing their neighbours, unlike the clash between Bangladesh and India, which was clearly a mismatch.

In the warm-up match, which took place in the newly built Nassau County Stadium in New York, Bangladesh suffered a 60-run defeat against India, making only 122-8 chasing 183.

Although the match in itself was inconsequential, as it was not recognised as a T20I and both teams fielded more than 11 players, Bangladesh's batting was an eyesore, devoid of any positive intent with the exception of Mahmudullah's 28-ball 40.

After losing three wickets for 10 runs, it never seemed like Bangladesh could get anywhere near the target, even though India captain Rohit Sharma used just two overs of Jasprit Bumrah, didn't complete the quotas of Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja and used three overs of part-timer Shivam Dube, who took 2-13.

The Tigers failed to bat positively in a match where there were no stakes, while associate teams like the USA, who just last month handed Bangladesh a 2-1 series defeat, and Canada displayed positive intent and fearless cricket that the Bangladesh players and coaches often talk about.

Even after the defeat against India, Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto spoke about having faith in their capabilities in T20s, even though barring some series wins at home and one away series win against the West Indies in 2018, the Tigers have nothing to show for in T20Is. Every metric indicates a clear dearth of ability alongside a lack of intent in the Bangladesh team when it comes to T20s. It's high time for the players and the management to put their heads out of the sand and acknowledge it.

16,970 workers missed deadline

FROM PAGE 12

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, said the workers who failed to reach Malaysia will be able to file their complaints with the newly formed probe body.

"We also plan to return the money to workers who could not go to Malaysia."

Several migrant workers, who were unable to go to Malaysia as they did not get air tickets despite having all valid documents, said they had mortgaged land, sold cows, and borrowed money from banks and relatives to pay the recruiting agencies.

"It was my dream to go to Malaysia and get a well-paying job so that I could provide financial stability for my family. My dreams have now been dashed as I failed to arrive in the country within the deadline," said Manikganj's Anisul Islam.

Like Anisul, several thousand others were also devastated after having to return from the Dhaka airport, failing to fly to Malaysia on May 31, the deadline for entering the country.

In March, Malaysia announced May 31 as the deadline to bring in foreign workers from 14 countries, including Bangladesh.

The country resumed hiring Bangladeshi workers in 2022 after a four-year suspension over allegations of irregularities in the recruitment process.

Between August 2022 and April 2024, nearly 4.50 lakh Bangladeshis migrated to Malaysia.

Last year, Malaysia was Bangladesh's second-largest overseas job market after Saudi Arabia.

Remittance jumps 32pc

FROM PAGE 12

remittance inflow rose ahead of Eid-ul-Azha as the country's migrant workers typically send more money home ahead of the major religious festival for Muslims.

On the other hand, the remittance inflow increased because some banks started offering higher rates than the official rates for collecting remittances, they said.

Banks are now offering Tk 117 to Tk 120 per dollar in case of collecting remittances after the introduction of a new exchange rate system -- "crawling peg".

On May 8, the central bank introduced the crawling peg exchange rate system and allowed banks to buy and sell US dollars freely at around Tk 117 in line with the prescription of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Bank officials said the remittance inflows are not up to par considering the record number of manpower exports.

In 2023, a record 13.05 lakh workers went abroad for jobs, up 15 percent year-on-year, according to data from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.

The remittance inflow was $2.16 billion in February, up from $2.11 billion in January, according to the central bank data.

Bankers said if the inflow continues to rise in the upcoming months, it will be a relief for the government by helping to boost the country's foreign exchange reserves.

Man kills wife

FROM PAGE 12

Aziz had rented.

Ashamoni, of Bogura Sadar, married Azizul, of Dhunat upazila, three years ago.

Azizul was stationed in Chattogram and Ashamoni mostly lived with her parents.

Azizul was staying in Bogura on a two-month vacation and was supposed to leave for Chattogram on Saturday night.

Before that, he took his wife and son out for shopping on Saturday afternoon. Later, he took them to the hotel and killed them sometime during the night, police said.

Ashamoni's family has demanded the highest punishment for Azizul.

ACC to make list of those who aided Benazir

FROM PAGE 12

Benazir's properties, like the Bhawal Resort in Gazipur."

These individuals reaped benefits when Benazir was the Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner, director general of Rab, and the IGP.

The ACC investigation team found that Benazir bought many pieces of land at prices much lower than the market value.

A list of sub-registrars who helped Benazir is being prepared, sources said.

ACC Chairman Mohammad Moinuddin Abdullah told The Daily Star yesterday, "Our investigation team is completely independent.

"They will investigate the way they think fit. The team will also interrogate individuals, whose names will come up for aiding and abetting Benazir."

The ACC team suspects that some bank officials might have helped Benazir withdraw Tk 70–80 crore from 33 bank accounts before they were frozen.

On April 25, the ACC wrote to the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) seeking information on Benazir's bank accounts. The ACC received a response on May 20.

The accounts were frozen three days later, but during this period, Benazir withdrew the money.

The ACC will investigate whether the banks submitted Cash Transaction Reports and Suspicious Transaction Reports to the Bangladesh Bank.

Banks and other financial institutions have to report to the BFIU about cash transactions of Tk 10 lakhs and above. They have to file a Suspicious Transaction Report if they feel something is off.

On April 18, the ACC decided to launch an inquiry into the allegations of amassing illegal wealth by the former police chief after a Bangla daily ran reports on this.

It also formed a three-member committee to probe the allegations.

On May 23 and May 26, Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court ordered authorities to confiscate his assets under 202 deeds and freeze his bank accounts.

The agencies picked by KL to blame

FROM PAGE 1

The issue of recruiting foreign workers in Malaysia came to the fore again as there have been numerous reports of joblessness, indebtedness and other forms of exploitation in Malaysia, which halted the foreign workers recruitment on May 31.

Between August 2022 and May 2024, about five lakh Bangladeshi workers went to Malaysia. UN experts in their letter to Bangladesh and Malaysia said the Bangladeshi migrants had to pay $4,500 to $6,000 as recruitment fees.

They even wrote about the bribes in recruitment process involving the Malaysian government officials, agents, and even Bangladesh high commission in Malaysia.

They called for measures to protect the thousands of Bangladeshi workers who face destitution and risk detention. They also enquired about the measures both the countries were taking regarding bilateral cooperation, policies, and investigations to improve the migrants' situation.

With none of the countries responding in 60 days, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights made public the letters on May 27. Later, Malaysia's Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva replied on May 28 and the Bangladesh mission the next day.

Among other things, Bangladesh mentioned how Malaysia played the role in selecting the 101 Bangladeshi recruiting agencies.

Recruitment industry insiders alleged that those who could pay hefty sums to leaders of the syndicate of 101 agencies were selected for the recruitment job.

The Bangladesh mission said the recruitment process and procedures had been agreed upon centred on an online-based system -- Foreign Workers Centralised Management System (FWCMS), which is developed and operated by the Malaysian government.

"As a result, there should be no scope for sending any Bangladeshi workers to Malaysia using false employment visas," the letter said.

According to Malaysian media, controversial IT company Bestinet is contracted by the Malaysian government to maintain the FWCMS.

Industry insiders said Bestinet President Aminul Islam Abdul Nor is a key figure behind the foreign workers' recruitment syndicate and manipulation.

The letter of Bangladesh to the UN experts says in the initial stage of the labour recruitment in August 2022, Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia used to inspect the employer companies before attesting the job demand letters -- an exercise meant to verify the genuineness of the jobs.

Later, the high commission suspended the process as the Malaysian foreign ministry officially requested the Bangladesh mission not to conduct such company inspection saying the matter fell under the jurisdiction of the competent Malaysian authorities, the letter mentions.

In joint working group meetings, Bangladesh raised the issue of non-placement of newly migrated Bangladeshi workers and requested the Malaysian authorities to take necessary remedial actions.

The letter added that Malaysia's Department of Labour (DoL) has prohibited 48 employers from recruiting foreign workers, including from Bangladesh.

In the letter, Nadzirah Osman, Malaysian permanent representative to the UN in Geneva, said the DoL relocated 1,664 foreign workers in 2023 and 910 workers this year to new employers.

It said Malaysia restricted the entry of foreign workers in the formal sector since May 31 to close the loopholes of exploitation and allow the government to reassess the country's foreign workers' needs.

She reaffirmed Kuala Lumpur's commitment to protect the rights of migrant workers in the country.

Israel accepts

FROM PAGE 12

opened fire on targets in central Rafah, a jet fired a missile at a house in the western Tel al-Sultan district and artillery shelling targeted the southern Brazil neighbourhood, witnesses said.

In the occupied West Bank, two Palestinian teenagers were killed by Israeli gunfire, the Palestinian health ministry said.

Elsewhere in Gaza, Israeli helicopters fired at targets in Gaza City's Zeitun and Sabra areas, and an air strike hit a house in the city's east, AFP reporters said.

Three people were killed including a woman and a child, when an air strike hit a family apartment in Gaza City's Daraj neighbourhood.

أين
حكام المسلمين؟

People take part in a pro-Palestinian rally in Banda Aceh, Indonesia yesterday, as Israel continues to pound Gaza Strip.
PHOTO: REUTERS

MALNUTRITION HITS GAZA

Palestinian mothers search for milk

AFP, *Deir El-Balah*

Amira al-Taweel scoured pharmacies in northern Gaza for milk to feed her child, but could not find a single bottle to satisfy his hunger.

"Youssef needs treatment and milk, but there' none available in Gaza," the 33-year-old mother told AFP at Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in central Gaza where her son was admitted suffering from malnutrition.

"I feed him, but no milk as it's not available. I feed him wheat (flour) which makes him bloated," she said, as Youssef lay on a narrow bed, his frail body receiving desperately needed medication through intravenous tubes in his feet.

At least 32 people, many of them children, have died of malnutrition in Gaza since the Israeli offensive began on October 7.

But aid agencies warn that the situation is even worse when it comes to children. On Saturday, the World Health Organization said that more than four in five children had gone a whole day without eating at least once in 72 hours.

The rise in malnutrition among Gaza's children is largely a result of humanitarian aid that enters the Palestinian territory not reaching its intended destination, aid agencies said.

At Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital, mothers were concerned about their malnourished children.

After Youssef and another baby boy, Saif, were admitted, their mothers sat next to them, worrying about how long they could survive on the food the hospital provides.

Won't ditch Ramaphosa to form coalition

Says S Africa's ANC

REUTERS, *Johannesburg*

South Africa's once dominant African National Congress (ANC) acknowledged that it had been humbled by an election that ended its 30-year majority but vowed not to replace President Cyril Ramaphosa as a condition to forming a new governing coalition.

Official results from Wednesday's vote, due yesterday evening, will confirm the end of the ANC's unchallenged grip on political power and start the clock on a race to strike a deal with one or more opposition parties.

Military ready to stop Taiwan independence

Warns China defence chief, calls for greater exchanges with US

AFP, *Singapore*

Chinese Defence Minister Dong Jun warned yesterday that his military is ready to "forcefully" stop Taiwan independence but called for greater exchanges with the United States.

The remarks at an annual security forum in Singapore followed the first substantive face-to-face talks in 18 months between the two countries' defence chiefs.

"We have always been open to exchanges and cooperation, but this requires both sides to meet each other halfway," Dong told the Shangri-La Dialogue where he met with US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Friday.

"We believe that we need more exchanges precisely because there are differences between our two militaries."

Dong and Austin met for over an hour at the luxury hotel hosting the forum, which is attended by defence officials from around the world and in recent years has been seen as a barometer of US-China relations.

After the meeting, Austin said that telephone conversations between US and Chinese military commanders would resume "in the coming months", while Beijing hailed the "stabilising" security relations between the countries.

This year's Shangri-La Dialogue comes a week after China held military drills around self-ruled Taiwan and warned of war over the US-backed island following the inauguration of President Lai Ching-te, who Beijing has described as a "dangerous separatist".

"The Chinese People's Liberation Army has always been an indestructible and powerful force in defence of the unification of the motherland, and it will act resolutely and forcefully at all times to curb the independence of Taiwan and to ensure that it never succeeds in its attempts," Dong told the forum yesterday.

PROVINCIAL POLLS

BJP retains power in Indian state bordering China

REUTERS, *Guwahati*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has won the regional vote in Arunachal Pradesh, a state bordering China, while a local party swept to power in Sikkim, a Himalayan state, officials and politicians said yesterday.

Provincial elections in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim were held on April 19, simultaneously with the first phase of the national polls.

The BJP comfortably retained power in Arunchal Pradesh by winning 45 of the 60 seats.

Modi on social media X said the people of Arunachal Pradesh had given "an unequivocal mandate to politics of development".

A senior BJP politician Ashok Singhal said the results were a "curtain raiser" ahead of national election results that will be declared tomorrow.

"This is just the trailer ahead of the real show on June 4. The massive victory that PM Modi will win has started with Arunachal Pradesh," he said.

Iran's Ahmadinejad to run in polls

REUTERS, *Dubai*

Iran's hardline former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has registered to run for president in the country's June 28 election, organized after the death of Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash last month, Iran's state television reported yesterday.

However, he could be barred from the race: the country's Guardian Council will vet candidates, and publish the list of qualified ones on June 11.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়
বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদ
বান্দরবান
ফোনঃ +৮৮০২৩৩৩৩০২১৬১ (অফিস), www.bhdc.gov.bd, bhdcbd@gmail.com

স্মারক নং-২৯.৩৫.০৩০০.০০৩.৩০.০৫০.২৩.৬৯৯ তারিখঃ ৩০/০৫/২০২৪খ্রিঃ

মনিহারী ও অফিস সামগ্রী সরবরাহের/ক্রয়ের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদের ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরের জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় মনিহারী ও অফিস সামগ্রী ক্রয়/সরবরাহের লক্ষ্যে নিম্নবর্ণিত বিবরণ মোতাবেক আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রঃ নং		বিবরণ		
১	মন্ত্রণালয়/এজেন্সী	পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়		
২	প্রকিউরিং এন্টিটির নাম	বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদ, বান্দরবান		
৩	কাজের নাম	বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদের ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরের জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় মনিহারী দ্রব্যাদি ও অন্যান্য অফিস সামগ্রী সরবরাহ।		
৪	দরপত্র নং	০১/২০২৪		
৫	ক্রয় প্রক্রিয়া	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি		
৬	অর্থের উৎস	সংশ্লিষ্ট খাত		
		১ম পর্যায়	২য় পর্যায়	৩য় পর্যায়
৭	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ	১০/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ বিকাল ৪.০০টা পর্যন্ত	১৯/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ বিকাল ৪.০০টা পর্যন্ত	২৫/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ বিকাল ৪.০০টা পর্যন্ত
৮	দরপত্র দাখিলের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১১/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ বেলা- ১.০০টা পর্যন্ত	২০/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ বেলা ১.০০টা পর্যন্ত	২৬/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ বেলা ১.০০টা পর্যন্ত
৯	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১১/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ বেলা- ১.১০টা পর্যন্ত	২০/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ বেলা ১.১০টা পর্যন্ত	২৬/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ বেলা- ১.১০টা পর্যন্ত
১০	দরপত্র বিক্রয় ও খোলার স্থান	প্রশাসন শাখা, বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদ।		
১১	দরপত্র জমা দেয়ার স্থান	সংরক্ষিত দরপত্র বক্স, প্রশাসন বিভাগ, বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদ।		
১২	দরপত্রদাতাগণের যোগ্যতা	দরপত্র সিডিউল মোতাবেক		
১৩	(ক) মালামালের বর্ণনাঃ (খ) লোকেশনঃ (গ) দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্যঃ (ঘ) দরপত্রের সিকিউরিটিঃ (ঙ) কার্যসম্পন্নের সময়কালঃ	দরপত্রের সহিত সংযুক্ত অনুমোদিত তালিকা মোতাবেক। বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদ। ২,০০০/= (দুই হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) ২০,০০০/= (বিশ হাজার) টাকা চাহিদা মোতাবেক ইস্যুকৃত ক্রেডিট অর্ডার স্লিপ/ কার্যাদেশ প্রদানের পরবর্তী ০৩ দিনের মধ্যে।		
১৪	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম ও পদবি	ক্য শৈ হ্লা, চেয়ারম্যান, বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদ।		
১৫	দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত কোন তথ্যের প্রয়োজন হলে	প্রশাসনিক কর্মকর্তা, মোবাইল- ০১৫৫০৬০১৮২০।		
১৬	বিশেষ শর্ত	দরপত্র সিডিউলের বর্ণনা মোতাবেক		
১৭	আলোচ্য দরপত্র অনুমোদন/বাস্তবায়ন	পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) মোতাবেক।		

ক্য শৈ হ্লা
চেয়ারম্যান
বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদ

GD-913

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, নেত্রকোণা

"দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি"

২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বৎসরের ১ম কোয়ার্টার (জুলাই-২০২৪ হতে সেপ্টেম্বর-২০২৪) এর রেশন সামগ্রী ক্রয়/নিলাম এর নিমিত্তে "The Public Procurement Rules-2008" অনুসারে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়/জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ।
২.	সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
৩.	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	পুলিশ সুপার, নেত্রকোণা।
৪.	কি কারণে দরপত্র আহবান	রেশন সামগ্রী ক্রয়/সরবরাহ।
৫.	দরপত্র সূত্র নম্বর	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, নেত্রকোণা'র স্মারক নং-৩৪৮৯/ই,
৬.	তারিখ	তারিখ-৩০/০৫/২০২৪ খ্রি.।
কাজের বিবরণ ঃ		
৭.	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।
অর্থের উৎস ঃ		
৮.	বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	রাজস্ব খাত।
তথ্যাদি ঃ		
৯.	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	০৩/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রি.।
১০.	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৩/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১১.	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৪/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রি. বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।
১২.	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময়	২৪/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা ঃ		
১৩.	অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা ঃ	
	দরপত্র ডকুমেন্ট/সিডিউল বিক্রয়কারী অফিস	১। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, নেত্রকোণা। ২। ডিআইজি, ময়মনসিংহ রেঞ্জ এর কার্যালয়। ৩। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, ময়মনসিংহ।
	দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী/অফিস	১। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, নেত্রকোণা।
	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, নেত্রকোণা।
১৪.	প্রি টেন্ডার সভার স্থান, তারিখ, সময়	প্রি টেন্ডার সভার স্থান ঃ পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, নেত্রকোণা। তারিখ-২৩/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রি., সময় ঃ সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা।
দরপত্র সম্পর্কিত তথ্য ঃ		
১৫.	দরপত্র যোগ্যতা	১। হালনাগাদ নবায়নকৃত ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ২। আয়কর সনদ, ৩। ভ্যাট রেজিষ্ট্রেশন, ৪। ব্যাংক সলভেন্সী সনদ, ৫। সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ, ৬। অন্যান্য যোগ্যতা যা টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট/সিডিউল-এ উল্লেখ আছে।
১৬.	মালামালের পরিমাণ/বিবরণ ঃ	

গ্রুপ নং	আইটেম	পরিমাণ	দরপত্রের মূল্য (টাকা) (অফেরৎযোগ্য)	নিরাপত্তা জামানত (টাকা)	কাজ সম্পন্ন করার সময় (দিন)
০১	মশুর ডাল (উন্নতমানের)	৪০,০০০ কেজি	১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা	৮০,০০০/- (আশিহাজার) টাকা	১৫(পনের) দিন
০২	সয়াবিন তৈল (বিএসটিআই এর মান নিয়ন্ত্রন সীল বিশিষ্ট ২ লিটার, ১ লিটার, $\frac{1}{2}$ লিটার স্বচ্ছ প্লাস্টিকের কনটেইনার)	৪০,০০০ লিটার	১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা	১,০০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ) টাকা	১৫(পনের) দিন
০৩	পরিবহন (লোড/আনলোড)	-	৪০০/- (চারশত) টাকা	৫,০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা	১৫(পনের) দিন
০৪	খালি বস্তা (নিলাম বিক্রয়)	খালি হওয়া সাপেক্ষে	৪০০/- (চারশত) টাকা	৫,০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা	১৫(পনের) দিন
০৫	গম পেশাই	৯০,০০০ কেজি	৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা	১৫,০০০/- (পনের হাজার) টাকা	১৫(পনের) দিন
০৬	লাকড়ী (শুকনা আম)	২,৪০০ কেজি	২০০/- (দুইশত) টাকা	১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা	১৫(পনের) দিন
০৭	চিনি (উন্নতমানের)	২৪,০০০ কেজি	১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা	১,১০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ দশ হাজার) টাকা	১৫(পনের) দিন

দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারীর বিবরণ ঃ		
১৭.	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম	জনাব মোঃ ফয়েজ আহমেদ, পিপিএম-সেবা
১৮.	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী	পুলিশ সুপার।
১৯.	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, নেত্রকোণা।
২০.	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	ফোন-০২৯৯৬৬৫১৫২০, ফ্যাক্স-০২৯৯৬৬৫১৫৯৯।
২১.	বিশেষ শর্তাবলী ঃ	
	ক) নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের পর আর কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।	
	খ) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	
	গ) দরপত্রে উল্লেখিত যে কোন আইটেমের পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি অথবা কমানোর বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের ক্ষমতা রয়েছে।	
	ঘ) দরপত্র "পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন, ২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮" মোতাবেক সকল শর্তাবলী কার্যকর হবে।	

০২/০৬/২৪
(মোঃ ফয়েজ আহমেদ, পিপিএম-সেবা)
বিপি-৭৯০৬১১৯৭২১
পুলিশ সুপার
নেত্রকোণা।
ফোন-০২৯৯৬৬৫১৫২০, ফ্যাক্স-০২৯৯৬৬৫১৫৯৯।
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GD-918

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Must our migrants pay the price every time?

The govt cannot treat our remittance warriors with such apathy

The level of apathy demonstrated towards our migrant workers—on the backs of whose remittances our economy is built—by the government is abhorring. Over 16,000 migrant workers failed to reach Malaysia before the deadline of May 31, as mismanagement by government authorities and local recruiting agents made their departure impossible. In early March, Malaysia announced that it would be closing its doors on aspiring Bangladeshi migrants—along with workers from 13 other countries—because of anomalies in the worker recruitment process. The government had pledged to address such anomalies when Malaysia resumed hiring Bangladeshis—after a four-year hiatus—in August 2022 and had even signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to that effect.

The government, however, failed to keep its promise and migrant workers, who were supposed to spend no more than Tk 78,990 for the whole process, had to spend around Tk 5 lakh on average. The reason for this, according to industry insiders and researchers, is that a syndicate of 100 Bangladeshi recruitment agents, who were selected by the Malaysian authorities, created a monopoly-like situation, which ensured workers had no other way of getting to Malaysia without spending hefty sums. It has been further alleged that several members of the Bangladesh parliament, their relatives and political leaders are beneficiaries of the clique, and even the Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia get a cut. These are extremely serious allegations that demand immediate investigations.

On top of failing to address such serious corruption, the Bangladesh government has been so lackadaisical in its response to Malaysia's deadline that hundreds of migrant workers had to wait for hours at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to catch flights, only to return home devastated. Many aspiring workers had gone to the airport without tickets after receiving assurances from local recruiters—no doubt, having paid hefty sums—that they would be given tickets on time. Following this massive debacle, the state minister for welfare and overseas employment said the government would look into the incident and take action against those responsible. But why hasn't the government investigated and punished anyone responsible for the mismanagement and corruption that has been ongoing in regards to labour migration to Malaysia over the years? And given its woeful track record, can anyone believe the government will do so now? And as for the migrants who failed to leave as a result of the government's mismanagement this time, who will compensate them for their sufferings and expenses?

The amount of corruption and mismanagement plaguing the entire labour migration process clearly indicates that it goes up to the highest levels of our government. And it is indefensible that our hard-working migrants are having to pay the ultimate price. We have said this repeatedly, and we will say it again: the government must investigate all of the allegations thoroughly and hold those responsible to account.

To be born poor and a woman!

The govt needs to do more to protect the marginalised

There is no doubt that we, as a nation, have failed to protect our women and children, as evident by the statistics on rape, murder and other gender-based violence in this country. The magnitude of women's vulnerability once again came to the fore through a recent report in our daily. A woman in Kurigram died by suicide after loan sharks repeatedly gang-raped her over a period of two months, because she failed to repay a loan of Tk 20,000.

That such an incident could take place in a country that boasts of economic growth with a per capita income of $2,650 (approximately Tk 3 lakh) and where loan defaulters, who owe crores of taka, go scot-free, feels like a cruel irony. It is obvious that the fruits of our so-called economic progress did not reach this woman and her family. But what really sealed her fate was her identity as a woman in a country where toxic masculinity reigns supreme and impunity for gender-based violence is commonplace. Consequently, the perpetrators used rape as a weapon to "punish" not just her but her husband, who also ingested poison but survived.

We need to take a long hard look at the nation we have become—one without equity, justice or hope for the poor and vulnerable. All our proud proclamations of economic development and women's empowerment ring hollow against the horrific injustices suffered by the victim. The government must rethink its current priorities; after all, what's the point of development if it is going to leave so many behind? What does it say about our justice system that a woman would rather take her life than seek redress?

We cannot allow this tragedy to become another statistic. The criminals in this particular case must be brought to book quickly and meted out exemplary punishment so that no one dares to commit such crimes again.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Tiananmen Square massacre

On this day in 1989, the Chinese government called in the military to put down a pro-democracy demonstration carried out by more than 100,000 people in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, resulting in hundreds of deaths.

FY25 budget should focus on the right priorities

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SAYEMA HAQUE BIDISHA

The national budget of FY2024-25 is set to be announced at a time when Bangladesh's economy is going through a difficult phase, facing high inflation and declining foreign exchange reserves. These challenges have partially been attributed to the falling value of the taka against the US dollar and a declining trend in remittance earnings and modest export inflows. While analysing the challenges of the upcoming budget, there are certain long-standing issues that need to be addressed—namely sluggish private investment, increased debt burden, dismal revenue mobilisation, inefficient implementation of development projects, lack of effective governance in the financial sector, etc. Resource allocation of the budget must also address the fundamental issues of reducing poverty particularly in the face of high inflation, managing rising inequality, sustaining growth, and generating employment. Though Bangladesh's budget structure is shaped on the basis of medium-term budgetary framework (MTBF), a certain degree of adjustment based on the short-term priorities are feasible too.

The most important task for the upcoming budget is to determine the priorities and manage resource allocations accordingly. The top priority must be bringing the inflation rate down to a tolerable level, instead of focusing on accelerating growth or ambitious and costly large-scale investment programmes. In April this year, the point-to-point inflation rate was as high as 9.74 percent, which put not only the low-income but also the middle-income people under serious pressure. Besides, though it is not within the direct purview of the budget, restoring macroeconomic stability through careful planning and strategising is of paramount importance. As for the forex reserves, since the hike in August 2021, we observe a steady decline with the gross reserves, which stood at $18.61 billion on May 21, 2024. In recent months, the gap between the supply and demand of dollars in the current account has widened along with the decline in the financial account balance, putting an upward pressure on the price of the greenback. While the artificially retained exchange rate was at Tk 110 till May 8, the market rate exceeded Tk 116, causing a faster depletion of forex reserves. Finally, very recently, the Bangladesh Bank set the crawling peg mid-rate (CPMR) at Tk 117 per US dollar, up from Tk 110.

Against this backdrop, the revenue and expenditure strategies should be aligned with the priorities. To contain the unprecedentedly high inflation, necessary downward adjustments of VAT, regulatory duties, import taxes, etc could give some relief to ordinary people. A one-percentage-point cut in the source tax on incomes from the supply of essential food commodities, as expected to be proposed by the government, is a right step. In order to compensate the deficit in revenue for this tax cut as well as to broaden the fiscal space, a massive reform is needed, gradually shifting the focus towards direct taxation.

As part of tax reform initiatives, digitalisation at every level of monetary transactions and making the revenue collection mechanism fully automated is essential. In addition, decentralising the tax system and tax offices, arranging tax fairs at different localities with certain incentives, severe penalty in case of corruption or harassment of clients, making submission of tax return certificates mandatory, making the surcharges more progressive, redesigning income tax brackets, making excise duties more progressive, etc can have important implications. Redesigning wealth tax in a progressive manner should be seriously considered too. Given the rising trend in income inequality, such reforms in direct taxation should be implemented with even greater emphasis.

In order to provide some comfort to the low-income groups, a massive shift is needed in favour of safety net allocations. The open market sale (OMS) activity should be expanded significantly by increasing the number of OMS trucks, including more items on the list, and subsidising those items by a greater margin. Besides, initiatives like rationing and fair price shops need to be introduced and operated. Revisiting the beneficiary selection criterion is also needed to correctly identify the vulnerable people. Though the government is planning to increase the number of beneficiaries along with the per capita allocation of several safety net programmes, given the high inflation rate, a multi-fold increase is needed to the allocation.

The government can also incentivise the private sector through small tax rebates to safeguard the interests of existing workers through monthly ration, subsidised mid-meal, etc. Besides, the safety net programmes need to be revisited while focusing on the urban poor living in slum areas. While analysing the safety net budgets, we should however keep in mind that it includes allocations for pension earners as well as interest payments of savings certificates. It is therefore crucial to track the amount of safety net allocations of these payments, which are actually directed towards those at the grassroots level. To combat the rising inflation, policy directions for effective market monitoring should be outlined in the budget. Initiatives for a quick implementation of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) should also be considered.

While considering the priorities for the next budget, though the target of macroeconomic stability is not a directly related fiscal target, important changes can be made through carefully designed strategies. For example, in order to encourage dollar inflow, there is a 2.5 percent incentive for remitters. Though this step has increased the inflow of remittances in the short term, as long as there is any divergence between the official and the unofficial rates, remitters will have monetary incentive to send remittances through the informal channels. Therefore, it is important to consider non-monetary incentives for the remitters, and in the long run, it is crucial to eventually move towards a market-driven unified exchange rate regime. However, in this regard, it is crucial to have effective background management of the relevant institutions.

Another reason for the increased flow through informal channels is the existence of the informal hundi market, based on black money. To channel foreign currency through formal means, strict measures should be taken to constrain the syphoning of black money through informal channels. To boost trade-related taxation as well as to put a constraint on the outflow of foreign currency, luxury commodities need to be taxed at even higher rates.

Allocations in different expenditure heads must be done in a careful manner while curtailing lesser important expenses and prioritising expenditure for social infrastructure, e.g. education, healthcare and social safety net. Despite low revenue mobilisation, these expenditure heads should not be compromised. With the twin macro concerns of the government, e.g. forex reserve depletion coupled with the falling value of the taka, the central bank has taken different contractionary policy stances to tame down inflation. As a result, the pace of job creation has slowed down. Consequently, the upcoming budget must prioritise incentivising the micro, small and cottage industry through tax rebates, subsidies of different forms, etc for small-scale job creation.

VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

Due to the forex crisis, careful consideration is also needed in case of any large-scale investment, and the priority should be to concentrate on quick completion of the ongoing ones. Given the narrow fiscal space, it should also be kept in mind that larger deficits and associated domestic financing can fuel inflation, whereas costly foreign financing can have further negative implications on the overall macro scenario. A more balanced approach in case of deficit financing while focusing more on long-term multilateral financing sources instead of costly bank financing is a better approach at this stage.

Finally, although the national budget is a tool for resource allocation and management, it is also expected that, given the prevailing challenges in certain important institutions, the upcoming budget will offer specific policy directions to tackle such underlying challenges of the economy, especially those related to low revenue mobilisation and irregularities in the financial sector.

The untold agony of Cyclone Remal

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MONIRA SHARMIN

Can you imagine living under the open sky, bereft of shelter, having lost your home to the sudden and merciless onslaught of a cyclone? For those who have not experienced such devastation, it is difficult to imagine such a dire situation. Government assessments to date indicate that at least 150,000 homes have been destroyed or damaged across 19 districts, affecting an estimated 639,000 people, of whom about 274,000 are children. Despite technological advancements that allow us to monitor a cyclone's trajectory, including its source, wind speed, estimated landfall time, and lead time, structural mitigation measures have not kept pace, as evidenced by Cyclone Remal.

The floodwaters left half a million people stranded. Significant damage was inflicted on agricultural land, shrimp and fish enclosures were swept away, road connections were severed in some locations, and salty water seeped in, depleting freshwater supplies. Many survivors are now compelled to live in cramped, filthy, temporary shelters or improvised housing. Some people may even find it difficult to rebuild their homes and lives while being displaced for prolonged periods.

While the cyclone tore through the nation's coastal regions, at least 26 people in Khulna, Satkhira, Barishal, Patuakhali, Bhola, and Chattogram lost their lives, mostly from collapsing walls and falling trees. The tidal surge triggered by the cyclone flooded many areas, leaving settlements underwater as embankments broke. The people whose houses were destroyed by the storm mostly took refuge with neighbours or relatives. Though awareness campaigns and preparations for the disasters led to at least 800,000 people being moved to cyclone shelters, significantly decreasing the death toll, the loss of lives during Cyclone Remal raises questions.

As you may recall, a young man wrote the words "We want dam, not relief" on his chest in a photo that went viral on social media right after the cyclone. This image effectively illustrates the precarious nature of reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts. In addition to disaster preparedness, dams and levees require prompt maintenance and reinforcement. Significant infrastructure vulnerabilities were revealed by the recent cyclone. Many houses in the coastal region are not constructed to withstand strong winds and torrential rain, resulting in extensive damage and the eviction of residents. Disaster management professionals have long emphasised the need for constructing stronger, more climate-resilient homes for vulnerable populations in these areas.

Widespread and protracted power outages resulted from substation damage and power line damage triggered by cyclone winds and flooding. Emergency response operations were hampered by damage to communication towers and networks, leaving isolated communities unable to request support. In at least 45 districts, the cyclone prompted blackouts and hindered telecommunication services. The initial statement from the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) stated that 22,218—or 48 percent—of the 45,601 towers had been out of order. Another report indicated that the cyclone left 1.73 crore people without electricity.

Every cyclone invariably causes a great deal of suffering. Even though the death toll is frequently highlighted in post-cyclone assessments, the impact of disasters cannot be fully appreciated based solely on this statistic. Beyond fatalities, a large number of people suffer injuries that may necessitate ongoing medical care and rehabilitation. Survivors may experience trauma, anxiety, and depression, and they may lose their homes, livelihoods, and loved ones—all of which are often disregarded in the aftermath.

The disruption in daily life extends to various facets of existence. The closure of schools, destroyed and damaged, impedes children's education, potentially causing long-term detriments to their development. Economic activities are halted as businesses face destruction and farmers lose their crops and livestock, leading to financial instability and poverty. The environmental impact is also significant, with the destruction of natural habitats and contamination of water sources posing additional long-term challenges.

Structural measures, such as repairing and reinforcing dams and levees, are critical to mitigate the impact of cyclones as they play a vital role in controlling floodwaters and protecting communities from inundation. Addressing the broader implications of cyclones also requires a holistic approach that includes psychological support for survivors, restoration of livelihoods, and rebuilding of community networks. Efforts should also focus on improving housing standards and developing sustainable agricultural practices to enhance resilience against future storms.

We need to ensure that impacted communities receive food, clean water, medical attention, and temporary housing as soon as possible. At the same time, start repairing and fortifying vital infrastructure, such as levees, roads, electricity lines, dams, and dwellings, using designs that are climate-resilient. The government, other national and international organisations should come together providing financial support, reestablishing livelihoods, and resurrecting local businesses to aid in the economic recovery. We have no chance of easing the suffering that results from natural disasters unless we make all-encompassing and persistent efforts.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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Advertisement: 01711623910
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GPO Box: 3257

Subscription:
01711623906

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Spare us the hypocrisy

BLOWIN IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza
is professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

Those who are familiar with my writing know that I am not a big fan of bureaucracy, either civil or military. Although I recognise the advantages of comprehensive systemic checks and balances for prudent decision-making, I believe the system primarily depends on institutional memory. Any incoming officer with idealist vision and indomitable passion to change the system soon learns that conformity and compliance are the rules of the game. They become a cog in the wheel, repeating what they are supposed to do.

In one series of *Asterix*, there is a satirical depiction of a young Roman officer who gets surprised that his colleagues are better off documenting everything in triplicate on stone tablets rather than going to fight. As a young soldier, he is dying to meet and kill his enemies. However, once battered, he simply picks up his chisel and begins writing reports in stone. The Roman centurion in *Asterix in Spain* experiences a harsh reality. The Romans taught the British. The British taught the use of carbon papers in typewriters to do the triplicates. Today, a digital CC is enough. And bureaucracy has not changed much.

Interestingly, I am writing this piece while sitting in what was once considered to be the Western tip of the world: A Coruna in Spain. The Galician flag represents the westernmost trading port with a setting sun. The Romans called the tip of the Iberian peninsula Cape Finisterre, to denote "*finis terrae*" (End of the Earth). Hence, Julius Caesar thought it important to build a lighthouse, named after Hercules, on the shore of the North Atlantic, thinking this was the place where the world ends. The belief was so strong that one of Jesus Christ's apostles, St James, wanted to be buried here, which led to the construction of Santiago de Compostela. His disciples brought his remains from Jerusalem, and later, in the ninth century, they built a cathedral in his honour. But it is also from Spain; Christopher Columbus dared to cross the Atlantic Ocean to open new frontiers for the West.

So here I am sitting in Spain, at the juncture of the end of the old world and the beginning of the new world. Here, I am surfing the internet to get news from home. This investigative report by DW on our military personnel who serve in the UN Peace Corps is available. The gist of the report is pretty straightforward: some of the military soldiers participating in these missions in various conflict-ridden territories around the world were allegedly involved in extrajudicial killings while they were serving in the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab). DW sought a comment from the UN to verify the allegations, but the international bureaucratic organisation responded by stating that it was not feasible for them to conduct a background check on every member of their troops involved. The DW report was fuming at the idea that Bangladesh earned $4.5 billion from its military personnel who might have been guilty of human rights violations.

Palestinians search for food among burnt debris in the aftermath of an Israeli strike on an area designated for displaced people, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on May 27, 2024.
FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

> **DW's attempt to act as the moral police from a Western perspective leaves me wondering: are you overlooking the broader picture? I understand the burden of guilt with which Germany treads the Holocaust memory carefully. But how can you discuss human rights violations when you have nothing to say about 40,000 dead in Gaza?**

At the height of political arson and anarchy that engulfed the country, Rab came into existence. Crossfire became a buzzword, and every day our national news parroted the same old narrative of killing in self-defence. I asked one of my army friends why they used the same narrative every time there is a crossfire. He replied candidly that their legal team had suggested it. Their plights bear a striking resemblance to those of the Roman soldier in *Asterix:* documentation precedes action. But facts remain: Rab's intervention helped us get out of a dark phase of a national crisis. Indeed, there are allegations of institutional and individual abuses of power, such as the contract killings by individual officers in Narayanganj. There are reports of the forced disappearance of political activists. Another DW report stemmed from the flow of such missing individuals.

However, DW's attempt to act as the moral police from a Western perspective leaves me wondering: are you overlooking the broader picture? I understand the burden of guilt with which Germany treads the Holocaust memory carefully. But how can you discuss human rights violations when you have nothing to say about 40,000 dead in Gaza? How do you respond to soldiers killing 45 refugees in a refugee shelter in Rafah, a father clutching his daughter's decapitated body against an inferno, or when 600 inmates perish by 2,000-pound bombs? At a time when the world is witnessing genocide, which will eventually need a UN intervention, you criticise a country that supplies soldiers for the most difficult areas where your own soldiers do not want to go? You criticise a government that earns its salaries through hard work in hazardous conditions. They are not your e-genies, trading in cryptocurrencies to make billions. Haven't you heard about what the British soldiers or the Americans have done in Kenya or Iraq? You must pick Bangladesh to prove your moral superiority. Seriously?

Human rights violations are a universal phenomenon. I find it problematic when individuals selectively promote certain ideas with the intention of harming a country's reputation and economy. A single accident at a garment factory can trigger—and rightly—a flurry of compliance issues. But as our entrepreneurs will tell you, our Western buyers will not give them any extra cent for the investments the factories are making in improving their working conditions. They will shove tons and tons of bureaucratic certificates at you to force you to comply. In the end, they will see their own benefits.

I am not a big fan of bureaucracy. I chose academia because I could distance myself from it. At a time when the International Court of Justice faces daily defamation and neglect by the West—the same West which has reached its nadir, revealing its hypocrisies daily—we require visionary global leaders who can defy the established hierarchy and devise a solution to protect human rights across the board. Change must come from the centre. If you fail to do so, there will be new centres to form new circles.

As I sit here at the intersection of the West, I begin to envision a future free from hypocrisy.

SBTi debate has major implications for RMG suppliers

RMG NOTES

Mostafiz Uddin
is the managing director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

A row has broken out about the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), a corporate climate action organisation, which could have significant implications for garment manufacturers around the world, depending on how it plays out. The SBTi is the world's best-known initiative that supports global enterprises in their efforts to reduce carbon emissions in line with sciences aligned with global agreements such as the Paris Agreement. Many of the world's largest fashion brands have set science-based targets for 2030 and beyond.

The biggest challenge in meeting these targets has been in reducing Scope 3 emissions—in supply chains, essentially. For fashion brands, reducing the amount of CO2 emissions related to garment production and textile processing is a huge task, especially given that so much of this manufacturing takes place in countries that use "dirty" energy such as fuel and gas.

Up until now, the SBTi has indicated that in order to meet their science-based targets, signatories must make absolute reductions in their carbon emissions. In order to do this, they would need to support their supply chains in the transition to renewable energy sources.

This is no easy task. It also explains why fashion brands have been in prolonged conversations with their suppliers in recent years to look at how they can measure and reduce carbon emissions.

Recently, however, the SBTi issued a statement suggesting they would, moving forward, allow voluntary carbon offsetting schemes to contribute to CO2 emissions reduction targets in supply chains. This news was significant for the fashion industry as many brands are indeed struggling to reduce Scope 3 emissions while also hitting business growth targets.

The SBTi said that, when properly supported by policies, standards and procedures based on scientific evidence, the use of environmental attribute certificates for abatement purposes on Scope 3 emissions could function as an additional tool to tackle climate change. Consequently, SBTi decided to extend their use for the purpose of abatement of Scope 3 emissions.

After the SBTi issued this statement, there was a huge uproar among environmental activists. They claimed that by allowing carbon offsetting to contribute towards emission abatement, the SBTi was taking a huge risk. Why? Because it has long been argued that carbon offsetting schemes are not trustworthy and poorly regulated.

Indeed, in recent years, we have seen a number of scandals whereby such schemes were shown to be bogus and/or contributing very little to environmental causes. Environmentalists are also concerned that many such schemes take place in remote parts of the world, so are difficult to monitor.

After the backlash, the SBTi responded quickly and issued another statement. This time, it said it was reviewing the situation and would update its guidance later this year. For now, it seems that we are back to a situation where carbon offsets are not allowed to be used in lieu of absolute reductions in carbon emissions.

Why is all this important? It's actually a huge debate for fashion supply chains—and suppliers in Bangladesh.

If the SBTi were to choose to allow carbon offset schemes to be used to help brands meet their climate goals, the pressure to directly cut supply chain emissions would be greatly reduced. I am not suggesting that fashion brands would take the easy road and rely solely on offsets in order to meet their climate targets. What I do think, however, is that brands would suddenly feel they had breathing space after several years during which they have struggled to balance business priorities with the need to reduce their carbon emissions.

So what now? From what I have learnt so far, even many Western nations are finding it challenging to meet the ambitious climate goals they have signed up for. Shifting to renewable energy is a slow and cumbersome process. We are talking about a completely new way of doing things as we dismantle the energy infrastructure which fuelled the industrial revolution.

I am all for progress and as many of my colleagues and friends will know, I have spent more than a decade championing environmental causes. I am also, however, a pragmatist. The way I see it, the only way some industries are going to reduce their emissions in the short term is to stop growing, period. This would mean recession and major societal upheaval. Do we want that?

Perhaps there is a middle way. Maybe the climate offsetting schemes that have been discredited in the past could be improved. What if countries collectively pump billions into tree-planting and reforestation? What if huge amounts of money is invested in new carbon capture technologies so we can find out whether they work or not, and the level of impact they can have? I see no reason why such schemes could not at least provide a partial solution. There is always a way, but I agree fully that poorly regulated offset schemes cannot be allowed to derail environmental goals.

My advice to the SBTi would be to open up a debate on this issue. Invite the experts on board and ensure that all discussions take place in an open and transparent manner. These issues affect us all, and discussions around them should not take place behind closed doors.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Divisional Forest Officer
Chittagong Hill Tracts South Forest Division
Rangamati
E-mail: dfochts@gmail.com

শেখ হাসিনার নির্দেশ
জলবায়ু সহিষ্ণু বাংলাদেশ

Invitation for Tender

Memo No. 22.01.8400.856.05.001.2024.1442 Dated: 02/6/2024

	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
2	Agency	Bangladesh Forest Department.
3	Procuring entity name	Divisional Forest Officer, Chittagong Hill Tracts South Forest Division, Rangamati.
4	Invitation for	Supply of service workers through outsourcing
5	Invitation Ref No.	12/Revenue (Outsourcing) of 2023-2024 Date: 02/6/2024.
KEY INFORMATION		
6	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
7	Budget and source of funds	GOB
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
8	Tender Package No.	South/2023-24/S1
9	Tender package name	Supply of service workers through outsourcing
10	Tender publication date	03/6/2024
11	Tender last selling date	23/6/2024 up to 4.00pm
12	Tender dropping & closing date and time	24/6/2024, 09.00am to 1.00pm
13	Tender opening date and time	24/6/2024, 2.00pm
14	Name & address of the office(s)	
	- Selling tender document	Rangamati Sadar Range, CHT South Forest Division, Rangamati.
	- Receiving tender document	(1) Office of the Conservator of Forest, Rangamati Circle. Rangamati. (2) Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, CHT South Forest Division, Rangamati.
	- Opening tender document	Office or the Divisional Forest Officer, Chittagong Hill Tracts South Forest Division, Rangamati.
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
15	Eligibility of tenderer	• Tenderers will be the firms having minimum 3 (three) years experience of manpower supply through outsourcing. • Tenderers shall have the legal capacity to enter into the Contract under the Applicable Law. • Tenderers will be the firm having licence from Department of Inspection for factories and establishments. • Tenderers shall have fulfilled its obligations to pay taxes & VAT under the Provisions of laws and regulations of Bangladesh. • Others eligibility are mentioned in Tender Document.
16	Brief description of services	Supply of service workers through outsourcing (Despatch Rider-01 No. & Mali - 08 Nos.)
17	Price of tender document	Tk. 1000.00 (one thousand) Taka only (non-refundable)

Package No.	Identification of Package	Location	Tender security amount	Completion time in weeks/months
South/202324/S1	Outsourcing service workers	Chittagong Hill Tracts South Forest Division, Rangamati	56000.00 (fifty-six thousand) Taka only.	12 months

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
18	Name of official inviting tender	Dr. Md. Zahidur Rahman Miah
19	Designation of official inviting tender	Divisional Forest Officer
20	Address of official inviting tender	Chittagong Hill Tracts South Forest Division, Rangamati.
21	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: 0233-3371125, E-mail: dfochts@gmail.com
22	Work order is subject to be issued upon releasing of fund.	

The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the tender proceedings.

02/06/2024
Dr. Md. Zahidur Rahman Miah
Divisional Forest Officer
Chittagong Hill Tracts South Forest Division
Rangamati
Phone: 0233-3371125

GD- 914

SCIENCES of Difference

Most of the scientific professions of the late colonial period were dominated by Bengalis. This enthusiasm had also inspired an almost-irrational faith in the transformative capacity of science and technology.

PROJIT BIHARI MUKHARJI

In 1935 Hemendrakumar Ray gave us a disturbing glimpse into an uncanny future. In a novel that is more a moral treatise on national science than histrionic pulp fiction, Ray described a fictional nation of Bengalis in the deepest heart of east-central Africa. An ancient shipwreck, he narrated, had left a hapless but plucky group of Bengalis in the deeply forested region. Undaunted, they had proceeded to build an incredibly advanced and supremely powerful civilization. They had not only remade their hostile environs, but indeed had remade themselves. Their bodies, tastes, reproductive modes—all had been modified to make them more efficient. Efficiency and national progress had been established as the sole criteria for all walks of life. Individual likes and dislikes were entirely expunged. Worst of all, basic human sympathy and fellow feelings had been subordinated to the cult of scientifically mandated efficiency. People, especially those who were marginal to the body politic, were considered expendable and subjected to deadly scientific experimentation. With the decay of the softer, nobler sentiments had also come a hubris. So much so, that these advanced Bengalis had come to mock and look down upon the Bengalis who had remained back in Bengal and not partaken of these tremendous technological advances. Ray, tellingly, called his novel *Amanushik Manush*.

However farfetched the dystopian Bengali colony in Africa might seem, the moral and ethical tensions articulated by Ray were incredibly cogent to mid-twentieth century Bengal. An enthusiasm for science and technology had grown with leaps and bounds across the subcontinent. But since many of the flagship educational institutions of the colonial era were situated in Bengal, predictably this enthusiasm was perhaps greatest amongst Bengalis. Most of the scientific professions of the late colonial period were dominated by Bengalis. This enthusiasm had also inspired an almost-irrational faith in the transformative capacity of science and technology.

Of all the myriad branches of science the one where this transformative potential of science was most conspicuous was Anthropology, more specifically Physical Anthropology. It claimed for itself the ability to adjudicate and clarify the knottiest of human conundrums: who are we? How do we relate to our neighbors? Etc. Indeed, the object of this science were not things, but beings. Fellow human beings. Yet, ironically, the way in which these human subjects were studied turned them into little more than objects. Measured, bled, quantified, and classified, with little reference to their individuality or their biography, in the hands of physical anthropologists at the time, their subjects became little more than biological objects. Rather than their dignities, desires, dejections, distresses, or dreams, these subjects came to be defined by a series of bodily measurements that could be used to determine their placement in one classificatory category or another.

Of the deluge of bodily measurements that cascaded through early and mid-twentieth-century Physical Anthropology, one that stood out most in terms of its novelty, future-promise, and claims to scientific objectivity, was blood group frequencies. Blood groups had first been discovered in the first decade of the twentieth century. The First World War and the need for blood transfusions on the battlefields had helped refine and develop the knowledge about blood groups. It was during these widespread experimentations with blood grouping on the battlefront that a Polish medical couple, Ludwig and Hanna Hirszfeld, working with British and French imperial troops claimed to have discovered a connection between blood groups and racial identity. The Hirszfelds claimed that the frequency with which different blood groups, i.e., A, B, AB and O, appeared in each racial group varied. Based on this they formulated a racial scale called the 'Biochemical Race Index'. Based on this index, they further hypothesized that blood group A had likely originated in Europe and blood group B in South Asia. Hence, a higher proportion of group A in a population, to the Hirszfelds, meant a closer biological connection with Europeans.

Though the specific conclusions of the Hirszfelds were frequently refuted, their basic method quickly caught on and, in less than a decade, gave rise to the entirely new discipline of seroanthropology. Between 1919, when the Hirszfeld study was published, and 1939, in a mere twenty years a whopping 1,158 seroanthropological studies were published in the UK, US and France alone. Many other studies were published in Germany, Japan, British India and elsewhere.

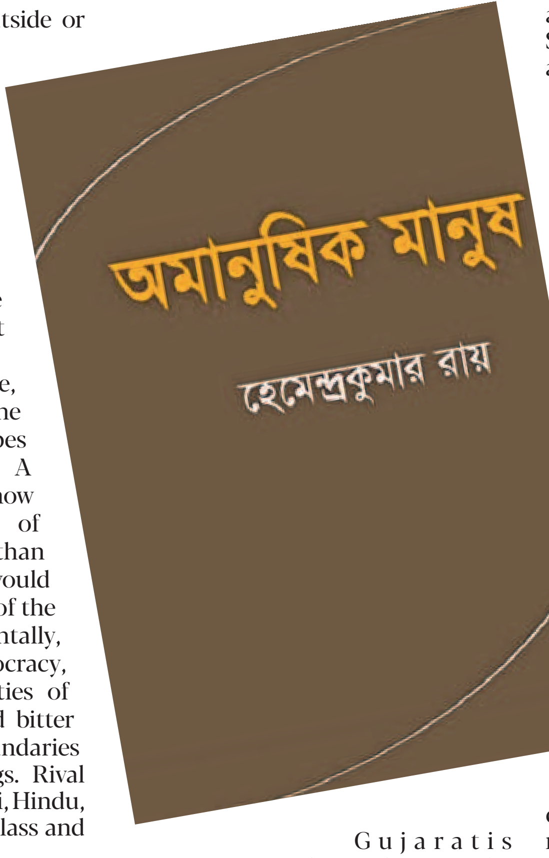
The twenties and thirties were epochal decades in the history of Bengal. The end game of empire played out slowly and with unexpected twists and bloody turns. On the one hand, the scientific services and state bureaucracies were progressively 'Indianized' after the WWI. This allowed a lot of Indian scientists to work within, rather than outside or on the fringes of, the state. On the other hand, the nature of mass politics and electoral democracy introduced by the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935 gave rise to bitter and often violent clashes along communal and caste lines. As a result, there emerged a tension amongst the educated classes.

The promise of science, ensconced firmly within the state apparatus, stoked hopes of a technocratic future. A future where science, now deployed in the interests of national uplift rather than imperial subordination, would lead to the future prosperity of the nation as a whole. Contrapuntally, the nature of electoral democracy, pegged as it was to identities of caste and religion, produced bitter disputes about the very boundaries of future national groupings. Rival nationalisms—Indian, Bengali, Hindu, Muslim etc. competed with class and caste based political movements, in defining distinct and different visions of a political future.

Faced with these orthogonal tendencies, many scientific men thought that science could supplant the messiness of politics in settling questions of group identity and political belonging. The polymath Sir Brojendra Nath Seal had long-advocated a scientific approach to settling issues of national composition and future development based on concrete, measurable numbers. But he had never gotten further than the idea. The challenge of how to turn something as complex as human political identities into simple numbers was left to his juniors to work out. Two young men in particular were drawn to Seal's suggestions. Both would go on to be scientific stalwarts in their own right.

One was the eminent statistician, Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis. The other was the founding director of the Anthropological Survey of India, Biraja Shankar Guha. Mahalanobis and Guha had distinctly different political visions. Mahalanobis emphasized that all Bengalis, irrespective of caste or religion, were biologically closer to each other than people from neighboring provinces. Guha refused to even count most of the so-called lower caste and tribal groups as 'Bengalis', reserving that label only for upper caste—though including both Hindu and Muslim—Bengalis. Yet, where Guha and Mahalanobis and many others agreed was that they thought various sorts of bodily measurements, and often seroanthropology, could settle the issue.

This technocratic dream inspired political parties to directly invest in and publish anthropometric surveys. The Maha Gujarat Society, a group demanding the break-up of the erstwhile Bombay State into separate Gujarati-speaking and Marathi-speaking regions, for example, employed a Cambridge-trained Bengali anthropologist, D.N. Majumdar, to determine whether the tribal peoples of the Dang forests were closer to Gujaratis or Marathis. Likewise, the Hindu Mahasabha, a prominent Hindu nationalist outfit, officially published a Bengali book titled *Bangalir Nritattwik Parichay* [Anthropological Identity of the Bengalis] by Atul Krishna Sur.



Far from ending the technocratic dreams of scientifically determining political futures, the end of empire in 1947 gave further encouragement to it. Pressed directly into the service of postcolonial nation-building several seroanthropologists now emphasized the medical benefits of studying the biological differences between different social groups. Some even went so far as to suggest the eugenic mechanisms to control the reproduction of specific castes which had been shown to have higher percentage of certain inheritable diseases like sickle cell malaria.

The founding premise of these studies was that communities that had lived cheek and jowl next to each other could be objectively and accurately distinguished from each other using strictly biological criteria. The fiction of perfect and sustained endogamy undergirded the possibility of such demarcation.

The polymath Sir Brojendra Nath Seal had long-advocated a scientific approach to settling issues of national composition and future development based on concrete, measurable numbers. But he had never gotten further than the idea. The challenge of how to turn something as complex as human political identities into simple numbers was left to his juniors to work out. Two young men in particular were drawn to Seal's suggestions.

A major stumbling block in the perpetuation of such fictions was the fact that as Bengalis themselves, many of the scientists would have known of numerous examples of how such perfect endogamy does not work in practice. Upwardly mobile families for instance, if they managed to become affluent, were often able to marry into higher-status groups. Migrants too were often able to marry locally. Practices such as adoption or levirate were also known to exist. Finally, no matter what the community rules exhort, there is hardly any human community where reproduction is entirely limited to the marital family. Extra-marital liaisons, particularly between affluent men and poorer women, have long been part of rural societies. All of this would have been well-known to most of the researchers. Yet, when they sought to approach community identities as discreet biological facts, it was as if they had to willfully suppress their own social memories.

The tragedy of this forgetting emerged in a little Bengali book authored by Sasanka Sekhar Sarkar. Sarkar was one of the most prolific and inveterate seroanthropologists. Eventually becoming a professor of the Calcutta University, he did much to establish seroanthropology as a popular academic discipline. Yet, late in life, he authored a book titled *Lokgatha,* a collection of folktales and stories collected throughout his life. Introducing the collection, he recalled his own grandmother and the stories she would tell. He insisted that it was these stories that were the true history and heritage of mankind and insisted that they could not be isolated as belonging to any one discrete community or the other. He lamented that Bengali grandmothers no longer had as large a stock of stories as they once did and neither could contemporary grandmothers narrate these stories with as much verve as those of yore. It seemed as though, having spent a rich and successful career insisting that humans could be defined entirely by their measurable biological inheritances, Sarkar at the end of his life was grasping for an alternate vision: a vision of kinship that was not simply genetic, but rather built upon a stock of shared stories and memories of telling stories.

Ray's *Amanushik Manush* shared a similar vision. Deeply influenced by Tagore and a close friend of Kazi Nazrul Islam, Ray had authored works of science fiction as well as the supernatural. Like Tagore he was smitten by science's ability to stoke our curiosity and wonder, but he was equally suspicious of its humbug and wary of its ability to disenchant complex social worlds.

Amanushik Manush was not a very successful novel. Few today, beyond *kalpabigyan* aficionados, know of it. By contrast the technocratic dreams for determining and shaping political futures thrived. Under Mahalanobis and Guha, leading scientific institutes such as the Indian Statistical Institute and the Anthropological Survey of India, conducted largescale biological studies of group difference in postcolonial India. Social groupings were refigured as biological differences. As seroanthropology evolved into technologically more sophisticated population genetics, castes and communities were reimagined as 'gene pools'. Faced with this ascendant faith in technocratic definitions of human identities, Ray's exhortations appeared quaint at best and inconsequential at worst.

Today as genetics, increasingly institutionalized through legal cases on paternity, immigration etc., progressively becomes the dominant way to define kinship, Ray's forgotten dilemma continues to haunt us. Who is an *amanushik manush*? Is it one who has forgotten to see their neighbors as complex human beings? Or is one who has been reduced simply to a biological assemblage of genetic traits? Is it the scientist or the subject who is studied that loses her humanity in the end? Indeed, what is it that makes us human or inhuman? Is it our biology? Or our history?

***Projit Bihari Mukharji** is a Professor of History and Head of the Department of History at Ashoka University, as well as a Professor of History of Science at the University of Pennsylvania. Currently, he is a Guggenheim Fellow.*

BROWN SKINS, WHITE COATS
Race Science in India, 1920–66
PROJIT BIHARI MUKHARJI

(L) Polish medical couple Ludwig and Hanna Hirszfeld, working with British and French troops during WWI, claimed to have discovered a link between blood groups and racial identity. (R) Cover of the book ' Brown Skins, White Coats'.

Star
DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 3, 2024, JAISHTHA 20, 1431 BS
SPORT

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Bangabandhu Cup final
Bangladesh vs Nepal
Live from 4:00 pm
FIFA friendly
Bangladesh women vs
Chinese Taipei women
Live from 5:45 pm

NAGORIK TV
T20 World Cup
Namibia vs Oman
Live from 6:30 am
Sri Lanka vs South Africa
Live from 8:30 pm

SONY SPORTS 2,3,5
French Open
Fourth round
Live from 3:00 pm

REAL DID what Real do best: Win

NABID YEASIN

"When you don't kill Real Madrid, Real Madrid kill you," Xavi Hernandez, who had to come up against Real Madrid a number of times in his career both as a Barcelona player and manager, had said just last year.

Borussia Dortmund became the latest side to be stung harshly by this aforementioned reality as they conceded two goals to see Real Madrid do what they do best -- win the Champions League for a record-extending 15th time at Wembley on Saturday.

Dortmund had caught the Spanish giants napping in the first half of the final. Edin Terzic's men were tactically superior, creating the most chances -- with Dortmund's seven attempts to Real's two during that phase -- and did everything right, except for killing the giants when they had them on the ropes.

"We missed out on scoring and then conceded the goal. That's how they [Real Madrid] always do it," said Dortmund defender Mats Hummels, who, along with Marco Reus, also had his heart broken in another Champions League final 11 years ago against Bayern Munich at the same venue.

Real Madrid did not look near their best in the first 45 minutes, with Toni Kroos unable to set the tempo, Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo not finding a clear way through -- and the sole credit for cornering Los Blancos must be given to Dortmund.

With the way Vinicius was attempting to manoeuvre his way past right-back Julian Ryerson, Terzic realised Dortmund needed to change things within the first 20 minutes of the game. He then had his players line up in a three-man backline -- Hummels and Nico Schlotterbeck playing a bit wider with Emre Can coming in between to do the dirty work. That helped Ryerson play up the field with the other full-back Ian Maatsen playing more as a playmaker, making the midfield heavy in numbers and closing the gaps to diminish any chance of Real Madrid exploiting while moving forward.

Owing to this tactical genius, Dortmund saw three clear-cut goal-mouth chances. Having been found through Real's defence, Niclas Fullkrug hit the bar before Karim Adeyemi wasted two golden opportunities.

One of those Adeyemi attempts was parried out by Los Blancos' goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois -- a player who had missed most of the season due to injuries but was backed strongly by Real manager Carlo Ancelotti to start the final. But the best of the lot was when Adeyemi had slipped past Dani Carvajal, went around Courtois, and still was not able to put it into the net with Carvajal running back and amending for his mistake with a sliding block.

Terzic was reduced to saying that his side "deserved a little bit more" but lacked "killer instinct".

That missing 'killer instinct' came back to haunt them, as it so often happens to the opponents of Real Madrid, once Ancelotti's men came back into the game with much more purpose in the second half.

Ironically, it was Carvajal who put Real ahead from a masterful Toni Kroos corner in the 74th minute, redeeming himself to the point of becoming the first defender to score in a final since Sergio Ramos in 2016 against Atletico Madrid.

What happened next is something very typical -- a repeat of the old script of Real killing the game in just a few minutes. Within nine minutes of the first goal, a misplaced pass from Maatsen -- perhaps still recounting how they missed those open chances and were a goal down – saw former Dortmund man Jude Bellingham receive the ball and feed it to Vinicius as Real put the final nail in the coffin.

Even Vinicius' finish was not a clean one, getting bumped off the ground before going past Dortmund keeper Gregor Kobel. But the important part is that Real did what Dortmund could not -- they killed the game when they had the chance.

Hummels credited Real's quality of being clinical when needed but also said that "it took them a bit of luck today". But maybe it is time for Dortmund, Hummels, and all the other clubs including Manchester City, Bayern, PSG, and Chelsea who at least had once to be at the wrong end of a similar storyline that 'luck' has very little to do as this is what Real Madrid do -- somehow or someway, they win.

- Carlo Ancelotti has now won a record-extending fifth European Cup/Champions League title, the most by any manager. The Italian won three of those titles with Real Madrid – the joint-most by a manager with a single club alongside Bob Paisley (Liverpool) and Zinedine Zidane (Real Madrid) - and led AC Milan to the title twice.
- This was the sixth Champions League win by Madrid's quartet of Toni Kroos, Luka Modric, Dani Carvajal, and Nacho, taking them taking them level with Paco Gento (6) for most European Cup/Champions League wins in history.
- Real goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois was just the second player to make his first start of a Champions League campaign in the final, after Ryan Bertrand for Chelsea in 2011-12.
- Right-back Dani Carvajal became the first defender to score in the final after his former teammate Sergio Ramos headed one in against Atletico Madrid in 2015-16. Making his 89th Champions League appearance, it was Carvajal's second goal in the competition.
- Real became the 12th different side to go unbeaten in their European Cup/Champions League title win. This was their first time in that regard and the 16th occasion overall in which the competition has seen an unbeaten champion. The Los Blancos also became the second Spanish side to do so after Barcelona achieved the feat in 2005-06.

> **This squad leaves me very satisfied because we don't always play our best but we never give up. Tomorrow this club will enjoy another fantastic, then to rest, the players will go to the Euros, Copa America, then we will return with same desire. We're a family. Working in a family is a lot better than working in an industry.**
>
> **Carlo Ancelotti**, Real Madrid coach

Hasaranga & Co face fearless Proteas

AGENCIES

Sri Lanka will rely on their exceptionally varied bowling attack to tame the unrestrained batting power of South Africa in their Group D T20 World Cup opener in New York on Monday.

They will be eager to get onto the points table at the earliest too as some tricky teams like Netherlands, Bangladesh and Nepal are clubbed with them in the group.

South Africa have spread all their cards on the table as the team selection indicated the most likely route they would take in this ICC showpiece.

A batting line-up consisting of captain Aiden Markram, wicketkeeper-batter Heinrich Klaasen, Quinton de Kock, David Miller and Tristan Stubbs could be a nightmare for any bowling attack.

Klaasen and Stubbs have been in roaring form of late. In this World Cup cycle, the right-hander has averaged 41 and struck runs at 182.

In the IPL 2024 too, Klaasen made 471 runs from 16 matches at a strike rate of 171 for the Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Stubbs has been equally impressive for the Delhi Capitals, amassing 378 runs from 14 matches and he made them at a strike-rate of 190.

Both these gifted power-strikers come in the middle order when the spinners are in operation, and to add to Lanka's worries, they are phenomenal against the tweakers, especially Klaasen.

In the run-up to the World Cup, the 32-year-old from Transvaal has averaged 59 against spin and made runs at an eye-watering strike rate of 191.

It will certainly worry a set of Lankan spinners such as captain Wanindu Hasaranga (economy 7.42) and Maheesh Theekshana (6.71), both of whom had to battle injuries in the recent past.

So, Sri Lanka, who have not reached the knockouts of a T20 WC after their triumph in 2014, will be eager to try a couple of overs from pacers Matheesha Pathirana and Dilshan Madhushanka in that phase when Klaasen and Stubbs are looking for acceleration.

However, Lanka might take heart from the fact that the Proteas went down 0-3 to the West Indies in a recent T20I series at Kingston.

Lanka will also hope that the New York pitch will continue to offer some help to the bowlers as it had happened in Saturday's warm-up match between India and Bangladesh, where a few deliveries did not rise above the ankle and knee level.

Beyond that, the Lankans are also one of the teams that have played a good number of T20Is this year. In 2024, they have a series wins over Zimbabwe and Afghanistan at home and Bangladesh away.

In fact, they have won six of the last nine T20Is.

But those external factors will not have much bearing on a fresh day and Lanka know that their batters too will have to come good against the African rival.

They have the experienced Angelo Mathews, the explosive Kusal Mendis and the rock-solid Dhananjaya de Silva to bank on while the former captain Dasun Shanaka can make a few quick runs down the order.

The SA attack does not have that much variety in their bowling unit as it largely revolves around pacer Kagiso Rabada and left-arm wrist-spinner Tabraiz Shamsi.

Anrich Nortje is still finding his range after coming back from an injury and had an underwhelming IPL where he conceded more than 11 runs an over.

The SA management will hope that the pacer will regain his rhythm on the biggest stage and that will have a major say in avoiding another below-par outing in a World Cup.

Oman face Namibia

In a Group B clash at Bridgetown, Namibia, a dominant force in the African Qualifiers, will be hoping for a winning start against Oman.

However, it would not be that easy for Namibia as Oman had run it close in April, before conceding the five-match series 2-1.

Hence, Oman, who are making their third appearance in a T20 WC, will be hoping for a better outcome this time.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
বিসমিল্লাহির রাহমানির রাহিম
আল্লাহ্ ক্রয়-বিক্রয়কে হালাল ও সুদকে করেছেন হারাম
সূরা বাকারা: আয়াত ২৭৫

স্ট্যান্ডার্ড ব্যাংক-এর ২৫ বছর

শুদ্ধতার শ্রেষ্ঠত্বে
শরি'আহ্‌র আলোকে
পূর্ণাঙ্গ ইসলামি ব্যাংক হিসাবে আমরা আছি আপনার পাশে

প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকীর এই দিনে সকল গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীকে স্ট্যান্ডার্ড ব্যাংক পরিবারের পক্ষ থেকে আন্তরিক অভিনন্দন ও কৃতজ্ঞতা। পূর্ণাঙ্গ ইসলামি ব্যাংক হিসাবে সময়োপযোগী ব্যাংকিং চাহিদা পূরণে আমরা সর্বদাই প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ।

আমাদের আকর্ষণীয় মুদারাবা ডিপোজিট প্রোডাক্টসমূহ
আস্থা-মুদারাবা মাসিক সঞ্চয়ী স্কিম
গুণবতী-মুদারাবা মাসিক সঞ্চয়ী স্কিম
নবাবি-মুদারাবা মিলিওনিয়ার প্লাস
আমির-মুদারাবা কোটিপতি প্লাস
সহজেই দ্বিগুণ-মুদারাবা ডাবল স্কিম
উপার্জন-মুদারাবা মাসিক আয়
স্ট্যান্ডার্ড জনপ্রিয়-মুদারাবা সঞ্চয়ী স্কিম
প্রিমিয়াম-মুদারাবা সঞ্চয়ী হিসাব

কল্যাণধর্মী ৩টি মুদারাবা ডিপোজিট প্রোডাক্ট
মুদারাবা ক্যাশ ওয়াকফ জমা হিসাব
মুদারাবা মোহর সঞ্চয়ী স্কিম হিসাব
মুদারাবা হজ সঞ্চয়ী স্কিম

স্ট্যান্ডার্ড ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
শরি'আহ্ ভিত্তিক ইসলামি ব্যাংক

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16,970 workers missed deadline for reaching KL

Many of them could not get air tickets despite having valid papers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite getting clearance from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) a total of 16,970 migrant workers could not reach Malaysia before May 31, when the deadline for workers to enter the Southeast Asian country ended.

"As of May 31, the BMET granted clearance to 493,642 workers; of them, 476,672 could leave for Malaysia by the deadline. This means that around 16,970 individuals were unable to go," State Minister Shofiqur Rahman Choudhury told reporters at the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment at New Eskaton in the capital yesterday.

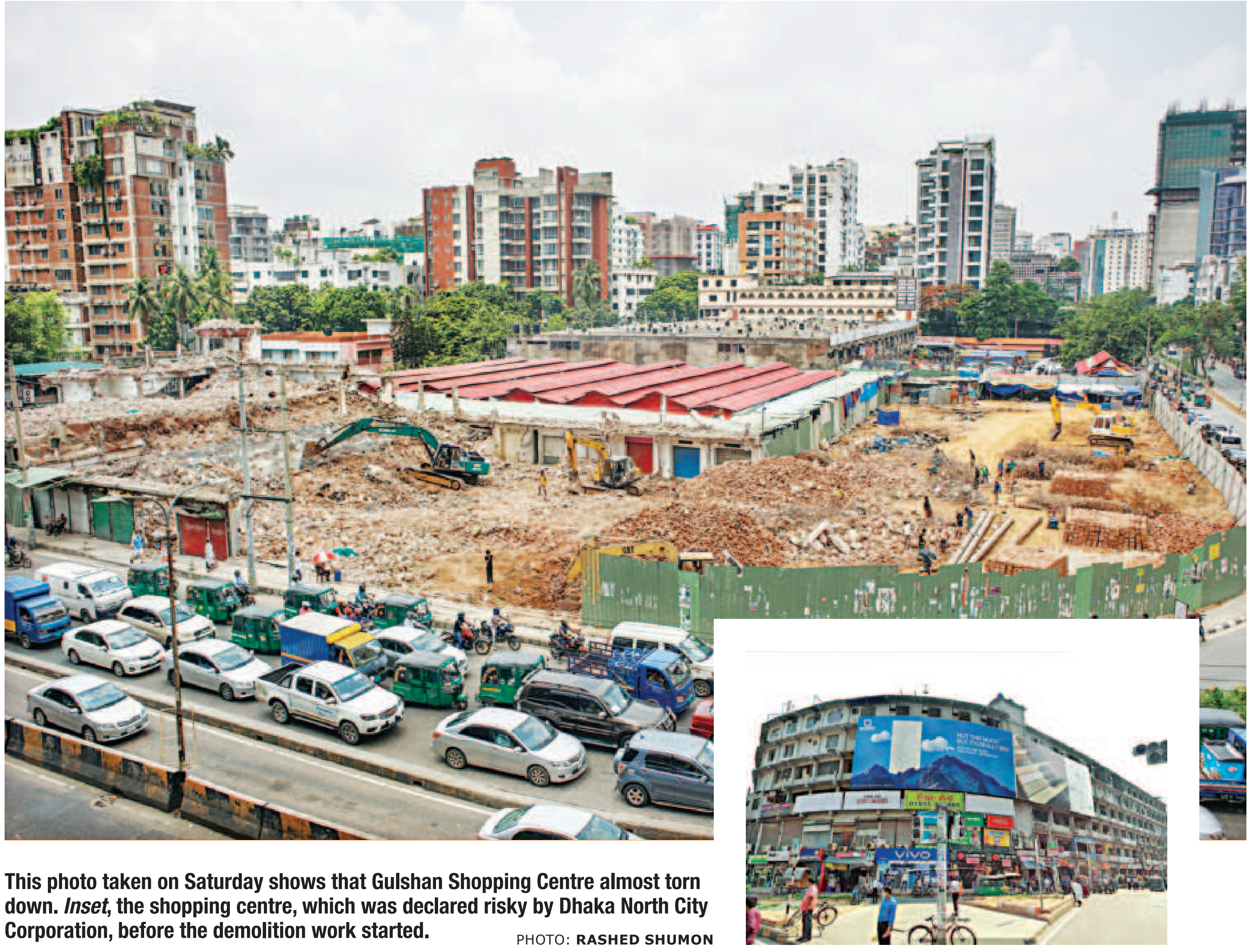
When asked about the ministry's next move, the state minister stated that a six-member probe committee had been formed to investigate why workers with valid visas did not get tickets to Malaysia.

"Those who are responsible will be brought to book," Shofiqur said, adding that the probe body will submit the report within seven days and steps will be taken based on its recommendations.

He further said that they were working to reopen the Malaysian labour market and would sit with the Malaysian High Commissioner in Dhaka on June 5 to decide their next course of action.

Md Ruhul Amin, secretary at the Ministry of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



This photo taken on Saturday shows that Gulshan Shopping Centre almost torn down. *Inset*, the shopping centre, which was declared risky by Dhaka North City Corporation, before the demolition work started. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Remittance jumps 32pc in May

Migrants sending home more money ahead of Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Remittance inflow to Bangladesh rose 32.35 percent year-on-year to $2.25 billion in May of this year as the country's migrant workers sent more money home ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

The remittance receipts were $1.7 billion in the same period last year, according to Bangladesh Bank data.

May's receipts were also 10.29 percent higher than that of the previous month.

In March, $2.04 billion entered Bangladesh as remittance, central bank data showed.

In the last 11 months from July (2023) to May (2024) of the financial year 2023-24, the remittance inflow was $21.36 billion, up 10 percent from $19.42 billion in the same period of the previous financial year.

Industry insiders said

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

'INDULGING IN GRAFT'

ACC to make list of those who aided Benazir

DIPAN NANDY

An Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) investigation team is now making a list of police officials, land officials, politicians, and others who aided and abetted former inspector general of police, Benazir Ahmed, in committing corruption.

Once the list is made, the ACC will quiz the individuals.

The sub-registrars of Dhaka, Gopalganj, Madaripur, and Gazipur land offices are likely to be among them, as Benazir and his family own properties in those districts.

A high official at the ACC requesting anonymity told The Daily Star, "Benazir committed corruption with the assistance of many individuals, as it would not have been possible to indulge in corruption to such extent alone. Most of his aides are police personnel."

The official said, "Some police officers even co-own some of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Israel accepts Biden's Gaza truce plan

Claims Netanyahu aide, says a lot of details to be worked out; 60 more Palestinians killed in Israeli airstrikes

AGENCIES

An aide to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday confirmed that Israel had accepted a framework deal for winding down the Gaza offensive now being advanced by US President Joe Biden, though he described it as flawed and in need of much more work.

In an interview with Britain's Sunday Times, Ophir Falk, chief foreign policy advisor to Netanyahu, said Biden's proposal was "a deal we agreed to — it's not a good deal but we dearly want the hostages released, all of them".

"There are a lot of details to be worked out," he said, adding that Israeli conditions, including "the release of the hostages and the destruction of Hamas as a genocidal terrorist organisation" have not changed.

- Hamas 'positively' views Gaza proposal set out by Biden
- UAE President, Qatar Emir discuss truce proposal
- Death toll in enclave rises to 36,439

Israel's defence minister Yoav Gallant said yesterday that Israel would not accept Hamas continuing to rule Gaza at any stage during the process to end the offensive, and that it was examining alternatives to the group.

For now, fighting again rocked Gaza overnight and yesterday, with the military reporting more air strikes and ground combat, and Palestinian officials reporting yet more deaths, reports Reuters.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 36,439 people have been killed in the territory since the offensive began on October 7. The toll includes at least 60 deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

Across Gaza, the military said it had struck "30 terror targets, including military infrastructure, weapons storage facilities and armed terrorist cells that posed a threat to IDF (army) ground troops".

Palestinian group Hamas, meanwhile, said it "views positively" what Biden on Friday described as the Israeli plan.

United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani discussed in Abu Dhabi proposals for the ceasefire deal that were laid out by Biden, the UAE state news agency (WAM) reported yesterday.

Heavy fighting has flared in far-southern Rafah, where Israel sent tanks and troops in early May, ignoring concerns for displaced civilians sheltering in the city.

Israeli Apache attack helicopters yesterday

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Man kills wife, son over family dispute

STAR REPORT

Police yesterday arrested a man over the murder of his wife and 11-month-old son at a hotel in Bogura's Banani.

The deceased were identified as Ashamoni, 22, wife of army soldier Azizul Haque, and their only son Abdullah Hel Rafi.

"In primary interrogation, Azizul told police that he killed his wife on Saturday night over a domestic dispute. He later murdered his only son, saying he could not take care of the child very well without his wife," Shahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shahjahanpur Police Station, told this newspaper.

Azizul used a fake name to rent a room at the hotel on Saturday night.

The hotel authorities got suspicious when Aziz checked out of the room without his wife and son, so they called the police.

The police later arrived at the hotel and recovered the bodies from the room

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Siam texted from MP's phone after his killing

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN AND RASHIDUL HASAN

Siam Hossain, a suspect in the murder of Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim Anar, went to India via Nepal and returned to the Himalayan country after killing the lawmaker at a Kolkata flat.

Siam assisted hitman Amanullah, alias Shimul Bhuiyan, say investigators.

MP AZIM
MURDER

He was also responsible for disposing of the body parts, they said.

In a letter on May 25, the Detective Branch (DB) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) informed the assistant inspector general of the Bangladesh Police's National Central Bureau (NCB) about the new findings.

Bangladesh Police's NCB wing then wrote to NCB Kathmandu the next day, seeking their assistance and cooperation in the arrest of Siam.

The Daily Star obtained copies of the letters, which also stated that Siam was the one who dumped the bones of the lawmaker into a canal. He then roamed around with the lawmaker's phones to confuse law enforcers about the whereabouts of Azim, the letters said.

This was why Azim's phone was found active until May 16 night. Several text messages were sent to different numbers from Azim's phone, which said the lawmaker was going to Delhi and was in meetings with VIPs there, said investigators.

Based on the information provided by the Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

West Indies players celebrate a wicket in their opening T20 World Cup 2024 fixture against Papua New Guinea (PNG) at the Providence Stadium in Guyana yesterday. The hosts restricted PNG to 136 for eight but slumped to 97 for five with only four overs left in the chase before eventually scrambling to a five-wicket win, courtesy of Roston Chase's unbeaten 27-ball 42. PHOTO: X

US masterclass a lesson for Tigers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pitting two associate teams in the opening match of the ICC T20 World Cup, even though one of them were co-hosts USA, was a risk as there was always a chance that the tournament would start with a whimper.

However, yesterday's USA-Canada match proved to be an ideal tournament opener, with both teams showing intent with the bat, providing plenty of T20 entertainment for the fans with the hosts in the end coming out on top.

Only the most ardent of cricket fans from this part of the world tuned in to watch the match which began at 6:30 am Bangladesh time, and were treated to an excellent game of T20, unlike what they had to go through the previous night in Bangladesh's warm-up game against India.

In the World Cup opener in Texas, Canada posted 194-5 after being sent to bat first, a seemingly daunting target for the USA, whose previous highest-ever chase in T20Is was 169 against the same opponents.

USA's chase was in the doldrums eight overs in, with only 48 runs on

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

S Africa's ANC says it won't ditch Ramaphosa to form coalition

PAGE 7

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For more information, please contact Deputy Director Mr. Md. Ashraf Uddin of UCEP Bangladesh (Cell # 01977-200108).

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KSRM
শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

Mexico elects Sheinbaum as first woman president
P7

Break the syndicates, not the dreams of migrants
P8

England begin T20 World Cup defence today
P11

Why tech workers must reskill, upskill in the age of AI
P10

Power, agriculture to drive up subsidies

REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* **ASIFUR RAHMAN**

The subsidies and incentive expenditures in the upcoming budget are going to be more than that of the current fiscal year.

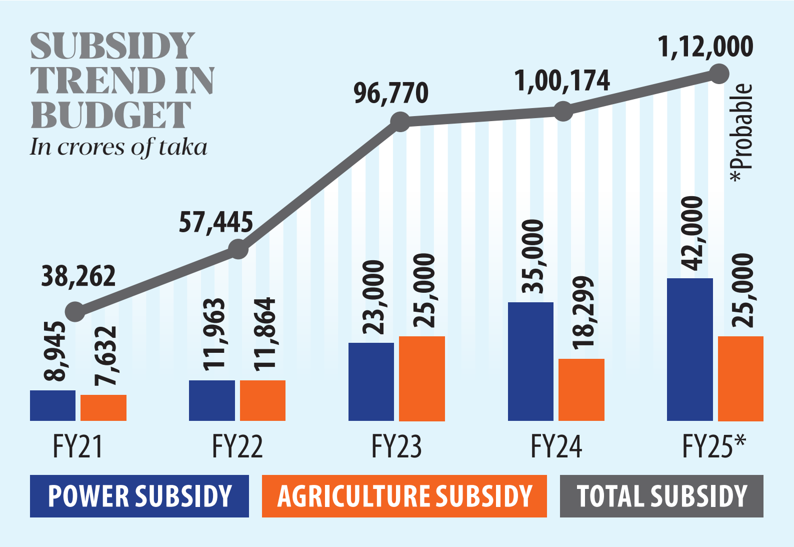
The subsidies are mainly increasing in the power, energy, and the agriculture sectors.

Even though the government plans to raise power tariffs four to five times a year, the highest subsidy allocation is likely to go towards the electricity sector.

Finance ministry officials said the increased subsidy allocation was largely due to the arrears in the power and agriculture sectors.

In the upcoming fiscal year, which begins on July 1, the subsidy allocation is likely to be Tk 1,12,000 crore, up from Tk 1,00,174 crore in the outgoing fiscal year.

Of the sum to be set aside for 2024-25, the power sector is likely to get Tk 42,000 crore. The government has earmarked Tk 35,000 crore for 2023-24.



Before 2021-22, the subsidy allocation for the power sector was between Tk 7,000 crore and Tk 9,000 crore.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said the main reason behind the rising subsidy allocation in FY25 is the higher energy prices in the international market and elevated capacity payments.

He said the government has planned to increase power tariffs

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

An elderly woman wades through knee-deep water in Sylhet city's Shahjalal neighbourhood yesterday afternoon. Due to the overflowing of rivers, overnight rains and mountain torrents, many areas in the city have gone under water, affecting at least 15,000 families. Due to the flooding, locals have been facing a shortage of food and clean water. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: **SHEIKH NASIR**

PM likely to visit India on June 21

She may tour China on July 9

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to visit New Delhi and Beijing in June and July to deepen Bangladesh's ties with Asia's two leading economic powers.

The prime minister will likely pay an official visit to New Delhi on June 21-22 and to Beijing on July 9-12, a senior Bangladeshi official told UNB.

The last bilateral engagement between Modi and Hasina was during the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

17,000 workers' fate up in the air

Even with clearance, they could not go to Malaysia

JAMIL MAHMUD

Despite getting emigration clearance, around 17,000 aspirant migrant workers could not fly to Malaysia before the May 31 deadline due to alleged mismanagement in the recruitment process.

Their fates now hang in the balance.

> **"If the government wants to compensate the workers, it should return the exact amount they had to pay throughout the process, which could be higher than the government-fixed cost."**
> Prof CR Abrar

Under the existing labour migration situation, the recruitment process for these workers had started much earlier and each had to pay hefty sums to secure jobs in Malaysia.

Many had to travel to Dhaka from other districts for different purposes, including pre-migration medical tests.

Some even made sure to be present at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital on Friday, the day of the deadline.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Inflation hits seven-month high

Higher food prices largely to blame

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

Inflation, fuelled by higher food prices, climbed 15 basis points to 9.89 percent in May from 9.74 percent a month earlier, figures from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics showed yesterday.

This is the highest rise on the Consumer Price Index in seven months.

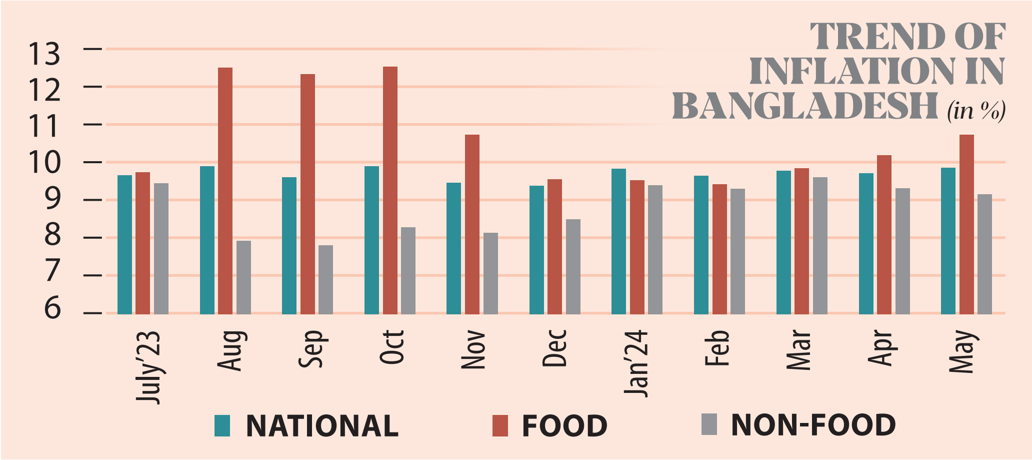
Food inflation surged 54 basis points to 10.76 percent from 10.22 percent while non-food inflation slipped 15 basis points to 9.19 percent from 9.34 percent in April.

In fiscal 2022-23, the average inflation rate was 9.02 percent, far higher than the average of 6 percent in recent years.

The Consumer Price Index grew by an average of 9.73 percent in the first 11 months of fiscal 2023-2024, which was 8.64 percent during the same period a year ago, BBS data showed.

"The persistent high inflation is continuously pushing the low-income groups against the wall," said Mustafa K Mujeri, executive director of the Institute for Inclusive Finance and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Fresh areas in Sylhet flooded after heavy rain

Over 6 lakh people stranded in 761 villages

MINTU DESHWARA

The flood situation in Sylhet has further worsened owing to incessant rainfall since yesterday and the subsequent onrush of water from upstream, resulting in immense public sufferings.

As a result, fresh areas in the district, including a large part of the city, were inundated yesterday.

The newly inundated areas in the city include -- Jatarpur, Mendibagh, Jamtala, Taltala, Sheikhghat, Kalapara, Majumdarpara, Laldigihipar, Dargamoholla, Munsipara, Hawapara, Nayorpool, Sonarpara, Baluchar, Mirer Maidan, Police Lines and Sagardighirpar.

With the further deterioration in the flood situation, around six lakh people from 761 villages under 10 upazilas remain marooned, said Sheikh Russel Hasan, deputy commissioner of Sylhet.

Many roads have been submerged, snapping communications at many places.

The ground floor of the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital has been inundated, said its Director Brig

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

CUSTODIAL DEATH

Victim's family 'leaves home fearing reprisal'

Says neighbour; police form probe body

STAR REPORT

The family of the woman, who died in police custody in Jashore on Sunday morning, padlocked their home and moved to a relative's home after the incident, said a neighbour.

Afroza Begum

Afroza Begum, 40, died hours after being picked up by Abhaynagar police from her Nawapara village home. Her family accused police of torture.

Visiting Afroza's house yesterday, our Benapole correspondent found it locked.

Her neighbour Nurul Islam Hawladar said the family moved to a relative's house fearing reprisals from police.

The Daily Star could not reach Afroza's husband Jalil Mollah and their two sons, Munna Mollah and Sabbir Molla, for comments as their phones were

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

A train whizzes past fruit sellers who have placed themselves right on the lines near the Airport Railway Station, putting not only themselves but also their customers at risk. Multiple trains frequently pass through the station, opposite the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Benazir's abuse of power a cause for grave concern

Says TIB, demands action against those who abetted, protected the former IGP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday expressed grave concerns over accumulation of substantial illegal wealth by a former police and Rab chief.

In a statement, it said the misuse of power by those who are in top positions creates "Frankenstein-like figures" such as Benazir Ahmed, former inspector general of police, and it makes questionable the state's mechanism to hold people accountable.

The graft watchdog demanded legal action against those who abetted and protected the power abuser and fair compensation for those whose land was grabbed.

According to media reports, the land in most cases was acquired by the former IGP through intimidation. Many of the landowners belong to minority

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

12kg LPG cylinder now costs Tk 1,363

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A standard 12kg LPG cylinder will now cost Tk 1,363, down by Tk 30 from Tk 1,393, according to the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC).

BERC at a press briefing said the new price came into effect from 6:00pm yesterday.

According to the new rate, a kilogramme of bottled liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) will be sold at Tk 113.55 at the retail level, down by Tk 2.53 from the previous Tk 116.08.

This adjustment follows a rational scale across various LPG cylinder sizes, ranging from 5.5kg to 45kg, addressing the need for a proportional price revision across different consumer segments.

Furthermore, the price for "auto gas", the LPG variant used in motor vehicles, has also been lowered to Tk 62.53 from Tk 63.92 per litre.

LPG prices marketed by the state-owned LP Gas Company will remain unchanged. This exception is attributed to its local production and the company's minimal market share, which is less than five percent.

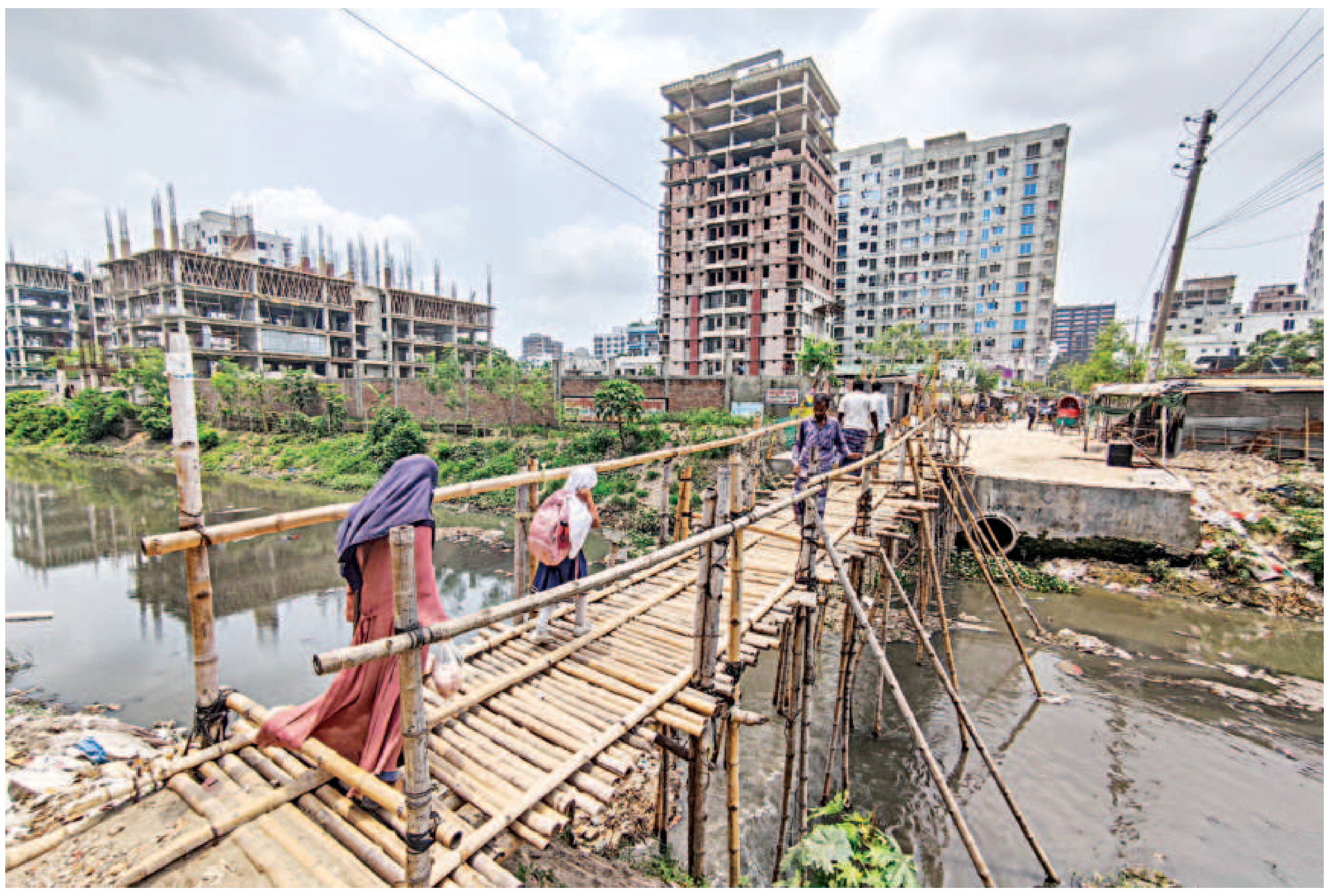


PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

This makeshift bridge over the Ramchandrapur canal in the capital's Mohammadpur is the only way for the locals to get to Bosila from Chandrima Model Town. A handful of bamboos are holding up the rickety structure. The photo was taken yesterday.

Cowhide price fixed at Tk 55 per sqft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday set the price of salt-cured cowhides at Tk 55-60 per square foot (sqft) in the capital and Tk 50-55 per sqft outside the capital.

Last year, the price was Tk 50-55 per sqft in Dhaka and Tk 47-52 per sqft outside the capital.

The decision was made at a meeting at the secretariat to fix rawhide prices ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, when millions of cattle are sacrificed by the country's Muslim community as a part of their religious duties.

Eid-ul-Azha accounts for nearly half of the rawhides collected annually, providing key raw material for the billion-dollar export-earning leather and leather goods industry in Bangladesh.

Mohiuddin Ahmed Mahim, chairman of the Bangladesh Finished Leather, Leathergoods and Footwear Exporters' Association, announced the new rates with State Minister for Commerce Ahsanul Islam Tito at the meeting.

According to the new rates, the lowest price per piece of cowhide has been fixed at Tk 1,200 in the capital and Tk 1,000 outside the capital.

Meanwhile, the price of castrated goat hides has been fixed at Tk 20-25 per sqft while the price of goat hides has been set at Tk 18-20 per sqft across the country this year.

Around 1.7 crore animals are expected to be sacrificed across the country during this year's Eid-ul-Azha. Of the number, 55 lakh are cows and buffalos while the rest are castrated goats, goats, sheep, and other animals.

17,000 workers' fate up in the air

FROM PAGE 1

The reason for them not being able to go is yet to be known.

Against this backdrop, the expatriates' welfare ministry has been trying to reopen the Malaysian labour market and has planned to meet the Malaysian high commissioner in Dhaka on Wednesday to discuss the next course of action for these workers.

Labour migration expert Prof CR Abrar said those responsible for creating an uncertain situation for the aspirant migrants need to be identified first and then punished.

He said many of these workers have left their occupations to get a job in Malaysia, while many others have sold their assets to arrange migration costs.

"There are associated costs that the workers will have to incur in case of their ultimate failure. We're not considering those."

Pointing at the government's compensation plan, Abrar said if the government wants to compensate the workers, it should return the exact amount they had to pay throughout the process, which could be higher than the government-fixed cost.

Malaysia resumed hiring Bangladeshi workers in 2022 after a four-year suspension over allegations of irregularities in the recruitment process.

Briefing reporters at his office on Sunday, Shafiqur Rahman Choudhury, state minister for expatriates' welfare and overseas employment, said as of May 31, the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training granted emigration clearance to 4,93,642 workers.

"Of them, 4,76,672 could leave for Malaysia by the deadline, meaning around 16,970 individuals were unable to go."

He added that a six-member probe body will, in the next seven days, investigate why workers with valid visas could not go to Malaysia, and will ensure that those responsible are brought to book.

The ministry's Secretary Ruhul Amin said they were planning to return the money to those who could not go.

After signing an MoU on labour cooperation with Malaysia in 2021, the Bangladesh government set a maximum of Tk 78,990 as migration cost.

However, Bangladesh Labour Force Survey-2022 said the average recruitment cost for jobs in Malaysia was Tk 3.40 lakh.

Shariful Hasan, head of BRAC's migration and youth initiatives programme, said the situation was similar when Malaysia had stopped issuing visas in the past, putting a number of workers' future into uncertainty. However, no acceptable solution was found back then and the workers were also not compensated, he added.

"We don't have good examples in this regard," he said, adding, the government should first assess the situation and then arrange compensation for the workers.

Malaysia announced the May 31 deadline in early March for 14 of its source countries, including Bangladesh.

However, the Bangladesh government responded in May and arranged some additional flights for the workers, which also turned out to be insufficient.

It also requested the Malaysian authorities to extend the deadline, but they did not respond.

Malaysia has been an attractive destination for Bangladeshi migrant workers, who prefer it over some traditional markets in the Gulf due to various factors, including higher wages.

According to the Labour Force Survey-2022, on an average a Bangladeshi migrant worker earns Tk 28,822 a month in Malaysia, and Tk 24,957 in Saudi Arabia.

Last year, Malaysia was Bangladesh's second-largest overseas job market after Saudi Arabia.

Ali Haider Chowdhury, secretary general of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies, said they will work with the government so that the workers do not have to face losses.

"We will also assist the government-formed probe body investigating the issue," he told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

Power, agriculture to drive up subsidies

FROM PAGE 1

several times, but the sector will require more subsidies as more power plants, including Rooppur nuclear plant, are ready to produce electricity.

"If the old and inefficient power plants are not phased out, the overall capacity charges will increase, which will deepen the subsidy burden," he told The Daily Star.

The recent mission of the International Monetary Fund also questioned the huge subsidy allocation in the power sector.

However, it is not possible to withdraw subsidies immediately from the power sector as it will hurt the economy. The government plans to increase power prices over the next three years so that the subsidies can be withdrawn, said finance ministry officials.

The subsidy for importing liquefied natural gas (LNG) for FY25 is likely to be Tk 7,000 crore, which is Tk 6,000 crore in the current fiscal year.

The agriculture subsidies were between Tk 5,000 and Tk 7,500 crore until FY21, but it has been on the rise since. In FY23, the allocation was Tk 25,000 crore and it rose to Tk 25,000 crore this fiscal year before it was revised downwards to Tk 18,000 crore.

It is likely to be Tk 25,000 crore next year.

The government usually provides subsidies to the export sector in the form of incentives to businesses. In the current fiscal year, Tk 9,025 crore was set aside, and it is likely to reduce to less than Tk 7,000 crore, according to the officials.

This is because due to Bangladesh's impending graduation from the group of least-developed countries, subsidies will eventually be phased out since World Trade Organisation rules don't allow developing and developed countries to give direct cash aid to exporters.

"We are thinking about the alternate measures in this regard, which will be incorporated in the new export policy," said an official.

Remittance subsidy in the upcoming budget will be unchanged at Tk 6,200 crore, while food subsidy will increase to Tk 7,000 crore from Tk 6,900 crore.

SOCIAL SAFETY NET

Even though economists suggested increasing the allocation for social safety net programmes so that people can cope with higher inflation, the budget in the area is likely to be lower.

Funds equivalent to about 2.5 percent of the GDP are likely to be allocated for social safety net schemes against 2.52 percent currently. However, the allocated amount may increase to Tk 1,32,000 crore from Tk 1,26,272 crore.

The government may increase the number of beneficiaries by around four to five lakh. However, the allowance per person may remain the same, according to officials.

Yet, the allowance may increase for the beneficiaries in two major groups: senior citizens, and widows, deserted, or destitute women.

In the case of senior citizens, a person will get Tk 600 per month and widows, deserted, or destitute women will get Tk 550 per month.

A top finance ministry official said they would reform the social safety net distribution system in FY25 before expanding the programmes.

In a circular recently, the ministry said all funds for social programmes must be disbursed through the mobile financial service (MFS) account registered with the national ID card of the beneficiaries. This must be ensured by June 30, 2025, it said.

At present, allowances under many schemes are paid via MFS, but often not to the registered accounts of the beneficiaries, which leaves room for irregularities.

The government provides social safety net benefits through around 130 programmes.

Analysts question whether some programmes are truly benefiting the poor. They also say a huge amount is being wasted due to corruption in distribution.

The finance ministry has asked all ministries to submit reports detailing who is receiving the allowances and the goals of the programme.

Based on the reports, the ministry will prepare a report as per the recommendations of the World Bank and the IMF.

Inflation hits seven-month high

FROM PAGE 1

Development, a non-profit institution.

Following the pandemic, the coping capacity of the low-and fixed-income groups has fallen significantly, which forced them to cut spending on basic needs, he said.

"Now, they are perplexed. It is a big challenge for the government to protect them."

In the budget for fiscal 2024-2025, scheduled to be announced on June 6, the government should keep enough measures to support these groups, he said.

Echoing his words, Prof Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem), said the new budget should concentrate on expanding social safety net programmes as much as possible for the next year.

Referring to a new study, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) recently showed that food inflation in rural areas remained around 15 percent in December, much higher than the official food inflation rate of 9.41 percent.

"The stubborn inflation trend indicates that the monetary policy isn't working properly. Inflation has just maintained its upward trend," said Mujeri, a former chief economist of the central bank.

Bangladesh Bank has tightened the policy rate repeatedly in recent times to tame high inflation.

"But the situation has taken such a turn that it is not possible to bring down inflation, using the monetary tools alone," he said.

Since March last year, inflation has stayed above 9 percent, BBS data shows.

In order to ensure a smooth supply chain in the commodity market, the government will have to focus on fiscal policy, along with the monetary policy, said Mujeri.

Fresh areas in Sylhet flooded

FROM PAGE 1

Gen Dr Mahbubur Rahman Bhuiyan.

Even the classes and exams at the medical college were suspended due to the flood, said Principal Shishir Ranjan Chakraborty.

Mamun Ahmad, a resident of Laladighirpar area of Sylhet city, said, "Floodwater has entered my house. The whole area has been inundated."

Sadek Hossain, a resident of Jamtala in the city, said, "My house has gone under knee-deep water. All the furniture and household items have been submerged."

Mahbub Alam, an attendee of a patient at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, said, "We were staying at the hospital's ground floor, as we did not get a bed. We had to shift to the balcony of the first floor as the ground floor got flooded."

Yesterday, Surma was flowing 13cm above the danger level near Sylhet city at 3:00pm, and Kushiyara was flowing 48cm above the danger level at Amalshid point under Zakiganj upazila at 6:00pm, according to the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB).

Some 214mm of rainfall was recorded in Sylhet in 24 hours till 6:00pm, said Dipak Ranjan Das, executive engineer of the BWDB.

Heavy rain may continue in the region for the next few days, said Sylhet Meteorological Office Assistant Meteorologist Shah Mohammad Sajib Hossain.

"If the heavy rains continue, the flood situation will keep worsening," said Dipak.

Celesty posed as mastermind's wife

FROM PAGE 12

killing, said sources in the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

After recording her statement for around four hours, the court sent her to jail.

Mahfuzur Rahman, investigating officer of the abduction case and also a senior assistant commissioner of DB, produced her before the court yesterday.

Celesty told investigators that at least 10 people took part in the killing mission.

The case was filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station on May 22. Celesty was remanded by DB for 10 days in two phases.

She was arrested on May 23, eight days after she along with Amanullah returned home from India.

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and stayed the night at his friend Gopal Biswas's house. He went out the following day saying that he would visit a doctor.

On May 22, India and Bangladesh police confirmed that the Jhenaidah-4 lawmaker was killed on May 13.

'PROVIDE INFO ON SUSPECTS' BANK ACCOUNTS'

Yesterday, the IO applied to another Dhaka court seeking its order to provide him with the bank account information of 10 suspects, including Aktaruzzaman, who is believed to have fled to the US after the murder.

The nine others are Amanullah, his nephew Tanvir Bhuiyan, Celesty, Siam Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Faisal Ali Saji, Chelsi Chery, Taj Mohammad Khan, and Md Jamal Hossain.

The court granted the prayer and asked the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit to provide the bank account information to the investigator.

Amanullah and Tanvir are now in DB custody, while Siam is in Nepal police custody. Jihad Howlader, who dismembered the lawmaker's body, is in West Bengal CID custody.

In another development, a Dhaka court yesterday issued an arrest warrant against Siam, accused of dumping the lawmaker's body.

Md Mahbubul Haque, additional chief metropolitan magistrate of Dhaka, passed the order after the IO of the case filed a prayer in this regard.

In the application, the IO said Siam was arrested in Nepal. If an arrest warrant was issued against him, it would be easy for the authorities concerned to bring him back home.

The court also asked the authorities concerned to send a copy of its order to Nepal police through Interpol.

Siam went to India via Nepal. He returned to the Himalayan country after the killing of the lawmaker. He assisted hitman Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan in the murder, said investigators.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Azim's daughter Mumtarin Ferdous Doreen said she secured an Indian visa.

She said she would travel to Kolkata for giving DNA samples to be checked against the suspected body parts of the MP, which was recovered from the septic tank of the Kolkata flat on May 28.

Doreen, however, did not confirm when she would leave for India.

Victim's family

FROM PAGE 1

apparently switched off.

According to the family members, police tortured Afroza and framed her in a drug case as they failed to pay Tk 2 lakh in bribe for her release.

Refuting the allegation of torture, police claimed that they detained the woman with 30 yaba tablets.

Jashore police yesterday formed a three-member committee, led by an additional superintendent of police, to investigate the allegations and the death.

Two rights organisations yesterday expressed grave concern over Afroza's death and demanded fair and neutral probe into the incident and appropriate legal action against those responsible.

Speaking to journalists on Sunday, deceased's son Sabbir, a ninth-grader, said a police team, led by Assistant Sub-Inspector Silon Ali of Abhaynagar Police Station, went to their home around midnight on Saturday.

"Bring out all that you have," Sabbir quoted Silon asking her mother.

"As my mother replied that she had nothing, a female police constable frisked her and found nothing. Then the ASI started beating her up in front of me. At one stage, she fell to the ground. He then tied a lock of my mother's hair to a ceiling fan and tortured her," Sabbir said.

His elder brother Munna said the police team went to their house at the instigation of some locals and detained her mother on false charges of possessing yaba pills.

"The ASI and some other police personnel tortured my mother and then took her away around 1:00am on Sunday," he said.

He said police demanded Tk 2 lakh in bribe for his mother's release. "As we could not pay the money, they tortured her to death."

Munna said they went to the police station on Sunday morning and found her mother in a bad condition.

Police took Afroza to the upazila health complex upon the family's request.

"They returned to the police station with my mother without doing any of tests the duty doctor recommended," he alleged.

As Afroza's condition deteriorated, she was taken to Jashore General Hospital where doctors declared her dead around 11:30am on Sunday.

Hasib Ali Hasan, a doctor at the hospital, said the woman was brought dead. An autopsy was conducted, he added.

Police filed a drug case against the woman on Sunday morning.

ASI Silon claimed that the allegations made by Afroza's family were false and baseless.

Akikul Islam, officer-in-charge of Abhaynagar Police Station, said police detained Afroza with 30 yaba tablets and kept her in the lock-up.

She fell ill in the morning and died on the way to a hospital, he said.

The OC claimed that police did not torture her.

FAIR PROBE DEMANDED

Rights organisation Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) in a statement yesterday said the allegations brought by Afroza's family were very serious.

Torture of a person in police custody is illegal and also a manifestation of unprofessional behaviour, it added.

The allegation of demanding bribe by police after an arrest has become a regular phenomenon, the rights body said.

ASK demanded a judicial enquiry into the death.

Another rights platform Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF) said police's statement regarding Afroza's death is merely a procedural statement, which is not at all acceptable or credible.

Torturing a woman after tying her lock of hair to a fan, showing her arrested with 30 yaba tables after failing to find anything during frisking and interrogation, and demanding Tk 2 lakh in bribe for her release is the manifestation of immorality on the part of police personnel, it added.

MSF demanded an impartial investigation into the custodial death, and justice and accountability for such incidents.

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243 women, girls faced violence in May

Says mahila parishad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 243 women and girls faced violence in May, according to a report prepared by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad.

Of them, 62 -- including 40 girls -- were raped. Additionally, 20 women -- including 12 girls -- were gang-raped. Two were killed after rape and one died by suicide afterwards, mentioned the report based on information taken from 16 national dailies.

In this time period, 22 girls faced sexual violence while seven women, including six girls, faced sexual harassment. Meanwhile, five women were tortured for dowry, and two of them were killed.

A total of 46 women, including seven girls, were killed due to various reasons, while 22 women and girls died mysteriously.

The period also saw 20 women, including five girls, die by suicide.

PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

A young girl floats a paper boat into the water. Her face lights up with joy as the little boat drifts away. In many rural areas such activities are still popular. The photo was taken yesterday in Khulna's Phultala area.

Air pollution linked to antibiotic resistance: Saber

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environment Minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury yesterday said air pollution is linked to antibiotic resistance.

The minister said 1.7 million people die every year across the globe due to antibiotic resistance or AMR.

"The linkages between these two issues [air pollution and AMR] are very important from a health perspective. It's not just about the environment; it's also about public health," the minister said.

He was speaking at an event, titled "Save Your Breath: Policy Dialogue on Clean Air Imperatives".

USAID and Shakti Foundation organised the programme at a city hotel marking World Environment Day.

Notably, a 2018 research published in The Lancet Planetary Health claimed that fine particulate matter (PM2.5), often found in air pollution, contributes to antibiotic resistance.

The research also projects the alarming toll of premature deaths caused by antibiotic resistance linked to PM2.5.

Speaking as the chief guest, Saber termed air pollution a silent killer and mentioned that his ministry has now formulated rules to identify and tackle both indoor and outdoor air pollution.

He stressed the need to identify exact sources of air pollution and suggested potential partnerships for funding and technology.

Lawmaker Nahim Razzak, convener of the Climate Parliament Bangladesh, cited a lack of coordination as the main reason for urban mismanagement. He urged combined efforts from all stakeholders to combat climate change and environmental issues.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

682 hajj pilgrims in a bind as funds stuck in bank

RASHIDUL HASAN

A total of 682 hajj pilgrims are facing uncertainty about traveling to Saudi Arabia this year as their flight tickets have not been booked.

Around Tk 13 crore for the tickets has been deposited to Premier Bank, but the bank is yet to release the funds.

The religious affairs ministry yesterday said these pilgrims may not reach Saudi Arabia on time. It also wrote to Premier Bank twice, urging the bank to release the funds by May 27, but to no avail.

In a letter yesterday, the ministry warned Premier Bank that it would be held responsible for any hindrance in sending the pilgrims.

Matiul Islam, additional secretary to the ministry, told The Daily Star that the pilgrims are now worried about missing their flights.

The first hajj flight was on May 9, and the last one is scheduled for June 12.

The ministry reported that the negligence of two hajj agencies primarily caused this issue.

Akbar Hajj Group initially planned to send 428 pilgrims but later withdrew.

These pilgrims were then transferred to Shikdar Air Travels, which also later declined to send them. Subsequently, they were moved to Al Risan Travel Agency.

The funds for these pilgrims are held in Premier Bank's Mohakhali branch, while Al Risan Travel's account is with Islami Bank's Uttara branch. Despite requests to transfer the money to Islami Bank for ticket purchases, Premier Bank has not acted.

Al Risan Travel Agency sought help from the ministry, which first contacted Premier Bank in March and again on May 26, directing the transfer by May 27. However, Premier Bank has not responded, said Matiul Islam.

Seeking anonymity, an official from Premier Bank's Mohakhali branch stated that Tk 6 crore was released on May 30, allowing for the purchase of air tickets for 318 pilgrims.

He said they are working to release the remaining funds soon.

BANGLADESH-JAPAN JOINT PPP PLATFORM

2 more projects dropped

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Two more development projects to be implemented following a public-private partnership module under Bangladesh-Japan joint initiative have been dropped.

The projects are expansion of Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway and the upgrading of Nabinagar-Manikganj-Paturia Highway into an expressway.

The decision came at the sixth Bangladesh-Japan Joint PPP Platform meeting held in Dhaka on March 18 this year, shows its minutes.

With the two, five projects have been dropped from the government-to-government initiative, which had created hopes of receiving huge investments from Japanese companies.

The development came at a time when most of the other projects under the initiative could not make significant progress over the last six years due to multiple problems.

Most of the projects were included in the list without carrying out any studies. So, when the studies were done, the projects were found not to be viable for PPP, leading to their exclusion from the list, officials said.

Besides, some Japanese companies involved in the process needed more engagement, they added.

However, a new project for building two

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

PROJECTS DROPPED SO FAR

- Expansion of Ctg-Cox's Bazar Highway
- Upgrading Nabinagar-Manikganj-Paturia Highway into expressway
- Multi-modal transport hub at Airport railway station
- Inland container depot at Gazipur's Dhirasram
- MRT Line-2

ON VERGE OF WITHDRAWAL

- Outer ring road around Dhaka

PROJECTS THAT REMAIN

- Multi-modal transport hub at Kamalapur station
- Tora Bridge on Dhaka-Aricha highway, 2nd Bhairab Bridge
- Operation, maintenance of HSIA third terminal
- Ctg Sewerage Project

Ensure departure of 16,970 workers to Malaysia: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the state minister for expatriates' welfare to facilitate the departure of migrant workers to Malaysia who missed the May 31 deadline.

She also urged an investigation into why workers with valid visas couldn't obtain tickets to Malaysia, sources revealed.

During an impromptu discussion after a formal cabinet meeting at the Prime Minister's Office, it was discussed that despite clearance from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, 16,970 migrant workers were unable to travel to Malaysia before the deadline.

Additionally, the premier announced plans to establish 12 new border haats to enhance trade with India during her upcoming visit to New Delhi. She also instructed for an increase in relief materials for cyclone Remal affected districts, said Cabinet Secretary Md Mahbub Hossain.

Furthermore, the cabinet decided to revert to the previous office hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm, effective from the first working day after Eid-ul-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

MEETING DECISIONS

- Govt offices to return to 9:00am-5:00pm
- Shahbagh Police Station to be relocated
- 12 more border haats to be established

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CMCH to get specialised burn unit soon

ARUN BIKASH DEY, *Chattogram*

A longstanding demand for a specialised and modern burn unit in Chattogram is finally being addressed. The National Economic Council approved a Tk 284.76 crore project on May 9 to construct a specialised burn and plastic surgery unit at Chattogram Medical College Hospital .

The project, funded jointly by the Bangladesh and China, with contributions of Tk 104.93 crore and Tk 179.83 crore respectively, is set to be completed by June 2026.

Rajib Palit, deputy director of CMCH, said the project will start soon.

On February 24, nine individuals sustained burn injuries following a gas cylinder explosion at the Rohingya camp in Noakhali's Bhashan Char. Among them, three-year-old Russell succumbed to his injuries due to the lack of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and High Dependency Unit (HDU) facilities at the burn unit.

Such incidents are not uncommon in CMCH, so the project to upgrade the burn unit has been a welcome development.

Dr Rafiq Uddin Ahmed, head of the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit at CMCH, emphasised the inadequacy of the current 30-bed unit. "The existing facilities are insufficient to accommodate the patients," he said. "It is a crying need to make the CMCH burn unit well equipped with adequate facilities to treat burn patients from across Chattogram division."

The new 150-bed unit will include outpatient and indoor departments, an emergency department, 10 ICU beds, 20 HDU beds for male and female patients, and five HDU beds for children.

PROPOSED DESIGN

CMCH director Brig Gen Taslim Uddin said the feasibility study has been completed and the construction work is expected to begin in August.

A Chinese delegation is scheduled to visit for a meeting on June 8 to discuss the primary design of the building with the health minister, he said.

Fake doctor held over rape charges

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Noakhali*

A doctor impersonator was arrested on Sunday night in a case filed over raping a college student in Chatkhil upazila of Noakhali.

The arrestee is Nur Hossain Palash, 45.

The 18-year-old victim's mother filed a case with Chatkhil Police Station Sunday night, said Muhammad Imdadul Haque, officer-in-charge of the police station.

The victim, a college student, reported the incident to the Chatkhil upazila nirbahi officer (UNO). Then, UNO Ehsan Uddin directed her to file a complaint at the local police station and ordered the OC to take action in this regard.

Later police arrested Palash. Chatkhil Upazila Assistant Commissioner (Land) and Executive Magistrate Akib Osman sealed his chamber for various violations.

The victim was taken to Noakhali General Hospital.

2 more projects dropped

FROM PAGE 3

bridges -- Tora Bridge on Dhaka-Aricha highway and the second Bhairab Bridge -- was included in the initiative.

Following an agreement signed between Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) in Bangladesh and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism of Japan in 2017, Japanese companies will invest under the initiative without taking part in any bidding.

At the platform's first meeting in December 2017, Bangladesh's PPPA sought multi-billion-dollar support from Japan for 18 infrastructure projects.

But Japanese companies showed interest in investing US $6.4 billion in six projects -- a multi-modal transport hub each at Kamalapur and Airport Railway stations; an inland container depot at Dhirasram in Gazipur; the improvement of Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway; the outer ring road around Dhaka; and Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-2.

Three projects on the list -- multi-modal transport hub at Airport Railway Station, the inland container depot, and MRT Line-2 -- were withdrawn earlier.

During the sixth platform meeting, it was decided to delist two more.

The Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway was supposed to be expanded under the initiative and a sub-working group (SWG) -- led by Marubeni Corporation -- was selected for the work. The project's feasibility study was also done. But during the fifth platform meeting in October 2022, a representative of Roads and Highways Department said JICA would provide a loan for a separate project undertaken to remove bottlenecks at five points on the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway.

Implementation of the project will be faster if it is done with a JICA loan instead of PPP. Besides, it will eliminate the risk of design uniformity and synchronisation, said the RHD representative.

The issues were also discussed in the sixth platform meeting and a representative of Marubeni Corporation suggested carrying out a study about the possibility of a PPP modality for the operation and maintenance of this road after project completion.

Given the situation, the meeting decided to delist the project and said the discussion regarding operation and maintenance following the PPP module may continue between RHD and the SWG.

Regarding the Nabinagar-Manikganj-Paturia highway project, an RHD representative said this project is not viable in terms of traffic projection as there was a significant drop in traffic on this highway following the opening of Padma Bridge.

As the SWG agreed to the RHD's proposal, the meeting decided to delist the project.

Another project for constructing Dhaka Outer Ring Road is also on the verge of withdrawal from the initiative, as RHD disagreed with a Japanese company's proposal to implement only one of the three parts of the road.

The decision concerning the withdrawal of the project from the platform shall be decided after RHD and Road Transport and Highways Division discuss it with MLIT, according to the meeting's minutes.

Regarding the Kamalapur Multi-Modal Transport Hub project, it was decided that Bangladesh Railway and SWG will continue to work with the stakeholders to fulfil the conditions to move forward with the project in line with proposed schedule.

Regarding Chattogram Metropolitan Sewerage Project, the meeting decided that the SWG concerned will carry out a risk assessment on property connections, and next decision will be taken based on the findings.

In connection with the project for operation and maintenance of the third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, the meeting decided that Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh and the SWG concerned will continue discussions regarding the schedule and key contractual terms.

Ensure departure

FROM PAGE 3

Azha, replacing the current timing of 9:00am to 4:00pm. The shift to the shorter hours was initially implemented from November 15, 2022, to conserve electricity.

Moreover, the cabinet approved the relocation of Shahbagh Police Station to facilitate the implementation of the Swadhinata Stambha project at Suhrawardy Udyan in Dhaka.

The station will be relocated opposite to the Hotel Intercontinental.

Mahbub said the relocation of Shahbagh Police Station is necessary due to the construction of the Swadhinata Stambha (Independence Monument) project. The Ministry of Liberation War Affairs proposed its removal in yesterday's cabinet meeting.

Ministry officials requested to relocate the police station to the building where Sakura Restaurant and Bar is situated, according to sources.

According to sources, despite repeated attempts by the Liberation War ministry, the home ministry did not take any initiatives to move the police station. Moreover, Dhaka South City Corporation opposed the relocation of the police station. Meanwhile, the cabinet approved the final draft of the "Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation Act, 2024" and the "National Biosafety Policy-2024".

Furthermore, the cabinet endorsed the draft agreement between Bangladesh and Mongolia on mutual exemption of visa requirements.

Air pollution linked

FROM PAGE 3

Prof Adil Mohammed Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners, identified a lack of policy implementation, unplanned industrialisation, urban sprawl, and inefficient transportation systems as major causes of air pollution.

Dhaka University Chemistry department Prof Abdus Salam presented on Dhaka's Air Quality Landscape, and Labiba Rahman of Shakti Foundation delivered the welcome address.

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam, Rajuk Chairman Siddiqur Rahman Sarkar, and BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder also spoke at the event's last session.

Anjali Kaur, deputy assistant administrator of the Asia Bureau at USAID, also spoke.

UGC bans future

FROM PAGE 5

from UGC. We look forward to resolving the issue, adhering to their recommendation through the syndicate," she told The Daily Star.

CMU VC Prof Ismail did not respond, despite repeated attempts via phone calls and texts.

However, Bidduth Barua, the university's spokesperson and deputy director of the university's Planning and Development department, said, "We did not violate any rules of the university act."

The officer, however, admitted that the university had relaxed some criteria while appointing staffers on an ad-hoc basis but claimed there were no policy violations.

Regarding UGC's ban on future recruitment, he said, "We abide by the decision taken by the university syndicate. The meeting, scheduled after this Eid, will decide what to do about the UGC's recommendation."

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 4

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-45	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-50	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

দি সিকিউরিটি প্রিন্টিং করপোরেশন (বাংলাদেশ) লিঃ
গাজীপুর-১৭০৩।

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং- ১৬/২০২৪ তারিখ-০৩/০৬/২০২৪ ইং

ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান তালিকাভুক্তির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

করপোরেশনের প্রকৌশল বিভাগের স্যানিটারী, প্লাম্বিং, বিবিধ নির্মাণ, মেরামত ও সরবরাহ কাজে ২০২৪-২০২৫ ও ২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থ বছর তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য উপযুক্ত যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন আগ্রহী ঠিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। আবেদন ফরমসহ নিয়মাবলী ও শর্তাবলী সম্বলিত সিডিউল প্রতিসেট টাঃ ৫০০.০০(পাঁচশত টাকা মাত্র) মূল্যে (অফেরৎযোগ্য) নিজস্ব প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাডে আবেদনের মাধ্যমে করপোরেশনের গাজীপুরস্থ প্রধান কার্যালয়ের অর্থ ও হিসাব বিভাগ এবং ঢাকাস্থ লিয়াজো অফিস, ১ম সংলগ্নী ভবন, ৭ম তলা, বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক, প্রধান কার্যালয়, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০ হতে ০৪/০৬/২০২৪ তারিখ হতে ২৫/০৬/২০২৪ তারিখ রবিবার হতে বৃহস্পতিবার সকাল ১০-০০ ঘটিকা হতে বিকাল ৪-০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত অফিস কর্মদিবসে ক্রয় করা যাবে।

ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক, দি সিকিউরিটি প্রিন্টিং করপোরেশন (বাংলাদেশ) লিঃ, গাজীপুর বরাবরে ডাকযোগে বা কুরিয়ার সার্ভিস মারফত সীলমোহরকৃত আবেদন ২৬/০৬/২০২৪ তারিখ সকাল ১১.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে পৌছাতে হবে অথবা একই তারিখ ও সময়ের মধ্যে গাজীপুরস্থ প্রধান কার্যালয়ে নির্ধারিত বাক্সে সরাসরি জমা (ড্রপ) করা যাবে। নির্ধারিত সময়ের পরে কোনো আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না। আবেদনকারীদের সামনে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) প্রাপ্ত সকল আবেদন ২৬/০৬/২০২৪ তারিখে সকাল ১১.০৫ ঘটিকায় গাজীপুরস্থ কার্যালয়ে খোলা হবে। অসমাপ্ত, শর্তযুক্ত আবেদন বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। করপোরেশনের স্বার্থে কর্তৃপক্ষ কোনো কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই যে কোনো বা সকল আবেদন বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

(মোঃ রুকনুজ্জামান)
মহাব্যবস্থাপক
(ব্যাংক নোট,উৎপাদন বিভাগ ও প্রকৌশল বিভাগ(ইনচার্জ)
ফোন : ৯৯৬৬৯৫১১০-১১৫/এক্সটেনশন-১০৭/২৬৮

GD- 928

বিদেশি সংস্থা জড়িত থাকায় পত্রটি ইংরেজিতে লেখা

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Co-operatives
Local Government Division
Urban Development-2'
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka
www.lgd.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

No. 46.00.0000.107.14.006.23-87 Date: 2nd June, 2024

General Public Notice for Procurement Opportunity

Invitation to a Market Assessment Conference for Improvement of Urban Public Health Preventive Services Project (LGD Component)

The Government of Bangladesh has signed a Financing Agreement with International Development Association (IDA) for financing US$200 million for Urban Health, Nutrition and Population Project. The Project will be implemented by two implementing agencies: – (1) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and (2) Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives. The Local Government Division (LGD) under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives will implement the **"Improvement of Urban Public Health Preventive Services Project"** with the help of IDA financing of US$ 100 million. The main goal of the project is to develop appropriate systems and capacities of LGD, City Corporations and Municipalities for delivering public health preventive services such as vector (mosquito) management and control, outhouse medical waste management, mitigating air and sound pollution in city life and climate change effects on public health, behavior change communications to promote healthy lifestyles and creating awareness as well as community-driven interventions for addressing Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

Under the project, the implementing agency (LGD) will procure goods and services to achieve the above goal. The major procurement items are: (i) equipment for establishment of a biological laboratory (main laboratory and training laboratory) for vector analysis and management including an insectarium; (ii) equipment and testing materials/chemicals for public health laboratory (i.e., food testing laboratory); (iii) equipment for vector (mosquito) management, collection of adult mosquitoes and control; (iv) equipment for air and sound pollution detection and control; (v) personal protection equipment; (vi) Insecticide/pesticide for vector control; (vii) 1 incinerator, 1 autoclave and 1 chemical treatment plants (1set); (viii) ICT/MIS equipment (such as: computer, laptop, printer, main server, backup server); (ix) office furniture; (x) Service provider for outhouse medical waste management; (xi) training firms for arranging foreign and local training/tours; and (xii) study/research on mosquito biology and research on dengue vaccine.

Procurement under the project will be carried out in accordance with the World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, November 2020 (the "WB Procurement Regulations") and the provisions stipulated in the Legal Agreement, Project Procurement Strategy for Development (PPSD) and the procurement plan. The project will be subject to the World Bank's Anticorruption Guidelines, dated October 15, 2006, and revised in January 2011 and July 2016. The evaluation of bids/proposals and contract signing procedure shall follow the Public Procurement Rules, 2008 of Bangladesh and the WB Procurement Regulations.

It is planned that the procurement of large packages for goods and services for the project will commence very soon. As part of designing a fit-for-purpose Project Procurement Strategy for Development (PPSD), the LGD proposes to conduct market engagement to understand market context and get the right suppliers/ service providers.

To this end, the Local Government Division hereby invites interested suppliers, manufacturers, and service providers for a 1.5-hour Market Sounding Conference for each category from **10:00 am on 27 June 2024** at the Conference Room, Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Dhaka.

The objectives of the conference are twofold: (1) to relay general information of the project to, suppliers, manufacturers, and service providers, present details of the project components, details of procurement strategy including selection methods, proposed contract models, expected procurement packages and implementation arrangements; and (2) to receive feedback from the suppliers, manufacturers, and service providers on procurement approach and strategy, contract implementation challenges, procurement risks and mitigation measures, suitability and sustainability of the proposed procurement design, and any other information deemed necessary for the successful implementation of the Project. These consultations are part of procurement preparation and to develop fit for purpose PPSD to achieve value for money based on market engagement and the market information.

The LGD strongly encourages potential suppliers, manufacturers, and service providers to participate in this process and to use the meeting as an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments/feedback regarding this upcoming project procurement opportunities. To help developing a better understanding of the market, please email us the filled-up Market Survey Form available at the website [www.lgd.gov.bd] while confirming your attendance in the conference.

To confirm your attendance and submission of the filled-up Market Survey Form, please email [urbandev2@lgd.gov.bd] by **12:00 PM on 26 June 2024.**

2/6/24
Name: Mohammed Tanvir Azam Siddiquee
Designation: Joint Secretary, Local Government Division & Project Director
Improvement of Urban Public Health Preventive Services Project
Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives
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GD- 934

গণিত বিভাগ
এ এফ মুজিবুর রহমান গণিত ভবন
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
ঢাকা ১০০০ বাংলাদেশ
ফোন : (অফিস) : (আইপি) ৯৬৬৬৯১১৪৬৩/৭০৭১
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টেন্ডার বিজ্ঞপ্তি (উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি)

মেমো নং: DU/OTM/23-24/গণিতঃ ০৩

তারিখঃ ২০ জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ
০৩ জুন ২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

ক্রঃ নং	কাজের নাম	টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ	টেন্ডার বক্স বন্ধের তারিখ ও সময়	টেন্ডার খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্য সংগ্রহের স্থান
১।	ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের গণিত বিভাগের জন্য ২টি High Performance Brand PC এবং ১টি Projector সরবরাহ।	১০/০৬/২০২৪ইং অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।	১১/০৬/২০২৪ইং সকাল ১০.০০টায়	১১/০৬/২০২৪ইং সকাল ১০.৩০টায়	গণিত বিভাগ, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

উল্লেখিত কাজের সিডিউল মূল্য ২,০০০/- টাকা (অফেরৎ যোগ্য) দরপত্র ক্রয় বিক্রয় খাত, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, জনতা ব্যাংক, টি.এস.সি. শাখায়, একাউন্ট নং ৩৬০০০৩৯২ তে জমা দিয়ে উল্লেখিত অফিস হইতে দরপত্র দলিল সংগ্রহ করা যাইবে।

০৩/০৬/২৪
(অধ্যাপক ড. মোঃ শহীদুল ইসলাম)
চেয়ারম্যান
গণিত বিভাগ, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

GD- 929

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

তারিখঃ ০২ জুন ২০২৪

১৫ স্বতন্ত্র সাঁজোয়া স্কোয়াড্রন
হাটহাজারী, চট্টগ্রাম

১। এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারনের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ১৫ স্বতন্ত্র সাঁজোয়া স্কোয়াড্রন, হাটহাজারী, চট্টগ্রাম এর সার্বিক তত্ত্বাবধানে নিম্নবর্ণিত কাজ সম্পন্ন করা হবে। আগ্রহী ঠিকাদার/ব্যবসায়ী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহের নিকট হতে নিম্নবর্ণিত কাজের পৃথক পৃথক দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

ক্রমিক	কাজের বিবরণ	মন্তব্য
১।	সদর দপ্তর ২৪ পদাতিক ডিভিশন এর ২৩.০১.৯২৪.০৮৮.০১.০১৪.০২.৩০.০৫.২৪ (ট্রেনিং)/১৩০২ তারিখ ৩০ মে ২০২৪ স্মারক মূলে সুষ্ঠ প্রশিক্ষণ নিশ্চিতকল্পে হাটহাজারী ফিল্ড ফায়ারিং রেঞ্জের উন্নয়ন/রক্ষনাবেক্ষণ/সংস্কার এবং এতদসংক্রান্ত বিবিধ প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যয় নির্বাহ বাবদ বিভিন্ন সামগ্রী ক্রয়/নির্মাণ	

২। দরপত্র গ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক ঠিকাদার/ব্যবসায়ী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহ ০৩ জুন ২০২৪ হতে ১১ জুন ২০২৪ তারিখের মধ্যে অধিনায়ক, ১৫ স্বতন্ত্র সাঁজোয়া স্কোয়াড্রন, হাটহাজারী, চট্টগ্রাম হতে উল্লেখিত কাজের পৃথক পৃথক তফসিল অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন।

৩। দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী ঠিকাদার/ব্যবসায়ী কর্তৃক দ্রব্য সামগ্রীর মূল্য নির্ধারণ পূর্বক আগামী ১২ জুন ২০২৪ তারিখ ১২০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে ১৫ স্বতন্ত্র সাঁজোয়া স্কোয়াড্রন, হাটহাজারী, চট্টগ্রাম এর প্রধান কার্যালয়ে রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বাক্সে জমা দিতে হবে। উল্লেখ্য যে উক্ত তারিখেই ১৩০০ ঘটিকায় উপস্থিত দরদাতাদের সম্মুখে ক্রয়ের পরিচালনা পর্ষদ কর্তৃক দরপত্র খোলা হবে।

৪। উল্লেখিত কাজের বিল প্রচলিত বিধি মোতাবেক পরিশোধ করা হবে।

৫। ঠিকাদার/ব্যবসায় প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহ কর্তৃক প্রচলিত হারে ভ্যাট ও আয়কর (VAT/IT) প্রদান করতে হবে।

৬। উল্লেখ্য যে, দ্রব্য সামগ্রী ক্রয়ের পরিচালনা পর্ষদ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

অধিনায়ক
১৫ স্বতন্ত্র সাঁজোয়া স্কোয়াড্রন
হাটহাজারী, চট্টগ্রাম

জিডি-৯৩১

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Dhaka South City Corporation
Office of the Project Director
Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP)
Level 10, West Block, Room -919
Nagar Bhaban, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

"e-Tender Notice" (Addendum 01)

Memo No: 46.207.014.09.10.282.2024/451
e-tender are invited in e-GP portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Project Director, DCNUP, Dhaka South City Corporation for the procurement of:

SI	Tender ID, Ref No	Description of items	Start Date & Time	Last Selling Date and Timc		Tender Closing Date & Time	
				Previous	Amended	Prcvious	Amended
01	Tender ID: 986468, Ref. No. 46.207.014.09.10.282 2024, Date: 24.04.2024	Works: Improvement and Construction works of Mayor Sheikh Taposh Bridge (Loharpool)-Contract Package No. DCNUP/W-03/KAC	27-May 2024 15:00 BST	26-June 2024 16:00 BST	30-June 2024 11:00 BST	27-June 2024 12:00 BST	30-June 2024 13:00 BST

N.B : Please see the details of addendum in the tender documents on the e-GP portal.
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and offline/hard copy(s) will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (htlp://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

02.06.2024
(Rajib Khadem)
Project Director, PIU,
Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP)
Dhaka South City Corporation
Tel. 880-2223350461
e-mail: pddcnupdscc24@gmail.com

DSCC/PRD/522/2023-2024

GD- 926

These bricks were shaped and left to dry before placing them in the furnace. However, in the aftermath of Cyclone Remal, most of the bricks turned into clay due to incessant rain. Now, workers are extracting the ones that have preserved their shape. The photo was taken the Doarika area of Barishal yesterday. PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

Attack on forest officials condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) yesterday sent a letter to the chief conservator of forests, expressing concern over a recent attack on forest officials in the Kaliakair area of Gazipur.

The letter, sent by Bela's lawyer advocate S Hasanul Banna of the Supreme Court, demanded immediate arrest and punishment of those involved in the incident.

On May 30, in the Chandra Beat of the Kaliakair Range in Gazipur, seven forest officials and employees were injured in an attack by around 30 miscreants, while trying to prevent forest land encroachment and tree felling.

The letter says around 30 miscreants cut down trees and built structures on government-reserved forest land. When forest officials intervened, they were attacked by the encroachers.

Additionally, the letter also highlights past incidents where forest officials were attacked and even killed by encroachers.

It mentioned deaths of Maheshkhali Forest Range Officer Mohammad Yusuf Uddin on August 7, 2020, and another forest officer in Cox's Bazar, Sazzaduzzaman, on March 31, this year.

Bhutan reduces fees for tourists from Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bhutan has reduced the Sustainable Development Fees (SDF) for Bangladeshis to US $15 per person per night for Bangladeshi tourists from US $100.

Bhutanese Department of Tourism issued a notification towards this end, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)

The US $15 SDF is equivalent to that of the Indian tourists who had been enjoying the reduced SDF previously.

Under the new policy, 15,000 Bangladeshi tourists can travel Bhutan with the reduced fees of USD 15 per year.

The MOFA statement yesterday said Bangladesh and Bhutan enjoy a special relationship, which has been further consolidated under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in recent years.

The visa policy has come into effect from June 2, 2024.

UGC bans future recruitment at CMU

Says VC recruited 6 staffers violating rules

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

The University Grants Commission recently banned any recruitment at Chittagong Medical University (CMU) after finding out about violation of recruitment policies by the university's administration while appointing six staffers.

A three-member UGC probe committee found the irregularities and recommended the ban.

The commission, which oversees university regulations, approved the recommendation and, on May 12, instructed CMU to take further action, said UGC Secretary Ferdous Zaman.

"Based on the investigation report, we sent a letter to the university authorities to take further measures following the recommendations. They will inform the commission after taking the necessary steps," he added.

According to university sources, CMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Ismail Khan appointed Md Alauddin, Md Misbah Ibne Hakim, Kazi Musfiqus Salehin, Md Abdullah Al Noman, Badiul Alam, and Muhammad Anik Al Hossain to several posts under Grade-9 payscale on an ad-hoc basis.

However, while working as temporary staffers [before making their posts permanent], they were given salaries and benefits of Grade-7 officers without syndicate approval.

The UGC investigation team confirmed the allegations, saying ad-hoc appointments in public universities are banned.

UGC deemed those appointments unconstitutional, a violation of citizens' rights, and in contradiction of Chittagong Medical University Act 2016.

The commission then recommended cancelling the appointments and recovering the salaries and benefits paid from February 1, 2022, to February 6, 2023.

The committee also advised the university to amend the Minimum Prescribed Qualification (MPQ) for recruiting teachers and staff to comply with government directives and inform the commission after implementing necessary initiatives.

Until then, the university authorities were instructed not to make any new recruitments, UGC said.

CMU Registrar (acting) Hasina Khan declined to comment, citing it as an "internal matter".

"We received such a letter

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Divisional Forest Officer
Coastal Forest Division, Chattogram.
Sustainable Forests and Livelihoods (SUFAL) Project.

Invitation For Tender of outsourcing 2023-24 FY

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC)
2	Agency	Forest Department, Bangladesh, Dhaka.
3	Procuring Entity Name	Mohammad Belayet Hossen, Divisional Forest Officer, Coastal Forest Division, Chattogram.
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not Applicable
5	Procuring Entity District	Chattogram
6	Invitation for	Supply of Service Provider through outsourcing.
7	Invitation Ref No	Tender No.39/ctg-CFD/outsourcing/Operating costs/2023-24
8	Date	02/06/2024
	KEY INFORMATION	
9	Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (OTM): National Competitive Tender (NCT)
	FUNDING INFORMATION	
10	Budget and Source of Funds	GOB Budget, Government of Bangladesh
11	Development Partners (if applicable)	Not applicable
	PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
12	Project/Programme Code (if applicable)	Divisional Forest Officer, Coastal Forest Division, Chattogram.
13	Project/Programme Name (if applicable)	
14	Tender Package No.	Tender No.39/ctg-CFD/outsourcing/Operating costs/2023-24
15	Tender Package Name	Supply of Service Provider through outsourcing.
16	Tender Publication Date	On or after 03/06/2024
17	Tender Last Selling Date & Time	19-06-2024 upto 5.00 PM (Office time)
18	Tender Closing Date and Time	20-06-2024 at 01.00 PM (Noon)
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	20-06-2024 at 2.00 PM
20	**Name & Address of the office(s)**	
	Selling Tender Document (Principal)	Sadar Range, Coastal Forest Division, Chattogram, Nandankanan, Chattogram.
	Selling Tender Document (Others)	Not Applicable
	Receiving Tender Document	Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Coastal Forest Division, Chattogram, Nandankanan, Chattogram.
	Opening Tender Document	Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Coastal Forest Division, Chattogram, Nandankanan, Chattogram.
21	Place/Date/Time of Pre-Tender Meeting (Optional)	Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Coastal Forest Division, Chattogram, Nandankanan, Chattogram, 09 June 2024, 11.00 AM
	INFORMATION FOR TENDERER	
22	Eligibility of Tenderer	• Tenderers will be the firms having five (5) years general experience of service provider supply through outsourcing. • Tenderers shall have the legal capacity to enter into the contract under the Applicable Law. • Tenderers shall be enrolled in the relevant professional or trade organizations registered in Bangladesh. • Tenderers shall have fulfilled its obligations to pay taxes under the provisions of laws and regulations of Bangladesh. • Tenderers shall have up-to-date license Factory and Establishment Inspection Directorate and a bank account certificate of minimum 01 (one) year with any Scheduled Bank under the name of "Employee Social Security Fund". • The minimum specific experience as a Prime Contractor in providing non-Consultant Service of similar nature, complexity and methods/technology completed of minimum **BDT. 21.50 (Twenty one Lakh Fifty thousand)** only under 01 (one) contracts within the last five (5) years. Years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper. • Others Eligibility are mentioned in Tender document.
23	Brief Description of Services	Supply of Service Provider for the (i) Boatman (10 nos), (ii) Malli (02 nos), (iii) Loskor (01 nos).
24	Price of Tender Document (TK)	Tk. 1,000/- (One thousand) only. (Non refundable)

25	Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk) (Refundable)	Work Start & Completion Time in days
	01.	Supply of Service Provider through outsourcing.	Different Range/Beat/SFNTC/SFPC of Coastal Forest Division, Chattogram & any other place of Forest Department, Bangladesh.	BDT 85,000/- (Eighty five Thousand) only.	01 July 2024 to 30 June, 2025

	PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS	
26	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Mohammad Belayet Hossen
27	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Divisional Forest Officer
28	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Coastal Forest Division, Chattogram, Nandankanan, Chattogram.
29	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Phone: 02333-351469, e-mail: dfocoastalctg@gmail.com
30	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings.	

02/06/24
(Mohammad Belayet Hossen)
Divisional Forest Officer
Coastal Forest Division, Chattogram.
Phone: 02333-351469
e-mail: dfocoastalctg@gmail.com

GD-925

পাবনা বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

স্মারক নং- পাবিপ্রবি/সংস্থাপন/২৮২/৭৮০

তারিখ ঃ ০৩ জুন ২০২৪ ইং

পাবনা বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের জন্য স্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে জনবল নিয়োগের নিমিত্ত নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তসাপেক্ষে বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

অনুষদ	বিভাগের নাম, পদের নাম, বেতনস্কেল ও গ্রেড	পদের সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
মানবিক ও সামাজিক বিজ্ঞান	(১) লোক প্রশাসন বিভাগ সহযোগী অধ্যাপক (৫০০০০-৭১২০০) (গ্রেড-৪)	০১টি	ক) কোন পাবলিক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে লোক প্রশাসন বিষয়ে সম্মান ও মাস্টার্স উভয় পরীক্ষায় গ্রেডিং পয়েন্টে সিজিপিএ ৪.০০ এর মধ্যে ৩.৫ অথবা সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে প্রথম শ্রেণি থাকতে হবে। খ) এসএসসি ও এইচএসসি **প্রত্যেকটি** পরীক্ষায় নূন্যতম সিজিপিএ ৫.০০ এর মধ্যে ৩.৫০ অথবা সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে প্রথম বিভাগ থাকতে হবে। গ) কোন পরীক্ষায় সিজিপিএ ২.৫০-এর কম / ৩য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়। ঘ) সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে পিএইচডি ডিগ্রিধারী প্রার্থীদেরকে পাবলিক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় পর্যায়ে কমপক্ষে ০৭(সাত) বছরের শিক্ষকতার সক্রিয় অভিজ্ঞতা, কমপক্ষে তিনটি স্নাতকোত্তর পর্যায়ের থিসিস গবেষণা পরিচালনা (Supervision) এর অভিজ্ঞতা ও সহকারী অধ্যাপক হিসেবে কমপক্ষে ০৪(চার) বছরের শিক্ষকতার সক্রিয় অভিজ্ঞতাসহ স্বীকৃত (referred) জার্নালে বিষয় সংশ্লিষ্ট অন্ততঃ ০৫(পাঁচ)টি প্রকাশনা যার মধ্যে সহকারী অধ্যাপক পদে থাকাকালীন কোন স্বীকৃত জার্নালে অন্ততঃ ০৩(তিন)টি প্রকাশনা থাকতে হবে। **অথবা** সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে এমফিল ডিগ্রিধারী প্রার্থীদেরকে পাবলিক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় পর্যায়ে কমপক্ষে ০৮(আট) বছরের শিক্ষকতার সক্রিয় অভিজ্ঞতা, কমপক্ষে দুইটি স্নাতকোত্তর পর্যায়ের থিসিস গবেষণা পরিচালনা (Supervision) এর অভিজ্ঞতা ও সহকারী অধ্যাপক হিসেবে কমপক্ষে ০৪(চার) বছরের শিক্ষকতার সক্রিয় অভিজ্ঞতাসহ স্বীকৃত (referred) জার্নালে বিষয় সংশ্লিষ্ট অন্ততঃ ০৫(পাঁচ)টি প্রকাশনা যার মধ্যে সহকারী অধ্যাপক পদে থাকাকালীন কোন স্বীকৃত জার্নালে অন্ততঃ ০৩(তিন)টি প্রকাশনা থাকতে হবে। **অথবা** যে সকল সহকারী অধ্যাপকের উচ্চতর ডিগ্রি নেই তাঁদের ক্ষেত্রে ১২(বারো) বছরের শিক্ষকতার সক্রিয় অভিজ্ঞতার মধ্যে সহকারী অধ্যাপক হিসেবে কমপক্ষে ০৫(পাঁচ) বছরের শিক্ষকতার সক্রিয় অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে এবং বিষয় সংশ্লিষ্ট মোট ০৪(চার)টি প্রকাশনা থাকেতে হবে যার মধ্যে সহকারী অধ্যাপক পদে থাকাকালীন কোন স্বীকৃত জার্নালে অন্ততঃ ০২(দুই)টি প্রকাশনা থাকতে হবে।
বিজ্ঞান	(২) ফার্মেসি বিভাগ প্রভাষক (২২০০০-৫৩০৬০) (গ্রেড-৯)	০১টি	১. ফার্মেসি বিভাগের জন্য ফার্মেসি বিভাগ হতে বি.ফার্ম এবং এম.ফার্ম ডিগ্রি থাকতে হবে এবং পরিসংখ্যান বিভাগের জন্য পরিসংখ্যান বিভাগ হতে ০৪(চার) বছর মেয়াদি স্নাতক (সম্মান) এবং স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি থাকতে হবে। ২. স্নাতক ও স্নাতকোত্তর উভয় পরীক্ষায় সিজিপিএ ৪.০০-এর মধ্যে সিজিপিএ ন্যূনতম ৩.৫০ থাকতে হবে। সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে স্নাতক (সম্মান) ও স্নাতকোত্তর উভয় পরীক্ষায় প্রথম শ্রেণি থাকতে হবে। প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই ডিগ্রিপ্রাপ্ত হতে হবে অর্থাৎ পরীক্ষার ফলপ্রকাশ অপেক্ষমান থাকাকালে আবেদন গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না। ৩. এসএসসি/সমমান এবং এইচএসসি/সমমান পরীক্ষায় জিপিএ ৫.০০ এর মধ্যে ন্যূনতম জিপিএ ৪.০০ অথবা সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে ১ম বিভাগ থাকতে হবে।
	(৩) পরিসংখ্যান বিভাগ প্রভাষক (২২০০০-৫৩০৬০) (গ্রেড-৯)	০৩টি	
ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং এন্ড টেকনোলজি	(৪) ইলেকট্রিক্যাল, ইলেকট্রনিক এন্ড কমিউনিকেশন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিভাগ প্রভাষক (২২০০০-৫৩০৬০) (গ্রেড-৯)	০১টি	১. ইলেকট্রিক্যাল, ইলেকট্রনিক এন্ড কমিউনিকেশন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/ ইলেকট্রিক্যাল এন্ড ইলেক্ট্রনিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিভাগ হতে ০৪(চার) বছর মেয়াদি স্নাতক এবং স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি থাকতে হবে। ২. স্নাতক ও স্নাতকোত্তর উভয় পরীক্ষায় সিজিপিএ ৪.০০-এর মধ্যে সিজিপিএ ন্যূনতম ৩.৫০ থাকতে হবে। সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে স্নাতক ও স্নাতকোত্তর উভয় পরীক্ষায় প্রথম শ্রেণি থাকতে হবে। প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই ডিগ্রিপ্রাপ্ত হতে হবে অর্থাৎ পরীক্ষার ফলপ্রকাশ অপেক্ষমান থাকাকালে আবেদন গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না। ৩. এসএসসি/সমমান এবং এইচএসসি/সমমান পরীক্ষায় জিপিএ ৫.০০ এর মধ্যে ন্যূনতম জিপিএ ৪.০০ অথবা সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে ১ম বিভাগ থাকতে হবে।
	(৫) নগর ও অঞ্চল পরিকল্পনা বিভাগ প্রভাষক (২২০০০-৫৩০৬০) (গ্রেড-৯)	০২টি	১. নগর ও অঞ্চল পরিকল্পনা বিভাগ হতে ০৪(চার) বছর মেয়াদি স্নাতক এবং স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি থাকতে হবে। ২. স্নাতক ও স্নাতকোত্তর উভয় পরীক্ষায় সিজিপিএ ৪.০০-এর মধ্যে সিজিপিএ ন্যূনতম ৩.৫০ থাকতে হবে। সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে স্নাতক ও স্নাতকোত্তর উভয় পরীক্ষায় প্রথম শ্রেণি থাকতে হবে। প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই ডিগ্রিপ্রাপ্ত হতে হবে অর্থাৎ পরীক্ষার ফলপ্রকাশ অপেক্ষমান থাকাকালে আবেদন গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না। ৩. এসএসসি/সমমান এবং এইচএসসি/সমমান পরীক্ষায় জিপিএ ৫.০০ এর মধ্যে ন্যূনতম জিপিএ ৪.০০ অথবা সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে ১ম বিভাগ থাকতে হবে।

★★★ উপর্যুক্ত শর্ত পূরণ সাপেক্ষে পরিসংখ্যান এবং নগর ও অঞ্চল পরিকল্পনা বিভাগে প্রভাষক পদে গত ১৯ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৩ ইং তারিখের পাবিপ্রবি/সংস্থাপন/২৮২/১৮৩৭ স্মারকমূলে প্রকাশিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি অনুযায়ী ইতোপূর্বে যারা পরিসংখ্যান এবং নগর ও অঞ্চল পরিকল্পনা বিভাগে প্রভাষক পদে আবেদন করেছেন, তাঁদের পুনরায় আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নেই। তবে কোন প্রার্থীর যদি উক্ত আবেদনে প্রেরিত তথ্যাদি আপডেট করার প্রয়োজন হয়, তবে তাঁর আপডেটেড তথ্যসহ ০৮ (আট) সেট আবেদনপত্র জমা দিতে হবে; সেক্ষেত্রে কোন ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/ পে-অর্ডার প্রয়োজন হবে না।

শর্তাবলী ঃ

১) **আবেদনপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ২৭ জুন ২০২৪ ইং।** সকল আবেদনপত্র রেজিস্ট্রার, পাবনা বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, রাজাপুর, পাবনা বরাবরে উক্ত তারিখের (**২৭ জুন ২০২৪ ইং**) মধ্যে (সরকারি ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত) অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে (৯:০০টা থেকে ৪:০০টা) কেবলমাত্র ডাকযোগে পৌছাতে হবে।

২) আবেদনের জন্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নিজস্ব ওয়েবসাইট (**www.pust.ac.bd**)-এ প্রদত্ত ফরমেটে আবেদন করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্রের সাথে নিম্নোক্ত ডকুমেন্টগুলো অবশ্যই সংযুক্ত করতে হবে এবং প্রার্থীকে আবেদনপত্রে স্বাক্ষর করতে হবে ঃ
(**ক**) সদ্যতোলা পাসপোর্ট আকারের ০৩ কপি রঙিন ছবি (**খ**) শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি (**গ**) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/ জন্ম নিবন্ধনের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি (**ঘ**) অভিজ্ঞতা (বেতনক্রমসহ) সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি (যদি থাকে বা প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) (**ঙ**) প্রকাশনা ও প্রশিক্ষণ সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি (যদি থাকে বা প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) (**চ**) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার।

৩) (**ক**) সকল পদের প্রার্থীদের জন্য ০৮ (আট) সেট আবেদনপত্র জমা দিতে হবে।
(**খ**) মূল আবেদনপত্রের সাথে নিজ ঠিকানা সম্বলিত ১০/-(দশ) টাকার ডাকটিকিটসহ ফেরত খাম সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।

৪) স্বীকৃত জার্নাল বলতে ISSN নম্বর সম্বলিত **Peer Reviewed** গবেষণা জার্নাল অথবা ISBN নম্বর সম্বলিত গবেষনা পুস্তক/ জার্নাল বুঝাবে।

৫) বিভাগীয় প্রার্থীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হবে এবং বিভাগীয় প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে প্রয়োজনীয় সংখ্যক প্রকাশনার অতিরিক্ত ০২(দুই)টি (প্রথম গবেষক হিসেবে একটি ও সহযোগী গবেষক হিসেবে একটি) প্রকাশনার জন্য ০৬(ছয়) মাস এবং আরও অতিরিক্ত ০২(দুই)টি (প্রথম গবেষক হিসেবে একটি ও সহযোগী গবেষক হিসেবে একটি) প্রকাশনার জন্য আরও ০৬(ছয়) মাস রেয়াত সুবিধা পাবেন এবং সর্বোচ্চ ১(এক) বছর রেয়াতি সুবিধা প্রাপ্য হবেন।

৬) চাকরিরত প্রার্থীদের অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে।

৭) ত্রুটিপূর্ণ/অসম্পূর্ণ এবং বিলম্ব প্রাপ্ত আবেদনপত্র সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।

৮) প্রত্যেক প্রার্থীর তাঁর প্রার্থিত পদের নাম খামের উপর স্পষ্ট করে লিখতে হবে।

৯) প্রাপ্ত দরখাস্তসমূহ প্রাথমিক বাছাইয়ের পর কেবলমাত্র যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে লিখিত পরীক্ষা/মৌখিক পরীক্ষা এ ডাকা হবে। এর জন্য কোন প্রকার টিএ/ডিএ প্রদান করা হবে না।

১০) **পাবনা বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়**-এর অনুকূলে জনতা ব্যাংক লিমিটেড-এর যে কোন শাখা হতে সকল পদের প্রার্থীদের ৬০০/- টাকার (অফেরতযোগ্য) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার আবেদনপত্রের সঙ্গে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্রে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার নং, টাকার পরিমাণ ও তারিখ উল্লেখ করতে হবে।

১১) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ এই নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল কিংবা সংশোধন করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।

অধিকতর যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন/ বিভাগীয় প্রার্থী/ পাবলিক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে এতদসংশ্লিষ্ট অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে এবং বাংলাদেশ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন কর্তৃক পদের অনুমোদন সাপেক্ষে কর্তৃপক্ষ বিজ্ঞাপিত পদের সংখ্যা হ্রাস বা বৃদ্ধি করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

০৩/০৬/২০২৪
রেজিস্ট্রার
পাবনা বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
পাবনা।

GD-927

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

There is a huge market for Bangla films, we need to utilise it: GOUTAM GHOSE

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Bangla cinema is currently evolving, with constant experiments rejuvenating it, according to acclaimed filmmaker Goutam Ghose.

In an interview with The Daily Star during his recent visit to Dhaka, for the purpose of his documentary film made on the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Goutam discussed the golden era of Bangla films, their present and future, the difficulties Bangla film productions face, as well as his own vision.

The director, widely known for his films like ***Padma Nadir Majhi, Antarjali Jatra, Moner Manush, Sankhachil, Ma Bhumi, Paar*** and ***Kaalbela***, stated that the international standard of Bangla films has declined.

"Experiments in Bangla cinema are commonplace-- young directors in both Dhaka and Kolkata are trying to make new types of movies with new dimensions in form and content. However, it's not nearly as much as it used to be in the old days," said the filmmaker.

Comparing Bangla movies to the cinemas of South India and Maharashtra, Goutam opined that the latter are performing better.

"Perception used to change with new technologies, and new perception is required for new technologies. I hope that a transformation will occur in Bangla movies," the director said, stressing the need for collective efforts by both West Bengal and Bangladesh for the betterment of Bangla cinema, and diversifying its market.

"We don't know proper marketing and how to conduct business," Goutam remarked, citing this as the primary reason for Bangla films' underperformance.

"The number of Tamil-Telugu speakers is far fewer than the Bangla audience, but they invest Tk 100-200 crores in a movie, and easily get a return on their investment," said the director, adding, "Tamil-Telugu speakers all over the world watch their movies in cinema halls. Their films are being released in halls across North America, Europe, Japan, Southeast Asia, etc."

"Directors of Kerala are doing well," he said, mentioning Payal Kapadia, who won the Grand Prix award at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival. "On the contrary, Bangalis across the globe don't watch Bangla movies; they watch pirated versions, or prefer television and OTT platforms".

Regarding his upcoming projects, the acclaimed director said his first Indo-Italian cinema is ready for release. "It is a trilingual fiction film with English, Hindi and Italian narratives. I am also working on a joint venture between Bangladesh and India," he said.

Speaking about his legendary film ***Moner Manush***, Goutam explained, "I made the film because I felt the need to tell Lalon's story. In this intolerant society, someone like Lalon is very much needed."

The director further revealed his plans to make a film about the partition history of India and Bangladesh. He believes that although the countries have been divided politically and geographically, there are several topics they can collaborate on.

"Due to a political crisis, India and Pakistan were divided. Was there any referendum in this regard? That political crisis led to suffering of countless people. Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah's two-nation theory did not stand the test of time, and birth of Bangladesh has proved it," he said.

The 74-year-old legend humbly described himself as a common person who has worked in the film industry for a long time. "Since I have taken a lot from society, I always feel a commitment towards it. Social contexts have repeatedly come up in my films, as have social and political aspects."

Goutam concluded by saying he is not an ambitious person at all, and wants to erase three words from the dictionary—Star, VIP and celebrity. "I have an objection regarding these three words."

"Perception used to change with new technologies, and new perception is required for new technologies. I hope that a transformation will occur in Bangla movies,"

Tahsan-Mithila starrer 'Baaji' to premier this Eid

A recent post on Chorki's Facebook page has ignited widespread speculation, featuring an image of a cricketer in a yellow jersey, helmet, and holding a bat, with the intriguing caption, "Who is coming to Chorki?"

The OTT platform has confirmed that the upcoming series will feature singer-turned-actor Tahsan Khan in the lead role. While Tahsan has graced television screens numerous times, ***Baaji*** marks his OTT debut. Rafiath Rashid Mithila will be seen alongside Tahsan in this series.

Directed by Arifur Rahman, the story revolves around the impact of betting on cricket. In ***Baaji,*** Tahsan portrays the role of a cricketer, while Mithila portrays a journalist.

Chorki is expected to release the first seven episodes of the series during the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha.

'Padatik' wins big at New York Indian Film Festival

After screenings at the London Indian Film Festival and the International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK), Srijit Mukherji's ***Padatik*** has now won the Best Screenplay Award at the 2024 New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF).

Srijit posted the good news on social media, congratulating the team on this achievement. He also personally shared the news with Chanchal Chowdhury.

Chanchal Chowdhury told The Daily Star, "This is a big achievement for the film. We have worked really hard for this film, and when I heard the news, I was really happy."

NEWS

Grameen Bank counsel sharpens barbs

FROM PAGE 12

the Packages Corporation Limited owners, including Prof Yunus, of taking financial benefits from Grameen Bank.

The two lawyers appeared before the media and made statements after Prof Yunus on Sunday commented that appearing in the iron cage in connection with a case is part of his cursed life.

Yesterday, Masud told reporters that when Prof Yunus was the managing director of Grameen Bank, he gave a loan to Packages Corporation Limited, owned by Prof Yunus and his family, and waived the interest of the loan in violation of the law.

He said Yunus Centre in an explanation presented "false information" about the establishment of Grameen Bank.

"A research project on microcredit was undertaken by Chattogram University under the leadership of Dr Muhammad Yunus in 1976 when he was a teacher at the economics department. The project was financed by the Chattogram University and it was participated by its students under the leadership of Dr Yunus.

"The agriculture ministry named the project as Grameen Bank Project and sent it to Bangladesh Bank. The government gave Tk 100 crore to the project for eliminating poverty in fiscal year 1978-1979. Dr Muhammad Yunus was appointed as a salaried project director. The project was turned into Grameen Bank in 1983 under the leadership of Prof Yunus," Masud said.

Not a single word in the Grameen Bank's complaint submitted to the ACC is fabricated, he said, adding, "If the allegations are false and if he is innocent, let him prove it in court."

Prof Yunus's lawyer Abdullah-Al-Mamun denounced the accusations, saying a vested quarter is jealous of his client's global outreach and popularity.

Prof Yunus has made great sacrifices for Grameen Bank, he said.

Replying to Masud's accusation, he said the lawyer made the statement in such a manner as if Grameen Bank created Prof Yunus.

"It is as if the son was born before the father. The microcredit project created by Muhammad Yunus under the Grameen Bank Ordinance, 1983, was named as Grameen Bank Project. Prof Yunus applied to the government to turn the project into a complete bank. The government directed him to give all his properties and capital to Grameen Bank and accordingly he did everything under section 37(1) of the Grameen Bank," he said.

At a press release earlier on May 30, Yunus Centre said the allegations that Prof Yunus and his family financially benefited from the loan given to Packages Corporation Limited is totally false.

The owners of Packages Corporation, including Prof Yunus and his family, offered to give the printing press for the use of Grameen Bank without any financial benefits, it said.

"The bilateral agreement signed between Grameen Bank and Packages Corporation makes it very clear that owners of Packages would not take any kind of financial benefits from Grameen Bank, such as, share of profit, rent on the land, building and machinery, any fee of any kind during the tenure of the management contract with Grameen Bank," said the press release.

It said the objective of Grameen Bank was to reduce the cost of printing materials of Grameen Bank, ensure quality printing and timely delivery of all printing materials. Owners just literally handed over the printing plant to Grameen Bank free of cost, it added.

"Packages Corporation received working capital loans from Grameen Bank through its donor-funded window called SVCF (Social Venture Capital Fund). This loan money cannot reach the owners of the Packages Corporation under the Agreement. And it did not."

It said Grameen Bank's price fixing committee used to work strictly on pricing. The price fixed by the committee was always much lower than the market price.

The release further said the total loan received by Packages Corporation over a period of 25 years was less than Tk 10 crore. These are internal financial transactions within Grameen Bank network of projects and companies. Any loan given to Packages has no way to reach the owners as per the agreement.

"It will remain within the Grameen Bank system -- between Grameen Bank and its project, or a social business company designated by Grameen Bank."

Whatever arrangement Grameen Bank made with Packages Corporation, it was made by Grameen Bank authorities. In several board meetings of Grameen Bank, the issues related to the contract were discussed. The board enthusiastically cooperated in the implementation of the agreement, said the release.

642m voters cast ballots in election

FROM PAGE 12

results from votes cast in Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

Postal votes, which are paper ballots, are mostly cast by troops serving outside their home constituencies or officials away from home on election duty.

This year, postal votes were also offered to voters over 85 years of age and people with disabilities to allow them to vote from home.

Kumar said the majority of postal votes would be counted before the completion of EVM vote counting and the process could not be changed at this stage of the election.

The INDIA alliance also urged the EC to ensure the "safe movement" of voting machines and their verification before and after the counting process, which Kumar said had been accepted.

Opposition parties have in the past accused the commission of bias in favour of BJP on issues such as violations during the campaign - charges the EC denies - but have not challenged the counting process or election outcomes.

Some opposition leaders and watchdogs have also claimed, without evidence, that EVMs can be manipulated. The EC has rejected those accusations and courts have endorsed EVMs.

Kumar said one key learning for future elections would be to hold polls at least a month earlier to avoid extreme heat.

Proteas thump SL

FROM PAGE 12

By contrast Sri Lanka's score was their lowest total in all T20 cricket.

Kagiso Rabada (2-21) and left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj, who took two wickets in two balls on his way to 2-22, also struck after Sri Lanka captain Wanindu Hasaranga won the toss.

Opener Kusal Mendis (19) and veteran all-rounder Angelo Mathews (16) were the only batsmen to pass 15.

Sri Lanka were bowled out with five balls to spare when last man Nuwan Thushara was run out for one of four ducks in the innings.

Fast bowler Ottneil Baartman, making his World Cup debut, started the collapse when, with his first ball, he had Pathum Nissanka caught in the deep before Nortje dismissed Kamindu Mendis in similar fashion.

Maharaj then struck twice in the ninth over as both Hasaranga, stumped by Quinton de Kock and Sadeera Samarawickrama, clean bowled by a quicker delivery, fell for nought to leave Sri Lanka 32-4 before Charith Asalanka survived the hat-trick ball.

Nortje, in the first match at a Long Island ground built specially for this tournament, returned to dismiss Mathews in his last over.

Drug dealer shot dead

FROM PAGE 12

Burmese cigarettes and 20,000 yaba pills were recovered from the spot.

During the reported shootout, Nezam was killed. Later, he was taken to his house in Khurushkul.

Informed, Sadar police recovered his body and sent it to Cox's Bazar General Hospital for autopsy.

According to the victim's father, Bashir Uddin, Nezam said he went to Maricha for three days to visit a friend.

Later, he found out that his son was shot dead.

Locals said Nezam was involved in cattle smuggling and yaba trading in the area.

Despite repeated attempts, Lt Col Shahol Ahmed Nobel, commanding officer (CO) of BGB-11, could not be reached over the phone for comments.

Benazir's abuse of power

FROM PAGE 1

communities, the statement read.

To do this, Benazir used members of his own organisation and other government organisations.

Terming such abuse of power by the top-ranking officer of a law enforcement agency outrageous, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said, "Under such circumstances, there is no alternative to ensuring exemplary punishment of the accused and his aides, and fair compensation of those who were forced to sell their land."

Citing media reports, he said Benazir, who is under investigation in connection with corruption, fled the country after withdrawing a large amount of money from banks.

Iftekharuzzaman said such a controversial person leaving the country with his family without anyone noticing raises suspicion that there might be people colluding with him and the graft investigation is just an eyewash.

He said, "It is evident that a section in power protected him before and is doing so now. Bring the former police chief to book will not be enough, his aides will also have to face the music."

He mentioned that Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said the government has the information of those involved in corruption.

Then how a high-ranking police official could indulge in such corruption, Iftekharuzzaman added.

Releasing the names of the corrupt and ensuring accountability is imperative to demonstrate the government's commitment to zero tolerance against graft. Otherwise, the public perception of such commitments to be farcical will become true, the TIB executive director added.

PM likely to visit

FROM PAGE 1

G-20 Leaders Summit in September last year.

Additionally, Hasina's visit to China in July was underscored during a meeting with Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen.

Ambassador Yao emphasised the significance of the visit in promoting trade, investment, and cultural exchange, aligning with Bangladesh's aspirations for "Vision 2041" and the realisation of a "Smart Bangladesh."

"It will be a game-changer. It will open a new chapter," Yao Wen told reporters responding to a question at a seminar on Sunday night.

Anti-Ershad movement

FROM PAGE 12

where doctors declared him dead," said Gazi Mozammel.

Ahamed has left behind his wife, two sons, and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death. His wife is serving as the general manager of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, and his sons are currently studying abroad.

AL President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in a statement, expressed deep shock at his death and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul. She also conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Ahamed's body will be taken to the Central Shaheed Minar tomorrow around 11:00am so that people can pay their last respects. Later, his namaz-e-janaza will be held on the premises of Dhaka University's central mosque.

Ahamed was born in 1961 in Makhna village of Netrakona's Madan upazila.

He studied law at Dhaka University.

Ahamed was the joint general secretary of JSD (Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal) Chhatra League central committee during the anti-autocracy movement. At that time, he was instrumental in the major decisions made by Chhatra Sangram Parishad and Sarbadaliya Chhatra Oikya.

In 1992, Ahamed joined AL and served as an assistant secretary to the party's central sub-committee.

He was nominated by the Awami League for the Netrakona-4 seat in the 2007 general election that got cancelled. Ahamed later aspired for the party's nomination in the last four national elections but was unsuccessful each time. In the 12 parliamentary elections held in January 2024, he wanted to contest as an independent candidate, but his nomination was scrapped.

Palestinian sisters Samar and Sahar cry as they search for their missing mother Amira Al-Breim at the rubble of a house hit in an Israeli strike, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

More than half of Gaza structures damaged

Says UN after preliminary satellite data analysis

AFP, *Geneva*

Some 55 percent of all structures in the Gaza Strip have been destroyed, damaged or possibly damaged since the Israeli offensive began in the Palestinian territory eight months ago, according to preliminary satellite analysis by the UN.

The analysis showed more than 137,000 buildings affected, UNOSAT, the United Nations satellite analysis agency, said on X, formerly Twitter.

The estimate is based on a satellite image taken on May 3, and compared with images taken in May a year earlier, last September, and on October 15.

The fresh satellite image was also compared to images taken during several dates in November, then again during the first months of this year, UNOSAT said.

"According to satellite imagery analysis, UNOSAT identified 36,591 destroyed structures," the agency said in a statement.

In addition, it said it had seen "16,513 severely damaged structures, 47,368 moderately damaged structures, and 36,825 possibly damaged structures for a total of 137,297 structures".

The analysis showed more than 137,000 buildings affected: UNOSAT

"These correspond to around 55 percent of the total structures in the Gaza Strip and a total of 135,142 estimated damaged housing units," it said.

UNOSAT said the image comparisons showed the governorates of Deir Al-Balah, in the centre, and Gaza, in the north, had suffered the worst damage between April 1 and May 3.

Comparing satellite images on those dates indicated that an additional 2,613 structures had been damaged in Deir Al-Balah, while another 2,368 had been damaged in Gaza governorate in just over a month.

Within Deir Al-Balah, the Nuseirat municipality suffered the greatest number of newly damaged structures during that period, at 1,216, UNOSAT said.

The agency stressed that the findings were still part of a preliminary analysis, which had yet to be validated in the field.

Philippe Lazzarini, the head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), has described images from Jabalia as horrific. Thousands of displaced people had no choice but to live amid the rubble and in destroyed UNRWA facilities, he said in a June 1 post on X.

More than 36,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's offensive, according to Gaza health officials.

People inspect a damaged building amid ongoing cross-border hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces in Houla village near the border with Israel, southern Lebanon yesterday. Hezbollah said yesterday it had launched a squadron of drones towards the headquarters of the Israeli military's Galilee formation.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Mexico elects Sheinbaum as first woman president

REUTERS, *Mexico City*

Claudia Sheinbaum won a landslide victory to become Mexico's first female president, inheriting the project of her mentor and outgoing leader Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador whose popularity among the poor helped drive her triumph.

Sheinbaum, a climate scientist and former mayor of Mexico City, won the presidency with between 58.3 percent and 60.7 percent of the vote, according to a rapid sample count by Mexico's electoral authority. That is set to be the highest vote percentage in Mexico's democratic history.

The ruling coalition was also on track for a possible two-thirds super majority in both houses of Congress.

WAYANAD CONSTITUENCY IN INDIA

Exit poll predicts massive slump in Rahul's vote share

TNN, *New Delhi*

In a bitter-sweet prediction for India's Congress party, an exit poll carried out by the VMR-Manorama News has suggested a massive erosion in Rahul Gandhi's vote share in the recently-concluded election in Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency.

The exit poll has predicted a clean sweep by the United Democratic Front (UDF), which has an alliance with the Congress, in the Lok Sabha election in Kerala. It has predicted 16 seats for UDF and two seats for the LDF while it's neck and neck race in two seats.

The exit poll has predicted that if Rahul had secured 64 percent vote in 2019, his vote share will come down to 50 percent this time.

Interestingly, BJP will have to settle without any seat this time too as per the prediction. As per the exit poll, results in Alathur and Kannur could go either way. The exit poll has predicted BJP will come second in two constituencies Thiruvananthapuram and Pathanamthitta.

Meanwhile, senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi said The INDIA Opposition bloc is hopeful that the results of the 2024 Lok Sabha election will be "completely opposite" to exit poll predictions that have predicted another big victory for the BJP-led NDA.

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The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

No end in sight to custodial deaths

Strict measures needed to ensure police accountability

We are outraged to learn of yet another case of custodial death in the country. This time, the victim is a 40-year-old woman from Abhaynagar upazila in Jashore. Her family alleges that local police implicated her in a false drug case and brutally tortured her, leading to her death. Police, however, claim that they detained her for illicit drug possession and deny the allegations of torture. Regardless of who is right, the fact remains that a person died in police custody, and it is a grievous blow to law enforcement that cannot be taken lightly.

According to a report by this daily, a team of Abhaynagar police led by Assistant Sub-Inspector Silon Ali detained the victim, Afroza Begum, right outside her house in the early hours of Sunday. Her ninth-grader son said he saw his mother being searched by a female constable, who found nothing. Then ASI Silon started torturing Afroza before police took her away at around 1am. Her elder son also said police had demanded Tk 2 lakh for her release. The Abhaynagar OC, however, claimed that police had found 30 yaba pills on Afroza, and later a case was filed against her.

Besides the allegations of torture and falsifying evidence, there seems to be a case of neglect in addressing Afroza's medical needs as well. Her elder son said they found her in a bad condition when they visited her at the police station in the morning. Police apparently took her to the upazila health complex, but brought her back without running the tests recommended. Hours later, when Afroza's condition deteriorated, police again took her to the upazila complex, and then to Jashore General Hospital, where she was pronounced dead. Unsurprisingly, police are denying any responsibility, saying the victim's family is making false accusations.

But what possible reason could there be for the family to do so? Equally importantly, will there be a fair investigation to get to the bottom of the incident? Over the years, we saw how such cases were often followed by perfunctory probes that hardly brought any satisfactory results. What happened to the young man who allegedly died by suicide in police custody in Habiganj in December last year? What happened to the Jubo Dal leader in Thakurgaon who died hours after being detained by police in April? The glaring holes in the case of Sultana Jasmine, who died in Rab's custody in March last year, also raised a lot of questions.

We keep asking these questions but there are seldom any satisfactory answers. Convictions in such cases are even rarer. Clearly, there is a lack of accountability pervading our law enforcement forces and institutions, which is totally unacceptable. Custodial torture—whether resulting in deaths or not—is a betrayal of public trust, and it must not be tolerated. We demand a proper investigation into the death of Afroza Begum and all such cases by an impartial and independent body.

Insane prices taking food off the plate

Govt must bring down prices of essentials

It is vital to ask—and seek a solution to—why and for how long local consumers will have to spend more on food compared to those in comparable countries. The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) has recently said that prices of essentials here have surged to such an extent that for many they have become luxury items. We cannot agree more. In 16 countries where GDP per capita is higher than that of Bangladesh, consumers are spending less on food, according to the CPD. The list includes Brazil and Colombia, where the average annual expenditure on food per person in 2022 was $882 and $874, respectively, compared to $924 in Bangladesh. There are also the sanction-hit Iran, war-ravaged Iraq, and crisis-ridden Sri Lanka, among other countries.

If Bangladesh is doing so well economically—as politicians often like to claim—why is it that people are having to spend so much more on food than in countries that are going through serious difficulties and upheavals? In fact, Bangladesh has been experiencing higher inflation for nearly two years now, exceeding inflation rates in many developed and developing economics. And the burden of it has been disproportionately shared by poor and low-income households.

Having analysed the daily prices of 34 essential food items in Dhaka from January 1, 2019 to May 19, 2024, the CPD found that price increases ranged between 10 percent and 310 percent. For example, the price of coarse rice, consumed mostly by the poor, has increased by 30 percent. Similarly, the price of lentils has gone up by as much as 95 percent since January 2019. Prices of unprocessed and processed flour have been going up in Dhaka since before the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war. And all types of soybean oils are pricier in Dhaka's market compared to the international market. The huge difference in these prices and others does not make any sense, with the CPD rightly calling on the government to investigate the alleged involvement of big importers and business groups in price gouging.

We strongly second that call. As we have been repeating in this column, the government must find out why domestic prices are not decreasing in line with pricing trends on the international market, and take effective steps to check inflation. The people—particularly the poor—can no longer afford for it to fail in that regard.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Dunkirk evacuation ends

On this day in 1940, following a massive rescue effort that included civilian boats, the withdrawal of Allied troops trapped at Dunkirk, France, was completed on this day during World War II; more than 300,000 soldiers were saved.

Break the syndicates, not the dreams of migrants

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KALLOL MUSTAFA

Thousands of Bangladeshi workers have been unable to go to Malaysia because they did not get a plane ticket even after completing all the procedures, including obtaining a visa by spending several times more than the prescribed fee. On Friday, several hundred workers waited for hours at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to catch flights, but most of them could not do so.

In fact, no reliable information is available on the exact number of workers who failed to go to Malaysia. According to an estimate of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), this number is 5,953. Bangladesh government's Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) says that this number is 31,000. And according to the information of the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, this number is about 55,000.

The Malaysian government had earlier announced on March 21 that the labour market for migrant workers will be closed on May 31. This means that the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and Baira had 70 days to make arrangements for aspirant migrant workers to go to Malaysia. But having not taken proper initiative in time, thousands of workers could not finish this journey. Due to the flight crisis, those who were able to go had to pay several times the actual airfare. Fares increased from Tk 20,000-25,000 to more than Tk 100,000.

The government does not have to spend money to send workers abroad. The workers arrange the money by themselves, often by taking loans or selling property, or by contacting brokers, and then through hard work, they send US dollars back to the country. Thus, the government enjoys the hard-earned dollars of these migrant workers at almost no cost. In return, the minimum obligation of the government should be to ensure that these workers can go and work abroad for a fixed fee without being harassed. But it appears that the government is not interested in taking even these minimal responsibilities, as a result of which thousands of workers are being cheated and exploited by local and foreign interest groups, including recruiting agencies.

According to a memorandum of understanding signed between Bangladesh and Malaysia in December, 2021, a Bangladeshi worker who wants to travel to Malaysia and work there would needs to spend no more than Tk 78,990 for the passport, health check-up, registration, welfare, insurance, identity card, clothing, and recruitment agency fees. Malaysian employers were supposed to pay for the plane ticket and visa.

On Friday, several hundred workers waited for hours at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to catch flights, but most of them could not do so.
PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

In practice, as reported by *The Daily Star*, a syndicate of 100 Bangladeshi recruiting agencies holds monopoly control over sending workers to Malaysia, and this has increased the cost for aspirant migrant workers. If any agency wants to send workers to Malaysia, it has to send them through this syndicate. Recruiting agencies have to pay huge sums of money to syndicate leaders to become members of the syndicate. The agencies, in turn, recoup that money from migrant workers.

The agencies that are part of the syndicate get a huge amount as "syndicate fee" against each worker, and a part of this money goes to those controlling the Malaysian syndicate. Even though the looting of migrant workers in this way is an open secret, there has been no initiative from the government to break this syndicate.

And why would it take any initiative? According to a report by *Prothom Alo*, several Bangladeshi parliamentarians and their relatives, along with some political leaders of the ruling party, are part of this syndicate. Notables among the members of the syndicate are Awami League MP (Feni-2) Nizam Uddin Hazari's Snigdha Overseas Limited; Jatiya Party MP (Feni-3) Masud Uddin Chowdhury's 5M International; Ahmed International of Dhaka-20 MP Benjir Ahmed; Orbitals Enterprise of Kashmeri Kamal, wife of former finance minister and current MP for Comilla-10, AHM Mustafa Kamal, and Orbitals International of Nafisa Kamal, AHM Mustafa Kamal's daughter.

On one hand, the workers are forced to go to Malaysia by spending several times more money due to the monopoly of the syndicate which exists under the patronage and participation of the ruling party members. On the other hand, workers are forced to live an undignified life even after going to Malaysia due to not getting the employment they are promised.

The situation is so bleak that, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) issued a statement on April 19 where UN experts expressed dismay about the situation of Bangladeshi migrants in Malaysia. They expressed concern that large sums of money were being generated through the fraudulent recruitment of migrant workers by criminal networks operating between Malaysia and Bangladesh. They said migrants were being deceived, recruited by companies that are frequently fake, and obliged to pay exorbitant recruitment fees which pushes them into debt bondage. The experts held some high-level officials in both governments responsible for this situation and called for an immediate end to this exploitation.

It is noteworthy that, although the UN issued a statement on the plight of Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia, no action was taken by the Bangladeshi government—the principal beneficiary of the remittances sent by the migrant workers—to address the sufferings of the workers.

> **These syndicates should no longer be tolerated. Recruiting agencies engaged in fraudulent practices in sending workers abroad should be stopped immediately.**

Malaysia has long been an attractive destination for Bangladeshi migrant workers. Although the government beats the drum of economic development, the reality is that there is a dire shortage of good wage employment in the country. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics' "Labour Force Survey-2022," a Bangladeshi migrant worker earns Tk 28,822 a month in Malaysia on average compared to Tk 24,957 in Saudi Arabia, making Malaysia more attractive for Bangladeshi workers compared to traditional markets in the Gulf.

However, the Bangladesh-Malaysia migration has been marred by irregularities and exploitation in the past, which has prompted Malaysia to shut its door on Bangladeshi workers on multiple occasions. According to a *Prothom Alo* report, Malaysia's labour market was closed in 2009 due to allegations of irregularities in sending workers by creating syndicates. Then the market opened at the end of 2016, and was closed again from September 2018 due to allegations of syndication, corruption and irregularities. After four years of closure, the Malaysian labour market reopened for Bangladeshis in 2022. The syndicate was created once more. It is in this context that Malaysia announced that it will no longer take workers from some countries, including Bangladesh.

These syndicates should no longer be tolerated. Recruiting agencies engaged in fraudulent practices in sending workers abroad should be stopped immediately. The workers who could not go to Malaysia even after paying several times more money this time should be compensated properly and the recruiting agencies and relevant government authorities should be made accountable.

Inequity in education is holding us back

EDUCATING EDUCATION

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RUBAIYA MURSHED

They called him *boigyanik* (scientist) Gias. He was the son of an honest hardworking farmer growing up in a small village in Cox's Bazar—salt-farms and paddy fields all around, with the sea just 35 kilometers away. He was the eldest of eight siblings, and his thirst for knowledge was unmatched. He was interested in science. It was the early 80s, and a young boy in a village school had little resources to satisfy his yearning to learn. The teachers couldn't do much either. The boy learned the harsh lesson that having an immense curiosity and passion for knowing wasn't enough. Still relentless, he opened a science club in his village.

That little boy, whom I later got to know as my eldest brother-in-law, never got the opportunity to learn science like I did living in Dhaka. I imagine countless more children like him, growing up across rural areas in Bangladesh. I wonder how many of them dream of someday becoming scientists, writers, professors, doctors, or engineers. With sadness, I then wonder, how many of their dreams will be broken soon because we have not been able to ascertain equity in our educational provisions.

Inequality and inequity remain harsh realities in Bangladesh. The truth is that talent in Bangladesh is in no way limited to the mega cities like Dhaka, but opportunities, in many instances, are limited. If we are to truly ever graduate from our lower-middle income status, we need to first and foremost channel our efforts towards increasing access to the same standard of education across rural and urban areas by investing in education in our villages. We need to support children from poorer socio-economic backgrounds and marginalised populations.

It's not that children from these backgrounds don't shine. The point is that not enough get the support they need and those who do make it to the other side are exceptions, not examples. They say it takes a village to raise a child, but the reality is that not everyone has that support, and this is where we need to play a role through education. We need to determine what helps children to achieve intergenerational mobility, that is, what helps them to move beyond the struggles their parents faced.

We also need to be careful of the inherent bias and elitism in our ideas. We think and say things like "Not everyone should go to university, not everyone needs a Masters" without assuring that anyone and everyone can if they want to. Yes, it doesn't make sense for scores of students to go for a Masters or PhDs if they're ultimately not going into academia, but this thought is biased until we can assure that anyone and everyone—regardless of their background—can pursue these paths if they want to. Otherwise, it's just another elite filtering where the privilege of being born in a city or into a stronger socio-economic background with more exposure to networks and connections plays a dominant role.

> **It's not that children from these backgrounds don't shine. The point is that not enough get the support they need and those who do make it to the other side are exceptions, not examples.**

Privilege is power but it's a responsibility too. This is where it gets tricky. Privilege shouldn't lead to entitlement. However, it is also unjust if every achievement of someone privileged is labelled to be a result of their background, hence belittling the person's own talent or hard work. Yes, privilege plays an important role in the person being able to leverage their talent but we must remember that not all privileged make a difference in the world. Just like not everyone with privilege gives proper credit to their fortune, to how it helped. Of course, there are also those who use their privilege and connections unethically to achieve their goals, often not even realising that they are robbing someone else's rightful place to make space for themselves. These wrongful practices are, sadly, rampant and evident all around us. No, this is not privilege—it's the misuse of privilege. There's a difference.

Equity is an attempt to make the playing field as equal as possible. This is why many educationists abroad have also been contending for "weighted grades" in assessing students so that we can account for socio-economic background factors. To this effect, demanding adjustments to the quota system at the university level and beyond, as argued by our youth who took to the streets in 2018, is a rightful demand.

Quotas are meant to bring balance and we have several quotas that are arguably unnecessary. For instance, quotas for children of university faculty members. These children already have the intergenerational advantage of growing up in homes where their parents are teachers. This quota is often even harmful because the children of faculty members face prejudice if they end up, on their own merit and without quota, as faculty members—they rarely escape conjectures that they didn't earn their place. Instead, we need quotas for children of farmers from rural villages, for bright enthusiastic children from families where they would be the first to go to university. Our classrooms need this variation. We can only truly prosper if we prosper together and so, we need to ascertain the representation of voices from all walks of life. What's stopping us?

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

Newsroom: Fax- 58156306
reporting@thedailystar.net

Advertisement: 01711623910
advertisement@thedailystar.net
GPO Box: 3257

Subscription:
01711623906

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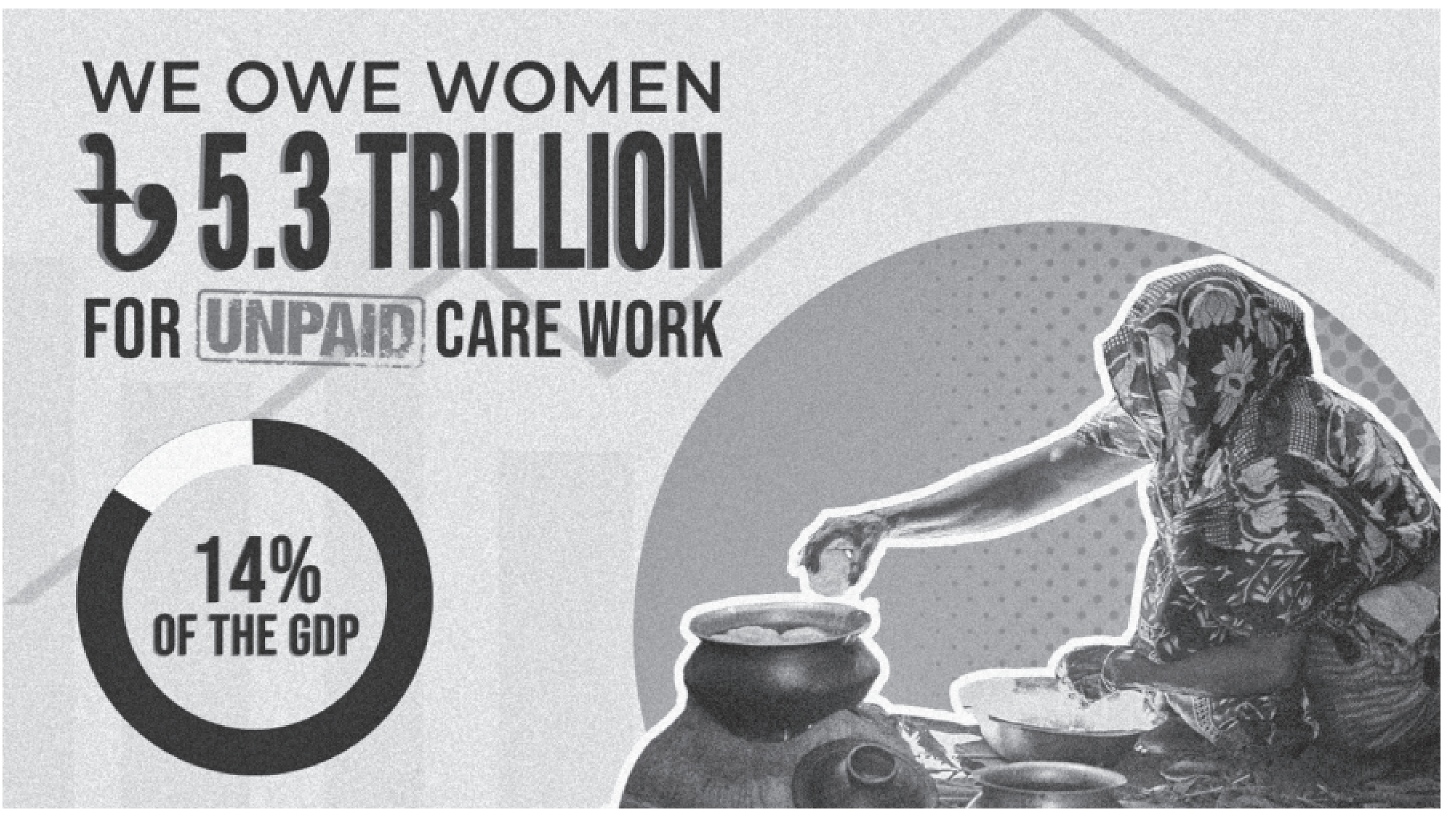
Why recognising unpaid care work is important

Shaheen Anam
is the executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation.

SHAHEEN ANAM

On April 23, 2023, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in an Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) meeting, instructed the Planning Commission to find a way to include the work that women perform within the household, commonly referred to as "unpaid care work," into the calculation of the GDP. This instruction speaks of her commitment towards gender equality and appreciation towards the contribution of women for their labour, irrespective of whether they get paid or not.



VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

What is unpaid care work? It is the work that women perform at home, behind closed doors, which remains mostly unseen and invisible. Their work is considered household work, something that women are "supposed to be doing." However, this work is productive as well as reproductive, and critical to the wellbeing of the family and society. Apart from taking care of children and the elderly, cooking, cleaning, washing, and fetching water, women are involved in economically productive activities such as looking after poultry, livestock, preservation of seeds, and other agricultural work.

The primary reason to recognise this work comes from the concept of "dignity of labour," and for families to realise the importance of this work and accord it the respect that it deserves. Women, by and large, are responsible for the health, hygiene, food security and over all wellbeing of the family. Making their work visible and giving it formal recognition will raise their status as families will become aware of their contribution, and there is hope that it will result in reduction of discrimination, domestic violence, and early marriage. There is a possibility that formal recognition will have an impact in elevating women's position in the family.

The progress of women in Bangladesh is a well-recognised fact today. Thousands of women have attained a level of social, political and economic empowerment. However, not being a homogenous group, this progress has not benefited all women equally. Differences in class, ethnicity, education, income and physical features has determined their level of empowerment. Although our aspiration is to have all women get an education, acquire skills, and become part of the labour force, the reality is that millions of married rural women will not seek jobs outside their homes. They will work within their households and carry out unpaid care work, or at best get involved in home-based enterprise.

For years, economists have argued that unpaid care work cannot be included in the GDP as it is out of the System of National Accounts (SNA), because their product is not in the "market." Remaining out of the SNA means such contribution remains economically invisible. However, advocates for recognition of unpaid care work have launched campaigns and research which has resulted in a number of positive initiatives from government and NGOs.

A number of important studies related to unpaid care work have been carried out in the last few years. Manusher Jonno Foundation commissioned the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) in 2013 to undertake a study titled "Evaluation of Women's Work" with a sample size of 13,000 women. The study revealed that on average, a female member of a household undertakes 12.1 non-SNA activities, the corresponding figure is only 2.7 for a male member. However, the most stunning finding of the study was that if women's unpaid work were to be monetised, it would amount to 2.5 or 2.9 times higher than the income of women received from paid services. For example, if a woman received remuneration of Tk 5,000 per month for her work in a garments factory, the corresponding amount for a woman's unpaid work, if monetised, would be around Tk 15,000.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics carried out a Time-Use Survey with support from UN Women to gather evidence of women's work. The survey revealed that women on average spend seven times more time on care work than men. It also revealed that women use about 25 percent of their daily time on unpaid care work including cooking, cleaning, washing, and taking care of children and the elderly, etc. On the contrary, their male counterparts only spend 3.3 percent of their daily time on such tasks. It was also found that the workload of women increases by over 151 percent with marriage, but for men, the percentage is 78 percent.

A more recent study conducted by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) reveals that women's unpaid care work, if calculated, was worth Tk 5.3 trillion, which is equivalent to almost 15 percent of the GDP. According to the study, women get only 1.2 hours for paid employment while men get 6.1 hours.

Researchers argue that as long as care work is not accorded the importance and dignity it deserves, "care crisis" will continue as it remains firmly in the "informal" economy. Feminist economists have long argued that productive work that is not accounted for in Systems of National Accounts, nor as part of the GDP of a country, is invisible work.

Evidence from studies above and across the globe shows how gendered care work still is. As per research conducted by Oxfam International in 2020, women carry out 76.2 percent of global unpaid care work, dedicating 3.2 times the hours that men do, totalling 12.5 billion hours every day. The researchers estimated that the annual monetary value of women's unpaid care at a conservative $10.8 trillion, which is three times of what Microsoft, the world's biggest company, is worth.

Valuation of care work is necessary to give recognition to the contributions of family caregivers. It also provides means to compare the private contributions of family caregivers with public expenditures on care, and the ways in which contributions are counted and valued. Additionally, it demonstrates how unequal these contributions are. It makes family care work visible and brings to light the inequality in men's work compared to women's work.

Given the evidence we now have, there should be no obstacle to take concrete steps towards formal recognition of unpaid care work and its inclusion in the GDP. Researchers have come up with a formula using the replacement method to evaluate and count its monetary value. The Satellite Accounts System has been used in a number of countries across the world successfully as a parallel GDP. This will bring to public and private attention the contribution of women to the family and society and create a positive image about them.

Development plans of government must include care work as an integral part of the care economy and allocate resources accordingly. Gender Responsive Budgeting is a positive step towards women's economic empowerment. However, much more policy support is required to reduce women's care work burden to give them options and choices for decent employment or to be homemakers. The 4 R's commonly used by advocates—Reduce, Recognise, Redistribute and Reward—is a pathway towards women's social and economic empowerment.

It is time to make women's work in all its dimensions visible, valued and accorded the respect it deserves.

Taking our startup ecosystem to the next level

Waseem Alim
is a co-founder of Chaldal.

WASEEM ALIM

The role of startups in driving economic growth and societal change is undisputed in developed economies—Apple, Facebook, Tesla were all once startups. Startups are vehicles through which people come together to develop a scalable innovation. While the world is adopting self-driving cars and AI assistants, Bangladeshis seem skeptical about the prospects of these ventures.

This is starkly visible in investments in local startups. In 2023, Bangladeshi startups secured $73 million, with 71.18 percent coming from foreigners, while India received over $11 billion. Before analysing this gap, it's important to understand why startups need investment in the first place.

Startups in Bangladesh are applying new technologies to add efficiency to age-old processes—from reducing fuel imports, fighting climate change to cutting food waste and improving healthcare. The startups working on education have made it easier for students in remote villages to access quality coaching through internet-enabled phones. By streamlining payments, bKash has accelerated the flow of commerce and added significant value to the life of every Bangladeshi.

These breakthroughs require dedication from some of our smartest citizens. Startups also need to collect data and run experiments to fine-tune their ideas, which require investment with no guaranteed success. Entrepreneurs must recruit talented individuals and take on the risk of building these systems, some of which can take a long time and many smart people.

The mechanism of startup investments, successful globally, differs from investing in established businesses. Startup ecosystems drive economic progress, but individual startups are high-risk, high-reward bets, unlike bonds or real estate. It is easier to gauge a building's progress than a startup's technology. Venture capitalists (VC) specialise in evaluating these businesses and estimating their success probability, but the Bangladeshi VC sector is just getting started.

Bangladeshis entrust banks with nearly all the country's capital, and the banking sector prefers lending to traditional businesses over investing in startups or VC funds. This terrible capital allocation strategy leads to many non-performing loans. The value of collateral depends on the country's economic prospects, which in the 21st century is driven by technology—the top-performing companies of the last decade have been tech firms. Our banking sector is living in the past.

In the past two years, the forex crisis and election uncertainty have severely impacted late-stage funding in Bangladesh. Top companies are starving for capital as their strategy depended on an evolving ecosystem. Since foreign VCs have shied away due to country concerns, so have local investors. The lack of late-stage activity will eventually hurt early-stage companies and restrain the ecosystem from flourishing.

If we truly commit to SMART Bangladesh and believe the startup ecosystem can transform the economy, we need a coordinated effort from different actors. One impactful government initiative has been Startup Bangladesh, which has mobilised youth and driven local funding. However, we risk losing momentum if others don't act urgently.

"Exits" have been instrumental in galvanising local investments in other countries. For any investor, a key consideration is how they will eventually sell-out of their investment. For example, the sale of Skype to Microsoft in 2011, Estonia's first exit, created a chain reaction that led to one of the fastest-growing GDPs in history. Since then, Estonia, a country with less population than Mirpur, has produced a dozen unicorns and at least two decacorns—companies valued at over $10 billion each.

The lack of exits is holding back Bangladesh. Unlike in the valley, where successes like Uber or OpenAI created thousands of millionaires, the success of bKash has not yet unleashed the funding landscape here. We are left in a chicken-egg limbo where startups cannot scale due to lack of capital, and capital avoids the ecosystem because of lack of role models and exit opportunities.

Exits happen in two forms: (i) sale of the company or (ii) listing the company in a public stock exchange or IPO, both of which return money to early investors. In Bangladesh, the number of purchasers is limited for now, but our consumer-driven economy is bound to make Bangladeshi startups attractive acquisition targets for international giants. Nevertheless, sale of the company is suboptimal. Yahoo had offered to buy Facebook in 2006 for $1 billion—had Mr Zuckerberg accepted, he would not have created the $1.2 *trillion* in value for his shareholders. Creating that kind of value requires pursuing an IPO and a courageous, almost fanatical, commitment to the vision.

Bangladesh Bank was visionary in establishing a fund for startup loans in 2021, but it has not had the desired impact since the banking sector did not pursue it aggressively. The central bank needs to create guidelines allowing banks to participate in the "upside" of startup investments, achievable through the use of warrants, which are common in the global venture debt industry. Powerful incentives such as reduced repo rates or lower forex purchase rates should also be linked to startup investment quotas.

The number of investments by SEC-licensed VCs has also been negligible, and there is a talent gap among these investors. The prospects are improving as there are many early-stage startups now. The skill shortage should be addressed by attracting international talent and providing training to high-potential candidates. The VCs need to collaborate with international agencies since a lot of impact funds are being mobilised for startups. Regulatory bodies need to act as catalysts and move faster. If the target is to drive $1 billion in startup investments per year, the government should contribute 20 percent.

The issue of IPOs must be addressed because without exits, it will be impossible to maintain motivation across the value chain. Bangladesh needs to send a clear message that we are self-sufficient for late-stage funding. India, Indonesia and China have been aggressive in creating new rules for startup listings and it is time that we took a similar stance. Increasing the strength of the local funding environment will automatically attract more foreign investors.

Finally, the startup ecosystem members need to collaborate vigorously. Founders should realise that macro and policy matters must align to unleash the ecosystem. Mentorship and policy advocacy have to become part of the Bangladeshi founder DNA.

The startup ecosystem has developed almost organically so far. To reach the next level, it requires a coordinated master plan. Success hinges on collective act of courage from capital allocators, regulators, and founders to enact a uniquely transformative story that makes Bangladesh a beacon of technological and entrepreneurial success.

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গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No: 46.07.0000.018.99.025.19.1903 Date: 02/06/2024

e-Tender Notice-25/2023-24

1.	Ministry/ Division	Ministry of the Local Government, Rural Development & Co-operatives.	
2.	**Agency:**	Sylhet City Corporation.	
3.	**Budget and source of Funds :**	**Local Government COVID-19 Response and Recovery Project, Sylhet City Corporation financed by World Bank.**	
Tender ID No		**Name of the work**	**Last Date of Tender Submission**
994789 (OTM)		(1) Upgrading of RCC Road at Chandi Point to Fokirpara Mosjid. Ch. 00-528m. (2) Upgrading of RCC Road at Burhan Udden Road to Poshim Murad Pur (Purbo Muktirchok), Ch. 00-610m	27/06/2024
994801 (OTM)		Upgrading of RCC Road at Srirampur Front Road, Ch. 00-750m.	27/06/2024
994819 (OTM)		Installation of Energy Efficient Street Lighting System for Ward no 28-42 (15 wards).	04/07/2024
4.	**Name, Designation & Address of PE**	**Engr. Md. Ali Akbar** **Superintending Engineer** **Sylhet City Corporation.** **+8802 9966 40486**	
5.	This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline/hard copies will not be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the web site: www.eprocure.gov.bd		
6.	The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches.		
7.	Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)		

Superintending Engineer
Sylhet City Corporation.

GD-924

ILLUSTRATION: **ZARIF FAIAZ**

Why tech workers must reskill, upskill in the age of AI

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) across various sectors is not just a trend but a transformative force reshaping the future of work in the modern world. In this rapidly evolving technological landscape, the need for reskilling and upskilling has become paramount. As AI continues to advance, it is essential for tech workers to embrace continuous learning to remain relevant and competitive.

ZARIF FAIAZ

The AI-driven transformation of the job market

AI is revolutionising the job market by automating routine tasks and creating new opportunities that require advanced skills. According to the World Economic Forum, by 2025, 85 million jobs may be displaced due to the shift in labour division between humans and machines.

However, this same transition is expected to generate 97 million new roles that are better suited to the evolving landscape. These new roles will demand a workforce proficient in AI, machine learning, data analysis, and other emerging technologies.

The necessity of reskilling

Reskilling involves learning new skills to transition into different job roles, which is crucial as AI takes over more traditional tasks. For instance, customer service roles are increasingly augmented by AI tools that handle initial queries, necessitating workers to learn how to manage AI systems and address complex issues that require human intervention.

Similarly, in financial services, employees are now required to understand and leverage AI to make better investment decisions, as highlighted by an IBM report stating that nearly 70% of financial services leaders believe significant upskilling is necessary in 2024.

The importance of upskilling

Upskilling, on the other hand, enhances existing skills to improve performance in current roles. This is particularly important as AI tools become integral to daily operations.

A study by MIT found that workers using AI tools like ChatGPT reported a 37% increase in productivity, demonstrating how AI can significantly augment human capabilities. In healthcare, for example, professionals are using AI to speed up medical diagnoses, allowing them to focus more on patient care and complex decision-making.

Bridging the skills gap

The rapid advancement of AI has exposed a significant skills gap in the workforce. Many organisations struggle to implement AI effectively due to a lack of skilled personnel. According to a survey by Boston Consulting Group, 66% of executives are dissatisfied with their progress in scaling AI initiatives, primarily due to this skills gap. Addressing this gap requires comprehensive training programs that focus on both reskilling and upskilling.

Benefits for individuals and organisations

For individuals, reskilling and upskilling offer several advantages. Workers equipped with the latest skills are less likely to be displaced by automation and are more likely to be hired and promoted, leading to higher job security and career advancement opportunities. Engaged employees who are continuously learning and growing tend to have higher job satisfaction and morale. Additionally, workers with new or enhanced skills can command higher salaries and have access to better job opportunities due to their broader range of expertise.

For organisations, having a skilled workforce enhances productivity and innovation. Skilled workers are more efficient and can leverage AI to drive innovation, which is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge in the market.

Furthermore, organisations that invest in their employees' development tend to have higher retention rates. The LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report found that opportunities for learning and development significantly influence job satisfaction and retention. By providing targeted training programs, organisations can bridge the skills gap, ensuring they have the necessary talent to implement and scale AI effectively.

Fostering a culture of continuous learning

Creating a culture of continuous learning is vital in an AI-driven world. This involves not only providing formal training but also encouraging on-the-job learning and mentorship. AI itself can play a role in this by offering personalised learning experiences and identifying skill gaps through data analysis. For example, AI can create customised training programs tailored to an individual's role and career aspirations, enhancing the learning experience and effectiveness.

Social and economic implications

The benefits of reskilling and upskilling extend beyond individual and organisational gains to broader social and economic impacts. The World Economic Forum's initiative to prepare one billion people for tomorrow's economy by 2030 highlights the global urgency of this issue. By equipping the workforce with the necessary skills, we can ensure inclusive growth and mitigate the risks of technological unemployment.

The imperative for tech workers to reskill and upskill in the age of AI is undeniable. As AI continues to transform the job market, staying ahead of the curve through continuous learning is essential. Embracing this change and investing in skill development will enable both individuals and organisations to thrive in the dynamic landscape shaped by AI.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

MetLife Bangladesh

Digital Support Associate

Deadline: June 6

Eligibility:
- Bachelors/Masters degree from any reputed university.

Minimum experience: 2 years

BRAC

Deputy Manager, Events and Design

Deadline: June 8

Eligibility:
- Graduate degree preferably in Social Science, Fine Arts, Graphics Design, Film & Media, or a related field.

Minimum experience: 4 years

International Rescue Committee

Manager, Ethics and Compliance

Deadline: June 5

Eligibility:
- Bachelor's degree in Finance/Law/ Management.

Minimum experience: 2-5 years

British Council

Administrative Officer

Deadline: June 6

Eligibility:
- A degree or diploma in Business Administration, Management, Office Administration, or a related field.

Minimum experience: 5 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

> "The most important investment you can make is in yourself."
>
> WARREN BUFFETT

Top tips for data protection in the workplace

In today's digital age, safeguarding personal data at the workplace is more crucial than ever. With the increasing threat of cyberattacks and stringent data protection regulations, businesses must adopt comprehensive measures to protect sensitive information. Here are some top tips to enhance data protection in your organisation.

Secure data storage

Data breaches can be costly and damaging, but proper data handling and storage can mitigate these risks. The average cost of a data breach in 2021 was $4.24 million, according to IBM's Cost of a Data Breach Report.

Ensuring that all personal data is stored securely is a fundamental step in data protection. Simple measures such as locking physical documents in cabinets and using strong passwords for digital files can significantly reduce the risk of unauthorised access. For highly sensitive information, additional steps such as encryption should be taken.

Implement a clear desk policy

A clear desk policy minimises the risk of sensitive information being left unattended. This policy requires employees to store paperwork, notes, and other documents securely when not in use. It prevents unauthorised access and fosters a culture of organisation and responsibility. For instance, leaving sensitive documents on desks can lead to data leaks, especially in shared office spaces.

Develop a remote/hybrid working policy

With the rise of remote and hybrid work, it is essential to have a clear policy on handling personal data off-site. This includes using two-factor authentication for accessing company systems and ensuring that personal devices used for work are secure.

The trend of remote work has seen a significant increase, with a 2020 Gartner survey revealing that 82% of company leaders worldwide plan to allow employees to work remotely some of the time. Securing mobile devices and educating staff on the proper handling of data when working remotely is essential.

Regular data backups

According to the Data Protection Benchmark Study by Veeam, 58% of organisations face significant data loss issues due to inadequate backups.

Regularly backing up your data to secure locations is crucial. This ensures that, in the event of a cyberattack, fire, or flood, you can still access critical information. Both physical and cloud-based backup solutions should be considered to provide redundancy and quick recovery options.

Limit access to data

Not all employees need access to all data. Implementing role-based access controls ensures that only authorised personnel can access sensitive information. This reduces the risk of internal data breaches and helps maintain data integrity. Categorising data and limiting administrative privileges are effective ways to enhance data security. For instance, the 2018 Verizon Data Breach Investigations Report found that 34% of data breaches involved internal actors.

ILLUSTRATION: **ZARIF FAIAZ**

Employee training

Data protection is everyone's responsibility. Regular training sessions can help employees understand the importance of data security and the best practices to follow. This can significantly reduce the risk of accidental breaches and ensure that all staff are aware of their roles in maintaining data protection.

Use encryption

Encrypting sensitive data both in transit and at rest adds an extra layer of security, making it difficult for unauthorised users to access the information. Encryption is particularly important for protecting high-value data and is a key component of a comprehensive data protection strategy.

Monitor and update security measures

Cyber threats are constantly evolving, so it is vital to keep your security systems up to date. The Equifax breach, which affected over 143 million people, highlights the importance of timely updates and proactive security measures. According to a 2021 report by Check Point Research, cyberattacks increased by 50% year over year, underscoring the need for continuous vigilance. Regularly reviewing and updating your data protection plan helps address new vulnerabilities and threats.

By implementing these best practices, organisations can significantly enhance their data protection measures, ensuring compliance with regulations and safeguarding against potential breaches. A proactive approach to data security not only protects your organisation but also builds trust with clients and employees.

What to WATCH

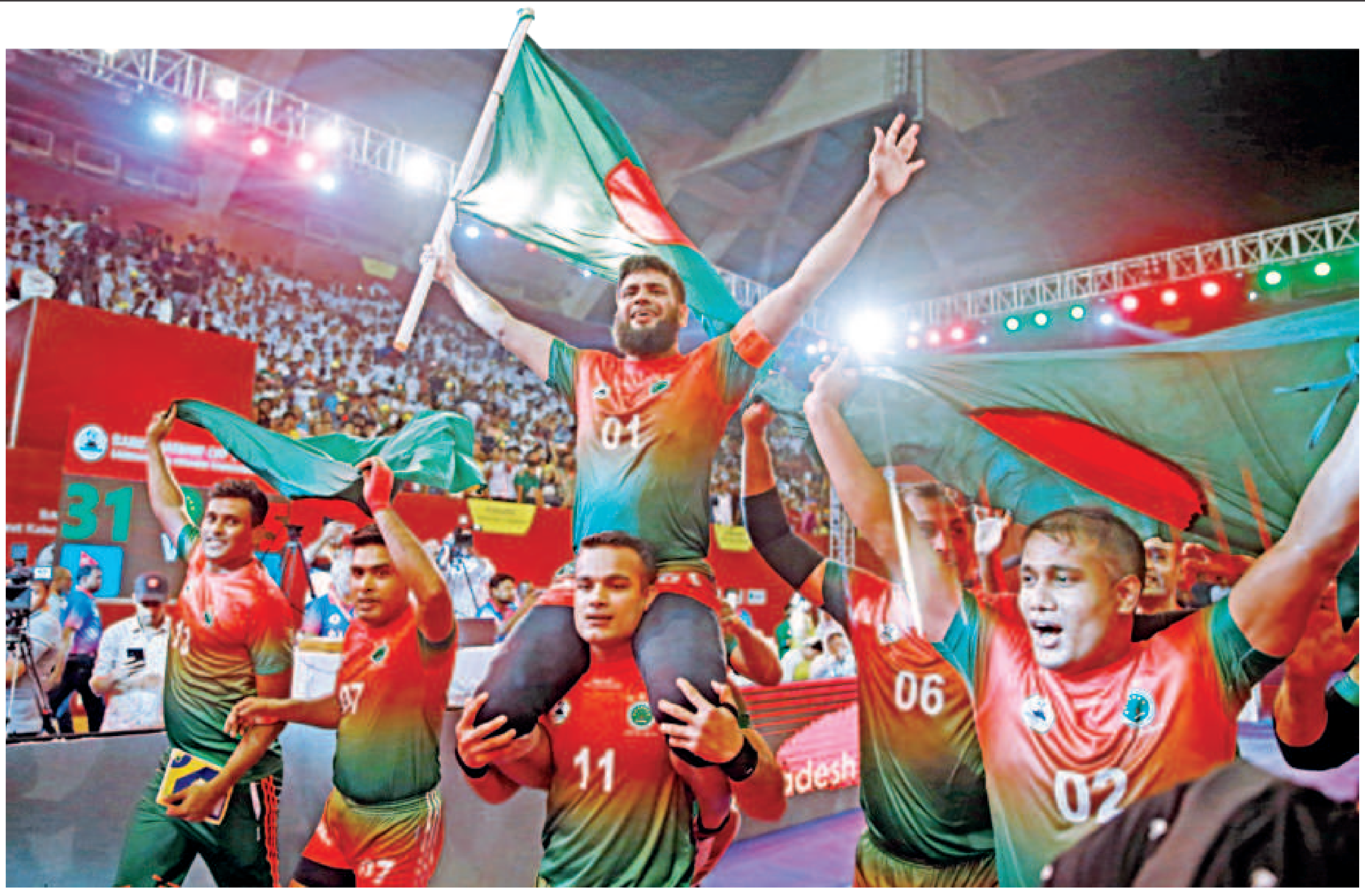
NAGORIK TV AND STAR SPORTS 1 HD
T20 World Cup
Afghanistan vs Uganda
Live from 6:30 am
England vs Scotland
Live from 8:30 pm
Netherlands vs Nepal
Live from 9:30 pm

SONY SPORTS 2
French Open Quarterfinals
Live From 3:00 pm

> **It is the biggest achievement in my life because I never thought I would bid farewell to the game in such a majestic way.**
>
> Bangladesh raider
> **Arduzzaman Munshi**

> **We had done a one-hour study on how to play and how to catch Ghanshyam (Roka Magar). We succeeded as we did not allow Ghanshyam to perform.**
>
> Bangladesh catcher
> **Roman Hossain**

> **We had the best defenders -- Ziaur Rahman and Roman Hussain -- who successfully caught their best raider [Ghanshyam Roka Magar] on most occasions. I was happy with the performance of the boys throughout the tournament since we could not display such consistent performances in previous three editions.**
>
> Bangladesh coach
> **Abdul Jalil**



Bangladesh captain Arduzzaman Munshi carries a flag is hailed on the back of a teammate following the hosts' 45-31 points victory against Nepal in the final of the Bangabandhu International Kabaddi Tournament at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. It was a bittersweet occasion for the 38-year-old Munshi, who called time on his 15-year international career with a player of the final performance, which helped Bangladesh win the title for the fourth consecutive time. PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

BANGLADESH go down fighting

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team put up a much improved performance against Chinese Taipei but still ended up on the losing side, suffering a 1-0 defeat in the second and final FIFA friendly match at the Bashundhara Kings Arena yesterday.

Smarting from a 4-0 drubbing at the hands of Chinese Taipei in the first match, the SAFF Champions showed their character in the second match against a side that is 100 places above them in the FIFA rankings.

Coach Peter Butler made four changes in the starting eleven, the most notable of them was his decision to drop captain Sabina Khatun in favour of forward Shamsunnahar Jr.

He also brought in defenders Shamsunnahar Sr and Anai Mogini and midfielder Swapna Rani in place of Masura Parvin, Sumaya Matsushima and Shaheda Akter Ripa, switching to a 4-4-2 formation from the first match's 3-5-2.

Sabina, who has been an indispensable part of the team since making her debut in 2010, was taken off after the first half in the first match and came off the bench in the dying minutes in yesterday's game.

The British coach said that he respected Sabina's contributions as a player but also hinted that age may be catching up with the 30-year-old booter.

"I think Sabi [Sabina] looked tired the other day. I'm trying to help her. I think she's an integral part, moving forward with this group. She's a good girl. She has had a distinguished career which I fully respect. When you get older, sometimes your legs don't do what your brain tells you to do," said Butler.

In the match, Chinese Taipei dominated the first 20 minutes of the game, taking the lead in the 17th minute by utilising a mistake from Bangladeshi defender Anai Mogini.

Anai failed to clear a cutback from the left side of the box and unmarked Su Yu-Hsuan, who scored a hat-trick in the first match, brilliantly placed the ball to the far post, beating goalkeeper Rupna Chakma.

After conceding the lead, Bangladesh started playing better, had more control of the ball and launched attacks through both flanks. But forwards Shamsunnahar Jr and Tahura Khatun were not able to reach most of the crosses due to their height disadvantage compared to the Chinese Taipei defenders.

The ball remained in the Chinese Taipei half for most of the second half as the pair of Monika Chakma and Munki Akther controlled the midfield while Ritu Porna Chakma and Swapna Rani made encouraging runs through both flanks but the hosts equalise.

Overall, the Bangladesh coach was satisfied with his team's performance in the match.

"I made a few changes looking back at the previous match where I thought we played well for 15-20 minutes, lost it for about a 20-minute spell when we conceded three goals, that obviously cost us," Butler said.

"So, today's [Monday] plan was building blocks – 15 minutes, 15 minutes, 15 minutes – don't play the game, play the clock and let's build confidence. We conceded again after 15 minutes, but I was delighted with the way they came back, the attitude they shown.

"I thought the girls were outstanding tonight. We didn't have a lot of chances in the first 40 minutes, but I thought in the second half we grew into the game and really dominated possession. I think if anybody's critical of that tonight, they don't understand football."

Nepal to host SAFF Women's C'ship 2024

SPORTS REPORTER

Nepal was declared hosts for the 7th SAFF Women's Championship yesterday, which is scheduled to be held on October 17-30 later this year.

This will be the Himalayan nation's third time hosting the tournament and they were chosen over Bangladesh, the defending champions, and Bhutan, who were also in contention.

"Considering everything, Nepal was the more suitable option. That's why we chose Nepal," said SAFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal adding that Bangladesh were not considered due to the unavailability of their main venue - Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS).

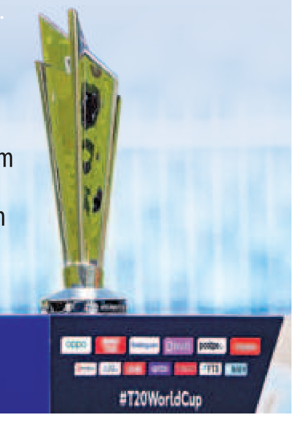
Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) women's committee chairman Mahfuza Akhter Kiron also gave the same reasoning for not getting the tournament's hosting rights.

"When we bid for the SAFF Women's Championship, we had the BNS in mind. But the venue's renovation is not yet complete and SAFF didn't want to take the tournament outside Dhaka due to expenditure, so we were not considered," said Kiron.

Helal also said, "SAFF is not comfortable hosting matches at Bashundhara Kings Arena due to the lack of control over the venue," and also added that the Bir Shrestha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium was not up to standard to stage FIFA tier-1 matches.

RECORD $11.25M ON OFFER AT T20 WC

- International Cricket Council (ICC) have announced a record-breaking prize fund of $11.25 million USD for the Men's T20 World Cup 2024.
- The winners will receive the highest amount (at least $2.45 million) in the tournament's history.
- The runners-up will earn at least $1.28 million, while the losing semi-finalists will take home $787,500 each.
- Teams that do not advance past the second round will receive $382,500 each, and those finishing between ninth and 12th place will get $247,500 each.
- Teams ranking from 13th to 20th place will each earn $225,000. Additionally, every team will receive an extra $31,154 for each match won, excluding the semifinals and finals.



De Minaur breaks 20-year hoodoo

REUTERS, *Paris*

Alex de Minaur broke a 20-year Australian hoodoo at the French Open on Monday as the 11th seed battled from a set down to stun fifth seed Daniil Medvedev 4-6, 6-2, 6-1, and 6-3 and advance to his first Roland Garros quarterfinal.

De Minaur became the first man from his nation to reach the last eight at the claycourt Grand Slam since Lleyton Hewitt in 2004, with the victory on Suzanne Lenglen seemingly aided by Medvedev's mid-match blip due to a foot problem.

Former Paris quarter-finalist Medvedev had lost only twice in eight previous meetings with De Minaur and drew first blood with a break in the third game but the 28-year-old was pushed hard in the next before extending his lead.

After Medvedev wrapped up the opening set with little fuss, he shrugged off a string of superb winners from De Minaur's racket at the start of the second set.

But Medvedev surrendered the second set tamely with an unforced error after taking a medical timeout for blisters on his foot midway.

With the momentum shifting, the 25-year-old De Minaur blazed to a 5-1 lead en route to winning the third set before he traded breaks with Medvedev early in the fourth and pulled away shortly after for a famous win.

Nepal return with high hopes

AGENCIES

With the game against the Netherlands at the Grand Prairie Stadium in Dallas on Tuesday, Nepal will be making a return to the T20 World Cup scene after having made their maiden and only appearance in the mega event in 2014.

Both sides will be desperate to get a win, given that their next matches will be against much more superior sides in South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh.

Netherlands are coming to the tournament after their tragic tri-series loss to Scotland and Ireland in May. However, they did win their most recent outing, the T20 WC warm-up game against Sri Lanka.

On the other hand, Nepal were unlucky way before the commencement of the tournament as there spirited bowler, Sandeep Lamichhane's US visa application was rejected for the second time.

However, Nepal will hope to shrug off the loss of Lamichhane and make their return to the T20 World Cup after 10 years a memorable one. It was, however, not a very happy outing for the Asian side as they had lost all three of their World Cup matches.

Now Rohit Paudel and his army will have to play their cards and focus on shifting their losing momentum and start their campaign on a positive note. They have recently lost their warm-up game to Canada.

England batter Jonny Bairstow plays a reverse sweep with Liam Livingstone watching from behind the stumps as the defending champions prepare in their bid to become the first team to retain the T20 World Cup title with their opening group game against Scotland in Barbados today. PHOTO: **ENGLAND CRICKET**

Hopeful of retaining title, England face Scotland first

AGENCIES

Rain prevented England from getting a good preparation, and the defending champions may once again have to beat the weather, as well as Scotland, when they begin their T20 World Cup campaign in Barbados today.

England were frustrated by rain during their recent four-match warm-up series against Pakistan, with two of those games washed out without a ball being bowled while the other two were won convincingly by Jos Buttler's men. There are concerns heading into tomorrow's opener in Bridgetown, too, with heavy showers part of the forecast.

England possess a mix of talent and an experienced pool of players. Ahead of their opening game, batter Harry Brook backed the Three Lions to retain their title in the USA and the West Indies this time around.

"Everybody's really excited. We fancy our chances. We've got a very good side, good squad depth around T20 cricket and we're confident we can bring it home again," Brook said ahead of the game as quoted from Sky Sports.

Brook is back in England colours after pulling out of the Test tour to India earlier this year to spend time with his grandmother, Pauline, who fell ill in January and sadly passed away the following month.

Her death also saw Brook skip the IPL before returning to action in the County Championship in April, after a three-month break in which he made major efforts to improve his fitness.

"Obviously, it wasn't in great circumstances, but I just tried to train as hard as possible, trying to lose a bit of weight and trying to get a bit leaner," said the 25-year-old Yorkshireman.

At the Kensington Oval, which provided a two-paced wicket for the Namibia-Oman game on Sunday evening, the Buttler-led England will be overwhelming favourites to win in what will be their first-ever encounter against the Scots in the shortest format.

The venue also holds a special place in the hearts of England players and fans as it is where they were first crowned champions 14 years ago by defeating Australia by seven wickets in the final.

Meanwhile, Scotland, playing their third successive T20 World Cup, may not be as strong as their more well-favoured opponents but they still have high expectations after winning all six of their qualifiers to make it to the mega event.

They will also hope for their knack of punching above their weights in opening matches of the T20 World Cup to continue – Scotland beat began the 2022 T20 World Cup in grand fashion, stunning two-time World Champions West Indies in Hobart and also defeated superior-ranked Bangladesh in their opening fixture of the 2021 T20 World Cup.

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Proteas thump SL in Group D opener

AFP, *New York*

South Africa beat Sri Lanka by a comfortable six-wicket margin in the teams' opening Group D match of the T20 World Cup in New York yesterday.

Proteas fast bowler Anrich Nortje took a remarkable four wickets for just seven runs as Sri Lanka were bowled out for just 77 -- their lowest T20 total.

But South Africa lost early wickets as they too struggled to time the ball before the big-hitting Heinrich Klaasen (19 not out) saw them to victory with 22 balls to spare. Quinton de Kock scored a team-high 20.

Nortje's figures, from his maximum four overs, were the best by a South African at a T20 World Cup, surpassing his own 4-10 against Bangladesh in Sydney two years ago.

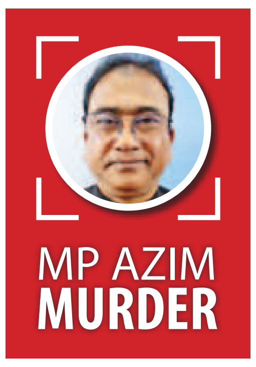
SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

South Africa pacer Anrich Nortje (L) celebrates the dismissal of Sri Lanka's Kamindu Mendis in the first Group D match of ICC Men's T20 World Cup at Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York yesterday. Nortje's remarkable four-wicket haul helped the Proteas bundle out the 2014 champions for a lowly 77, paving the way for a six-wicket victory. PHOTO: AFP

Celesty posed as mastermind's wife to rent flat

Court sends her to jail after confessional statement

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER**



Celesty Rahman went to Kolkata and posed as the wife of Aktaruzzaman, alleged mastermind of MP Anwarul Azim Anar murder, to rent the flat where the lawmaker was killed.

The two jointly prepared the lease document for the flat in Kolkata's New Town on April 25.

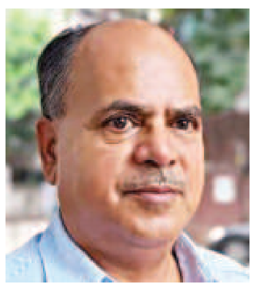
Celesty went to the flat on April 30 with Amanullah, the alleged hitman, and started staying there. She was given the responsibility to welcome the lawmaker on his arrival at the flat.

During the gruesome murder, she heard the sounds of Azim's body being dismembered, she said in her confessional statement made before a Dhaka court yesterday.

In her statement, Celesty disclosed details of the suspects and also gave a brief description of the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Anti-Ershad movement hero no more



Shafi Ahamed
(1961-2024)

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former student leader and politician Shafi Ahamed passed away at a hospital in the capital yesterday evening after suffering cardiac arrest. He was 62.

Ahamed was a key figure in the anti-autocracy movement, which eventually led to a mass uprising in 1990 that deposed military dictator Ershad.

His relative, Gazi Mozammel Hossain, also the education affairs secretary of Netrakona district unit Awami League, confirmed the news of his death.

"Shafi Ahamed was sleeping at his residence in the capital's Uttara this [Monday] afternoon. He suffered a heart attack in his sleep. He was rushed to a private hospital in Uttara,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Over 1m forced to flee Gaza city of Rafah

UNRWA says they live in 'unspeakable' conditions; 40 more Palestinians killed as Israel continues offensive

AGENCIES

Forced displacement has pushed over a million Palestinians away from the Gaza city of Rafah, the United Nations Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA) said yesterday.

Thousands of families now shelter in damaged and destroyed facilities in the city of Khan Younis, where the agency is providing essential services despite "increasing challenges", UNRWA said, adding: "Conditions are unspeakable".

Since early May, Israel's military has been carrying out what it says is a limited operation in Rafah to root out Hamas fighters and dismantle infrastructure used by the Palestinian group that runs Gaza.

The Israeli military has told civilians to go to an "expanded humanitarian zone" some 20 km (12 miles) away.

- Doubts grow over Gaza truce plan
- Egypt rejects Israeli presence at Rafah crossing
- Death toll in enclave rises to 36,479

Many Palestinians have complained they are vulnerable to Israeli attacks wherever they go, and have been moving up and down the Gaza Strip in the past few months.

Doubts were growing yesterday about a plan for a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal outlined by US President Joe Biden as heavy fighting raged for a third day since his White House address.

An Israeli government spokesperson quoted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as saying that US President Joe Biden, in advancing a plan to wind down the Gaza offensive, had published only some of the details.

"The war will be stopped for the purpose of returning hostages and then we will proceed with other discussions," spokesperson David Mencer quoted Netanyahu as saying, in what appeared a reiteration of Israel's refusal to call off the offensive against Hamas entirely before the group is destroyed.

But for now, the bombardments and combat showed no sign of easing in the Gaza offensive soon entering its ninth month that has devastated the Palestinian coastal territory of 2.4 million people, reports AFP.

Yesterday, the Israeli military said that over the past day its forces had struck "over 50 targets in the Gaza Strip". Gaza hospitals reported at least 19 people killed in overnight strikes.

Israel's offensive in the Gaza has killed at least 36,479 Palestinians and wounded 82,777 since October 7, the Palestinian enclave's health ministry said yesterday. Forty Palestinians have been killed and 150 wounded in the past 24 hours, the ministry said in a statement.

Grameen Bank counsel sharpens barbs against Prof Yunus

Yunus' lawyer bins 'false claims'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grameen Bank's Chief Legal Adviser Masud Akhter yesterday said Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus deceived 1.05 crore members of the bank and misappropriated their money, a claim Prof Yunus's lawyer vehemently denied.

"He is talking about curses. He has deceived 1.05 crore members of Grameen Bank. He has used and misappropriated their money for personal gains. Their curse has fallen upon him," he told reporters at a press briefing on the Supreme Court premises.

At a separate press briefing later in the day at the same place, Prof Yunus's lawyer Abdullah-Al-Mamun said there is no scope for embezzling Grameen Bank depositors' money under the rules of the Grameen Bank Ordinance, 1983, under which the bank was established.

The developments come after Grameen Bank went to the Anti-Corruption Commission, accusing

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

642m voters cast ballots in election

Says India EC, dismisses opposition concerns over ballot count

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

India's Election Commission (EC) said yesterday a record-breaking 642 million voters cast their ballots in the general election that concluded on June 1 and dismissed opposition concerns over how the votes would be counted.

The seven-phase vote - the world's largest - began on April 19 and was held in scorching summer heat in many parts of the country, with temperatures rising to nearly 50 degrees Celsius (122°F) in some north and northwestern regions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seeking a third consecutive term and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led alliance is projected to win a big majority, TV exit polls said on Saturday, ahead of the counting today.

INDIA
ELECTION

"We have created a world record of 642 million proud Indian voters. This is a historic moment," Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar told reporters.

Although the 2024 turnout is higher than the 612 million voters who cast their ballots in 2019, it is about one percentage point lower than the 67.4 percent turnout five years back.

Turnout among 968 million registered voters was possibly lower in the initial phases because there was no single major issue to draw voters out in the heat, analysts said.

Kumar said the vote-counting process had been in place for decades and was "very robust".

"All work will be done transparently. If someone still tries to do something wrong, strict action will be taken," he said.

His comments on the vote-counting process came a day after the opposition INDIA alliance, led by Rahul Gandhi's Congress party, urged the commission to follow norms during counting.

The alliance of two dozen parties petitioned the EC to stick to its old system of completing counting postal votes before declaring

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

STATE SECRETS CASE

Ex-Pak PM Imran Khan acquitted

REUTERS, *Islamabad*

A High Court in Pakistan yesterday acquitted jailed former prime minister Imran Khan from a conviction on charges of leaking state secrets, his lawyer and his party said, but Khan will remain in prison for now due to a conviction in another case.

Khan, 71, was sentenced to 10 years in prison by a lower court on charges of making public a classified cable sent to Islamabad by Pakistan's ambassador in Washington in 2022.

Shah Mehmood Qureshi, who was Khan's foreign minister during his tenure from 2018-2022, was also acquitted of the charges.

"Thank God, the sentence is overturned," a spokesman for legal affairs from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, Naeem Panjutha, said in a post on the X social media platform.

Despite the acquittal, Khan will remain in prison, having also been convicted in another case relating to his marriage to his third wife, Bushra Khan, contravening Islamic traditions.

Khan said on May 30 that February's national election was stolen from his party, describing it as the "biggest robbery of a public mandate".

Khan, speaking in the Supreme Court via video link from Adyala jail in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, said he was being held in solitary confinement.

His remarks were the first to be heard in open court since he was jailed in August.

A Palestinian man carries the body of a young relative, killed by an Israeli airstrike the previous night, during preparations for a funeral outside the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

'Drug dealer' shot dead in 'gunfight' with BGB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

A suspected drug dealer was shot dead in a reported gunfight with members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in Ramu upazila, Cox's Bazar, early yesterday.

The incident took place in the Maricha area under Garjania union around 5:00am, said BGB Public Relations Officer Shariful Islam, in a statement.

The deceased was identified as Nezam Uddin, of the Khurushkul area under Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila. He walked out of jail six months ago after getting bail in a murder case, the release said.

According to the statement, around 150-200 drug smugglers, led by Nezam, opened fire at a BGB patrol team from Battalion 11 (Naikhongchhari) in Maricha.

When BGB troops returned fire in self-defence, the smugglers were forced to fall back and flee the scene.

Afterwards, at least 98 cartons of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

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LIVING GREEN

Making Everyday ECO-FRIENDLY

ILLUSTRATION: **SOJIB ROY**

TAZRI MARWA AHMED

In today's world, living green is no longer just a trend—it's a necessity. With environmental concerns mounting, minimizing our ecological footprint has become imperative. From renewable energy to mindful consumption, every aspect of our lives offers an opportunity to contribute positively to environmental preservation. Join us as we explore the essence of living green and uncover ways to make everyday choices that prioritize the well-being of our planet.

TURNING WASTE INTO ENERGY

In Bangladesh, the trajectory of rising energy costs intersects with the alarming reality of mounting plastic waste. Dhaka alone generates a staggering 700 tons of plastic waste daily, with only 37% being recycled. However, amidst this challenge lies an opportunity—organic waste such as rice husks or coconut shells holds potential for conversion into electricity or biomass.

Ali Arsalan, the Managing Director of Atiya Consulting Ltd, shares, "We have vast potential in every major city in Bangladesh to begin segregating our daily waste, enabling easy treatment and recycling for various purposes, including energy generation. While government policies play a role, individual action is essential for success. " His company is focused on transforming waste liabilities into energy assets.

According to Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Chief Executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), we can start understanding our impact on the environment by looking at how much energy and water we use and waste, and whether we prefer local or imported products for our food and clothing. This helps us see how much harm we're causing and what we can do to live more eco-friendly.

We should also think about how much waste we produce and be aware of plastic pollution, especially by avoiding single-use plastics. We can do this by checking if we waste food, if our food is contaminated with chemicals, and by avoiding drinks and foods with chemicals. It's also good to think about growing our own food or buying directly from farmers, and using public transportation instead of driving a car. Lastly, we should get involved in protesting activities that harm the environment, added Syeda Rizwana Hasan.

SUSTAINABLE FASHION

People of all ages often find themselves buying more clothes than they need, resulting in overstuffed wardrobes. However, adopting a sustainable fashion approach not only benefits the environment but also allows individuals to look stylish by incorporating eco-friendly elements into their wardrobes.

Sustainable fashion is an integral part of a green lifestyle, involving the use of eco-friendly materials such as organic cotton, bamboo and recycled fabrics. Additionally, creating a minimalist wardrobe with versatile, timeless pieces and extending the life of garments through proper washing, repairing, and repurposing are excellent practices for promoting a green lifestyle.

> **"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."**
>
> --Margaret Mead

Kumudini Handicrafts, a popular brand, offers many eco-friendly and sustainable products. Notably, Kumudini's clothing line for men, women, and children uses only natural dyes made from various tree parts, including branches, roots, and fruits.

Rafiqul Islam, Head of Operations at Kumudini Handicrafts, proudly notes "Our main goal is to encourage people to choose natural products, which not only protect the environment but also safeguard individuals from skin conditions and cancer caused by chemical dyes in fabrics."

HOME GARDENING

A popular local organization in Dhaka, Green Savers, promotes home gardening by planting trees in people's homes. According to Ahsan Rony, the founder of Green Savers, home gardening has become very popular in cities over the last 5-10 years. People with rooftop access are using their spaces for gardening and farming. Some create rooftop gardens for beautification and entertainment, while others commit to rooftop farming for fresh vegetables and fruits. Recently, a few individuals have even started earning money by producing and selling fruit saplings and ornamental plants from their rooftops.

"Most city dwellers have developed an understanding of global warming, and their small greening initiatives have led to cultural transformations. Greening has become a part of smart living," said Ahsan Rony. "As a result, senior citizens, newly married couples, office workers, and more are planting trees in their spaces, contributing to the environment in a small but effective way."

When asked how more people can adopt the habit of planting trees, Rony suggested that beginners start with a small pot plant on their desk or reading table. Observing daily changes, such as new leaves or spreading branches, can create a ripple effect, encouraging them to bring more plants into their surroundings. This process fosters empathy for plants, motivating beginners to become true plant lovers.

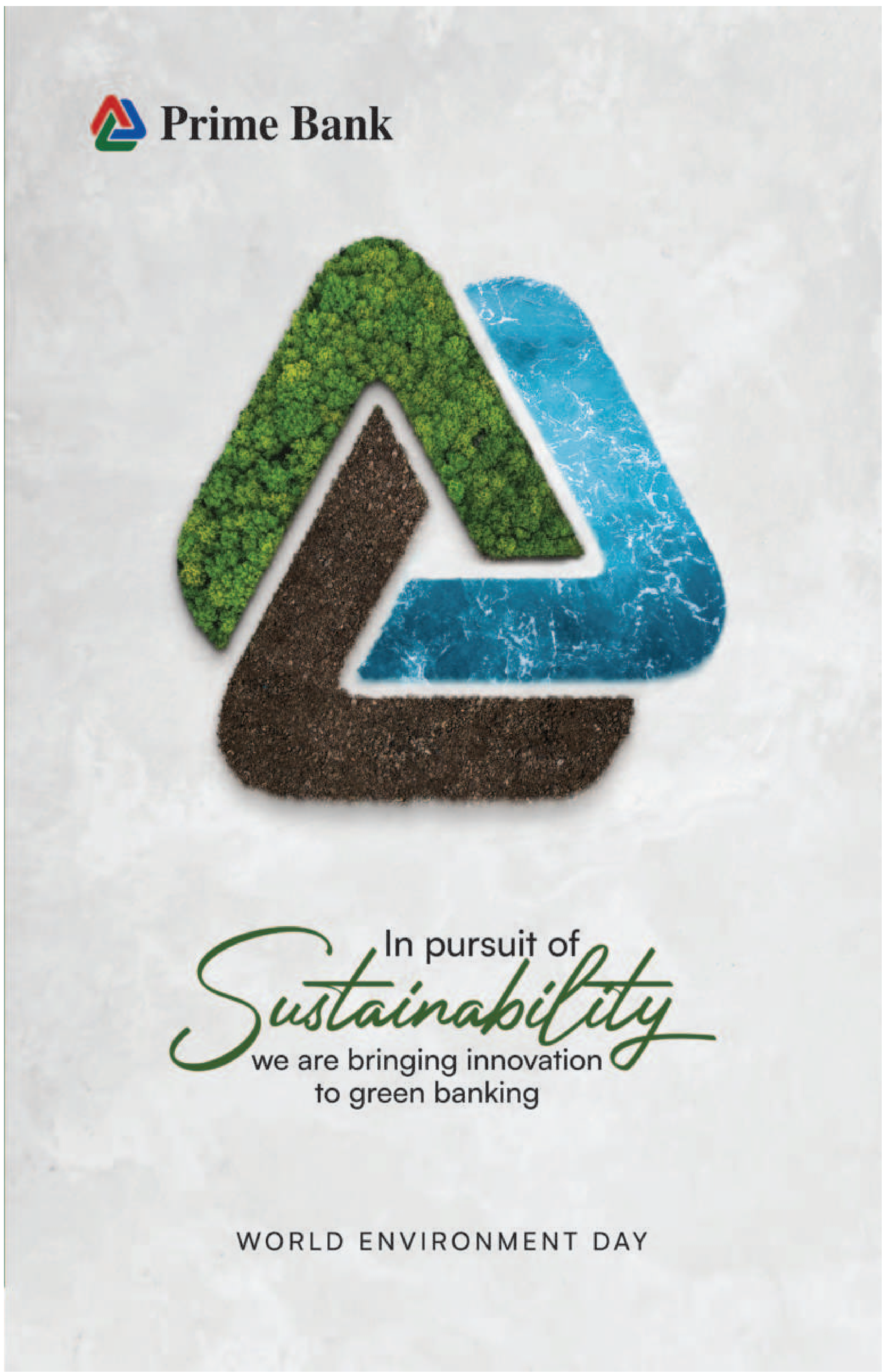
AVOID PLASTICS

People are more willing to switch to sustainable alternatives when they are made aware of the environmental impact of single-use plastics and are provided with viable options. EcoCutlet, a local brand in Dhaka, offers a diverse range of eco-friendly products, including wooden cutlery and areca leaf plates.

"Our wooden cutlery collection consists of disposable spoons, forks, and knives made from sustainably sourced wood, priced between 2 to 3 Taka, perfect for events and outdoor activities. At the same time, our selection of areca leaf plates includes biodegradable plates, bowls, trays, and food boxes crafted from areca leaves, available in multiple designs and sizes ranging from 4 to 10 inches, priced between 5 to 25 Taka," said Md. Azizul Haque, Co-Founder & CEO, EcoCutlet.

Md. Azizul also mentioned that they are excited to expand their eco-friendly product range with new additions, including 'Jute Stick Straws' as a sustainable alternative to single-use plastic straws, and durable, reusable 'Bamboo Straws.'

SEE PAGE J2


Prime Bank

In pursuit of Sustainability
we are bringing innovation to green banking

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

FROMPAGEJ1

They are also introducing more bamboo and clay items, catering to consumers seeking quality, compostable options without sacrificing aesthetics and environmental friendliness.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD CHOICES

Incorporating green practices into every aspect of our daily lives is crucial, and making sustainable food choices is no exception. People need to become more mindful of the food they consume and its impact on the environment. One significant way to do this is by reducing meat and dairy consumption and embracing plant-based diets, which offer environmental benefits.

Moreover, home gardening provides an excellent opportunity to grow your own vegetables, herbs, and fruits, thereby reducing reliance on commercially grown produce. Additionally, minimizing food waste through meal planning, proper storage techniques, and creative use of leftovers is a simple yet effective way to promote sustainability in our food choices.

ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY

As an individual, embracing a green lifestyle involves not only making changes within your home but also extending your efforts to the community and beyond, collectively with others who share similar values.

A mother teaching her children to be responsible consumers can alter the family's behavior, potentially creating a ripple effect that extends to society.

Engaging in community gardening and tree-planting initiatives, which contribute to building urban green spaces, is a powerful way to make a positive impact on the environment. These activities not only beautify neighborhoods but also promote biodiversity and improve air quality. Furthermore, participating in local conservation projects and clean-up efforts provides opportunities to contribute to larger-scale environmental initiatives and foster a sense of community involvement.

"Changes in individual behavior can significantly influence broader societal shifts. For example, a mother teaching her children to be responsible consumers can alter the family's behavior, potentially creating a ripple effect that extends to society. A family may promote sustainable practices, encouraging others to follow suit. Electing the right leaders can foster positive changes. Similarly, an extravagant parent may model overspending, while a responsible parent encourages prudent habits. Connecting these dots is crucial; an individual may feel isolated if society is unresponsive. Nonetheless, maintaining personal integrity remains essential," said Syeda Rizwana Hasa.

A famous quote by Margaret Mead says, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Reimagining the urban ENVIRONMENT WITH RIVERS

NAHALY NAFISA KHAN

What good is a river to a city? Imagine strolling along the riverbanks on a lazy afternoon or just returning home from work. The picturesque sight that a river offers to city dwellers has its own charm. A river, as they say, has something to offer everyone.

Bangladesh is widely known as a river-borne country, with as many as 700 or more rivers listed in various archives, according to Banglapedia. Over the years, city dwellers have almost forgotten what urban life is like in a riverine country. Names like Buriganga or Shitalakhya don't positively resonate with us, thanks to pollution and encroachment. A 2019 report by the Water Development Board documented the names of 406 rivers. The curious case of missing rivers is not a mystery, due to open encroachment, pollution, erosion, and the eventual death of hundreds of rivers.

Architect and environmental activist Iqbal Habib said most major cities in the country originated from one or multiple rivers. "Apart from Dhaka, other cities or towns like Mymensingh, Cumilla, Rangpur, Sylhet, and Munshiganj were also heavily dependent on the rivers they originated from. Over time, through rapid unplanned urbanization and the expansion of roads and railways, the vast riverine network of canals and smaller water bodies started to be neglected and pushed to the verge of death by pollution," said Habib.

According to the Rivers and Delta Research Centre (RDRC), at least 56 rivers flowing through different parts of the country suffer from "extreme pollution" during lean periods when the natural flows of rivers are at their lowest. Habib said the construction of dams to the west end of the capital and unplanned urbanization on the eastern front are responsible for the death of rivers like the Buriganga, Dhaleshwari, and Bangshi. "WASA and the city authorities are also responsible for this. There is no proper waste management system except in Pagla and Rampura for the wastes to be processed before they go into the river," he added.

Reimagining the chaotic traffic situation in cities like Dhaka could greatly benefit from conserving our rivers and using them properly. Take the Hatirjheel water taxi service, for example. The service is available at five locations in the capital and operates from 6:30 AM to 10 AM, providing hassle-free transportation with a scenic view. "I was directly involved with the Hatirjheel project, which came into being after five years of environmentalist movement. After the completion of the Hatirjheel project in 2010, there was genuine reason for hope for us to recover the remaining canals and the old riverine network for the capital," said Habib.

"However, we could not maintain the progress. The greed and profit-centric approach of those in authority are responsible for that. The city authorities have been unable to come up with a master plan for river conservation in the last three and a half years," he added.

It's not just the economic benefits we are missing out on by letting our urban rivers rot. Rivers also impact local climate patterns. Rivers and related natural spaces help to cool the surrounding area, reducing the effects of urban heat islands. In another sense, rivers have a life of their own that adds vibrancy to the city they surround. The pollution and death of rivers in urban spaces come at the cost of the connection between the residents and the rivers, according to Habib.

"I still believe that reimagining urban life with rivers is a possibility. We have been fighting for this for the last 35 years. We need strong political will to make this happen. We owe it to the next generation," said Habib.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ব্যাংক এশিয়া
আগামীর জন্য সঞ্চয় হোক
নির্মল ও সবুজ পৃথিবী
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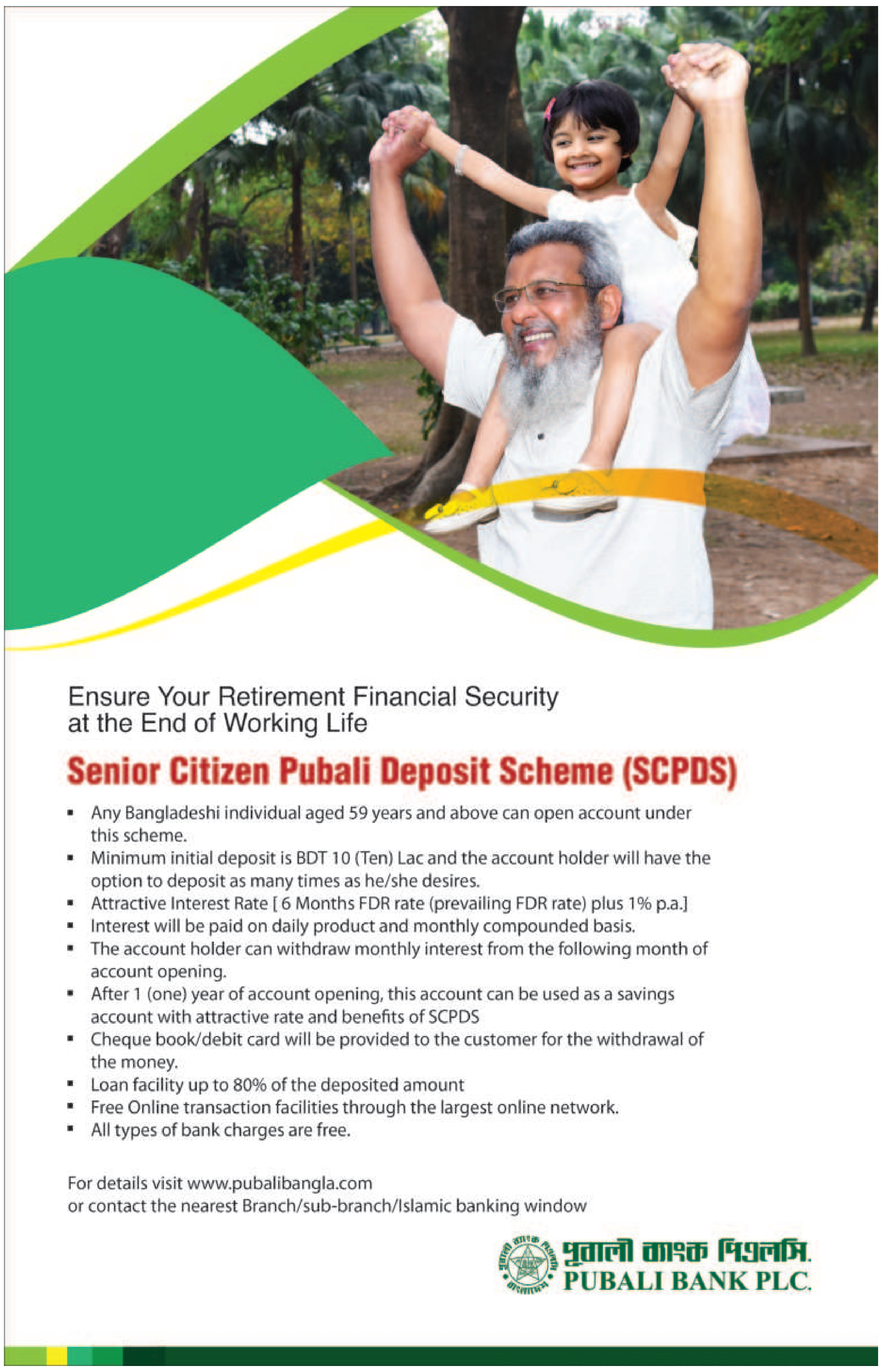
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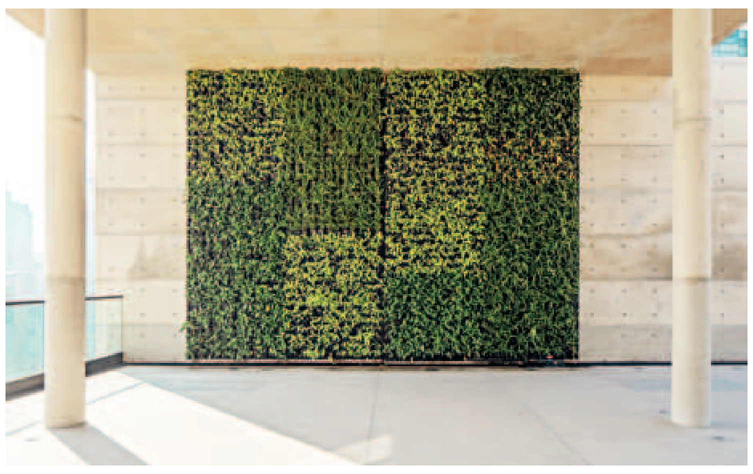
Building Green SAVING GREEN

As urban landscapes in Bangladesh continue to expand, the concept of eco-friendly structures is transitioning from a trend to a necessity. These structures, designed with environmental sustainability in mind, offer a blueprint for the future, promoting sustainability while providing healthier living spaces for occupants. Their benefits extend beyond the structures themselves – contributing substantially to environmental conservation, economic savings, and improved human health.

AYMAN ANIKA

At the core of eco-friendly structures is efficiency. An expert from Navana Real Estate Ltd. notes, "In our eco-friendly designs, we primarily focus on minimising utility consumption, especially in water and energy. For instance, we reuse water from handwashing basins in toilet flush systems."



COURTESY: **MIRANDA_RANGS PROPERTIES LTD**

Eco-friendly structures often incorporate natural elements into their design. Features like green roofs, vertical gardens, and landscaped terraces not only enhance aesthetics but also help reduce heat absorption, lowering the need for air conditioning.

Choosing the right materials is also crucial for eco-friendly construction. This involves utilising materials that are recycled, renewable, or sourced with minimal environmental impact, such as bamboo flooring, recycled steel, or reclaimed wood. Employing these materials helps reduce resource depletion, decrease pollution, and lower the carbon footprint of the structure.

The indoor environment is a vital aspect of eco-friendly structures. Low-emitting materials are preferred to improve air quality and occupant health. An expert from Dulux Paints advises, "While high-gloss paints are popular, they contain higher levels of VOCs. We recommend matte-finished paints as healthier, more environmentally friendly options."

The economic advantages of eco-friendly structures, particularly in terms of reduced operating costs and increased property values, make them an appealing investment. "Our clients have responded positively to our eco-friendly designs," remarks the expert from Navana Real Estate, highlighting a growing demand among homeowners for sustainable and environmentally conscious designs.

The economic advantages of eco-friendly structures, particularly in terms of reduced operating costs and increased property values, make them an appealing investment.

COURTESY: **DIORAMA_RANGS PROPERTIES LTD**

One primary challenge in Bangladesh is the higher initial cost associated with eco-friendly construction projects. Technologies such as solar panels, energy-efficient systems, and sustainable building materials require a substantial upfront investment. Many builders and buyers are deterred by these initial costs, opting for the short-term savings offered by traditional construction methods.

An expert from Rangs Properties Limited points out, "We are yet to achieve the capacity to construct structures that adhere to international eco-friendly standards. The journey toward full compliance with international standards demands significant investments and a broader understanding of what such structures entail beyond mere aesthetics such as green landscaping."

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The Impact of Green Finance in Bangladesh

CHARTING AGREENER FUTURE

PRIYAM PAUL

Bangladesh has been profoundly affected by global human-induced climate change, despite its minimal contribution to the problem. The consequences are stark, with the country experiencing frequent cyclones, tornadoes, floods, coastal and riverbank erosion, droughts, landslides, heat waves, and prolonged summer seasons. According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2021, Bangladesh is ranked as the seventh most disaster-prone country in the world, underscoring its extreme vulnerability to both natural disasters and climate change.

In response to this existential environmental crisis, the banking sector has taken proactive measures by offering green finance loans, refinancing options, and dedicated funds aimed at mitigating the devastating effects of climate change and promoting a sustainable future for Bangladesh.

"We are pioneers in green financing, an initiative started by the central bank in 2009-2010. The United Nations recognized Bangladesh Bank as the first central bank to implement green finance, and now other central banks have followed suit. We created a fund with 200 crores for refinancing small and medium enterprises with only three products," shares Professor Atiur Rahman, former governor of Bangladesh Bank.

He also elaborated on the context of why the green fund for small and medium enterprises was expanded to include heavy industries, such as the garment sector, noting that Bangladesh has been globally recognized for its RMG products.

"After the Rana Plaza incident, we secured a three million dollar fund from the World Bank and another three million dollars from Bangladesh Bank, which continue to support the green transformation fund. The results have been fantastic, with over 200 green factories established and another 500 in the pipeline. Out of the 20 best green factories in the world, 18 are now in Bangladesh," adds Atiur Rahman.

According to the central bank's latest report, the total amount of green finance disbursed during FY23 was BDT 126.41 billion by banks and BDT 23.58 billion by NBFIs. Green finance accounted for 5.84 percent of the total term loan disbursements.

The central bank has made Environmental and Social Risk Rating (ESRR) mandatory for banks and NBFIs, under ESRM guidelines. During FY23, 229,592 projects were rated using the Environmental and Social Due Diligence (ESDD) checklist. A total of BDT 4,165 billion was disbursed across 179,022 rated projects in FY23. Additionally, a total of BDT 0.88 billion was utilized from the climate risk fund by banks and NBFIs in FY23, provided as grants.

The green banking policy has encouraged banks to establish online branches and power them with solar energy. By the end of FY23, there were 720 branches powered by solar energy. Moreover, the sustainability rating methodology for banks and NBFIs, circulated on December 31, 2021, includes green refinance as one of its five components. This rating assesses the performance of banks and NBFIs in terms of their sustainability practices.

> **According to the central bank's latest report, the total amount of green finance disbursed during FY23 was BDT 126.41 billion by banks and BDT 23.58 billion by NBFIs. Green finance accounted for 5.84 percent of the total term loan disbursements.**

In 2009, a revolving refinance scheme worth BDT 2.0 billion was instituted to offer accessible financing for green products and initiatives. This fund was later augmented to BDT 4.0 billion. Initially, the scheme identified six green products or initiatives for the refinance facility. By FY22, the number of eligible green products and initiatives for refinance had risen to 68.

The central bank's latest initiative to promote sustainable finance is the establishment of the Green Transformation Fund (GTF). Initially targeted at the export-oriented textile, leather, and jute sectors, it was later expanded to encompass all export-oriented industries, facilitating sustainable export growth as the nation transitions to a greener economy. As per the Bangladesh Bank report, disbursements from the Green Transformation Fund (GTF) totaled USD 140.94 million across 47 projects and Euro 71.21 million across 30 projects by FY22. Furthermore, by June 30, 2023, BDT 1778 million had been disbursed to five clients of four banks from the local currency GTF fund.

Bankers opine that if projects are carefully selected, green finance loans are unlikely to turn into bad debts over time. Consequently, they foresee significant potential for green finance.

"In 2023 alone, EBL financed BDT 1,180 crore across 385 diverse projects dedicated to promoting energy and resource efficiency, effective liquid waste management, circular economy ventures, LEED certified factories, green CMSMEs, information and communication technology projects, and more," shares Ali Reza Iftekhar, Managing Director, Eastern Bank PLC.

"BRAC Bank has been recognized as one of the top sustainable banks in Bangladesh for the past three consecutive years. We continuously emphasize green and sustainable financing, increasing the percentage of such financing each year. In the last quarter, we disbursed BDT 15,472 million in green financing, constituting 23% of our total term loan disbursements," says Md. Sabbir Hossain, DMD & Chief Sustainability Officer, BRAC Bank PLC.

"Our bank consistently prioritizes green finance. As a result, we were among the top 10 award recipients from the Central Bank for sustainable finance in 2020 and 2021. Last year, we disbursed loans to approximately 100,000 borrowers across all loan segments with a particular focus on small clients, totaling BDT 53170.77 million only for sustainable finance, including BDT 182 million in green finance. Moving forward, we aim to provide loans for renewable energy, solar projects, environmentally-friendly buildings, and energy-efficient equipment for manufacturing," states Shafiuzzaman, AMD & Chief Credit Officer at Bank Asia PLC.

When asked about whether the existing level of green finance is adequate to tackle Bangladesh's urgent climate and environmental issues, Atiur Rahman points out that the current financial crisis has somewhat slowed the flow of green investment. Yet, he remains optimistic that once the financial situation stabilizes, there will be a resurgence of initiatives aimed at bolstering this crucial sector.

FACING THE CRISIS

Environmental Challenges in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is the seventh most vulnerable country to climate change.

Between 2000 and 2019, the country faced 185 extreme weather events.

The mean temperature rose by 0.39°C from 1991-2000, 0.53°C from 2001-2010, and 1.06°C from 2011-2019.

Climate change has made heatwaves 45 times more likely in Bangladesh and South Asia.

Sea levels in Bangladesh are rising 3.8 to 5.8 mm annually, outpacing the global average.

Salt-affected coastal areas in Bangladesh have increased by 27% since the 1970s, impacting crops and livelihoods.

In the past 50 years, Bangladesh has experienced about 20 droughts, with the northwest particularly vulnerable.

Tropical cyclones cause $1 billion in losses annually.

Dhaka ranks second globally in methane emission, with 47% of emissions stemming from garbage.

Bangladesh lost 246,000 hectares of forest between 2001 and 2023.

The number of rivers is 907. Till November 2021, a total of 65,127 river grabbers had encroached on various parts and foreshores of some 770 rivers.

From 2015 to 2022, lightning strikes killed 2,142 people and injured 538 others in Bangladesh.

Current contribution to global greenhouse gas (GHG) - 0.4 percent.

Bangladesh's shifting climate exacerbates conditions for diseases like dengue, malaria, and chikungunya. Between January and April 2024, there were 2,290 cases of dengue, with 24 fatalities.

In 2022, 7.2 million people in nine north-eastern districts severely affected by the flash flood.

In 2005, Bangladesh was one of the first least developed countries to put forward a national adaptation programme of action

In 2009, Bangladesh developed its Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, a blueprint for other climate-vulnerable nations.

SOURCE: **GLOBAL CLIMATE RISK INDEX (2021), MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE, NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLAN 2022, WORLD BANK, NATIONAL RIVER CONSERVATION COMMISSION, WORLD WEATHER ATTRIBUTION (WWA), CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS IN BANGLADESH – A REPORT BY ICCCAD AND BUET, CEGIS 2022, GLOBAL FOREST WATCH, ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH LETTERS (2023), UN RC BANGLADESH (2022), AND INT. J. CLIMATOL (2018) ETC.**

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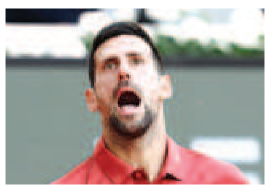


Djokovic out of French Open with injury

P11

Our forests are disappearing when we need them most

P9

South Africa's ANC weighs up partners after polls

P5

Plastic pollution invades the Sundarbans

P3

Modi wins but resurgent INDIA steals the show

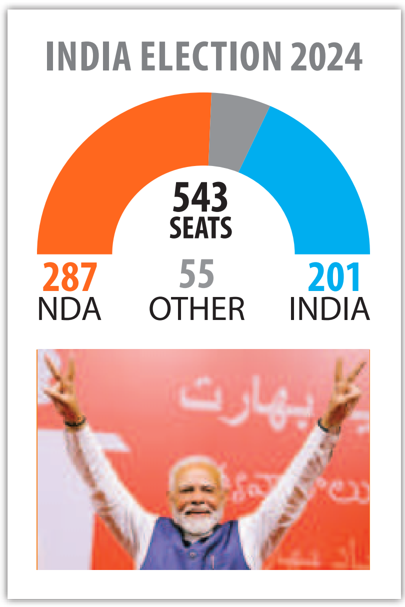
AGENCIES

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's political alliance won India's weeks-long general election yesterday, but his Hindu nationalist party lost its outright majority for the first time in a decade.

The outcome spooked investors, with stocks falling steeply as emerging results showed that Modi would, for the first time since sweeping to power in 2014, have to depend on at least three disparate regional parties whose political loyalties have wavered over the years.

This, analysts say, could introduce some uncertainty into policymaking after a decade in which Modi has ruled with an authoritative hold.

NDA, the alliance led by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), secured a parliamentary majority at the country's general election, official results showed late yesterday.



With a few constituencies still left to declare, it had secured 272 seats, enough for a majority in the 543-seat parliament, results on the election commission website showed.

The BJP itself had won 224 seats and was leading in 16 more for a projected total of 240 -- by far the largest party but a significant drop from the 303 seats it won at the last polls in 2019.

The main opposition Congress party had won 88 seats and was leading in 11 for a projected total of 99, nearly double the 52 it secured five years ago.

The NDA coalition was on track to win at least 291 seats.

Modi's BJP won a majority on its own in 2014, ending India's era of unstable coalition governments, and repeated the feat in 2019.

Modi said people had placed their faith in the BJP-led coalition for a third time and it was historic, in his first comments since the counting of votes began.

"I bow to the people for this affection and assure them that we will continue the good work done in the last decade to keep fulfilling the aspirations of people," he posted on X.

Markets had soared on Monday after exit polls on June 1 projected Modi and BJP would register a big victory, and the ruling National

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

14-party allies vent anger at AL

Reject ruling party's plan for joint programme

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Several key partners in the Awami League-led 14-party alliance yesterday came down heavily on the ruling party, and rejected an AL plan to go for joint programmes until the ruling party changes its attitude towards the allies.

Venting their anger, the alliance partners at a meeting with senior AL leader Amir Hossain Amu, also coordinator of the 14-party alliance, sought to know if the alliance meant anything to the ruling party anymore, meeting sources said.

And even if they go for any joint programmes with AL, they will speak out about market syndicates

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Tight budget in austere times

REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* **ASIFUR RAHMAN**

With an aim to restore macroeconomic stability, reduce inflation, and contain pressure on foreign currency reserves, Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali is going to place a Tk 7,96,900 crore budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year tomorrow.

"The upcoming budget will be a tight and cautious one," a top finance ministry official involved with the budget formulation told The Daily Star.

The new budget is likely to be just 4.6 percent bigger than the current one, much lower than the year-on-year average spike of 11 percent seen in the last five years. The current fiscal year's budget was 12.35 percent larger than the previous year's.

Even during the peak of the coronavirus pandemic, which brought the economy to a halt amid countrywide lockdowns, budgets grew around 9 percent.

The finance minister is going to place his first budget at a time when the economy is going through a prolonged economic crisis, driven by both external and internal factors.

The government's fiscal position has tightened owing to lower-than-expected revenue collections. Therefore, it is not possible to raise the budget size as per expectations.

Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, said the ongoing crisis has three dimensions: high inflation, the US dollar

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Inflation Target
6.50%

GDP
6.75%

Budget Deficit
4.60% or Tk **2,57,000**cr

Foreign Finance
Tk **1,00,000**cr

Domestic Finance
Tk **1,57,000**cr

Mamata aura prevails as BJP stumbles in West Bengal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *New Delhi*

The aura of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee remains undiminished even after 13 years in power. She reaffirmed her status as the numero uno street-savvy politician as her party Trinamool Congress coasted to a memorable victory in parliamentary elections in the state.

TMC has already won 16 seats and is leading in 13 other constituencies. Its nearest challenger BJP have so far won two seats and is leading in 10 others.

TMC's performance, if sustained until the final results, would mark its second-best showing in the state since the 2014 elections when it secured 34 seats.

Its victory came in the face of a sustained campaign by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah on the two issues of alleged corruption and atrocities on women

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

'A victory that feels like defeat'

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, *New Delhi*

NEWS ANALYSIS

By all accounts, Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party looks set to return for a rare third consecutive term to rule India. It has emerged as the largest single party but failed to reach the majority mark on its own. The opposition INDIA alliance led by Congress made a strong comeback that has done the spadework for a check and balance in a democracy.

How? As an analyst has aptly commented: the election has given a victory that feels like defeat and a defeat that is akin to a win.

With Modi's and BJP's repeated claim of '400 paar' shredded, the mandate has dented Modi's electoral invincibility. The INDIA (Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance) has come out of the polls as a force to reckon with in India's politics as a viable opposition in the time to come.

The opposition bloc has reversed all exit poll predictions by leading in at least 228 seats, according to the latest numbers. However, despite a stiff contest, the BJP-led NDA is inching closer towards the 300-mark, standing at 297 at the moment.

From 52 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, its worst performance in parliamentary elections, Congress has come a long way this year. The party is leading in 99 seats. Even though the party stares at another five-year stint in the opposition benches in the Lok Sabha, the result is likely to shape its future political course, policies and strategies. As a senior leader of the party from Uttar Pradesh said, "Some defeats are more important than victories because they provide you the learning curve leading to a resurgent journey."

Congress is set to become the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Land the size of Dhaka city degrades every year

Finds govt study, raises alarm over food security

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Soil degradation in Bangladesh is happening at a faster pace than earlier thought, and it is threatening the country's food security.

Every year, the physical, chemical, and biological or economic properties of soil are degrading on around 270 sq km area, roughly the size of Dhaka city.

"If the trend continues, there will be no cultivable land within the next 63 years," said Ameer Md Zahid, chief scientific officer at the Soil Resource Development Institute (SRDI) of the Department of Environment (DoE).

The SRDI conducted a study which revealed that the trend of soil degradation has been continuing for 20 years.

Today is World Environment Day. This year's theme is "Our Land, Our Future. We are #GenerationRestoration". This year's theme emphasises the importance of restoring land, combating desertification, and enhancing resilience to drought.

> **"If the trend continues, there will be no cultivable land within the next 63 years."**
>
> **AMEER MD ZAHID, chief scientific officer at SRDI**

Ameer told The Daily Star that if immediate actions were not taken to stop the soil degradation, the country's food security would be threatened.

Soil degradation is the decline in soil fertility, organic matter depletion, acidification, salinisation, soil pollution, soil erosion, riverbank erosion, sand overwash, drought, waterlogging, soil sealing, and ecosystem degradation.

The SRDI study, styled "Land Degradation in Bangladesh 2020", found that soil degradation of moderate to very severe levels happened on 1.124 crore hectares in 2020. The study was published in 2022.

"It is about 76.2 percent of the country. The degraded land is 0.54 million hectares [5.4 lakh] higher than the previous estimation of 10.70 million [1.070 crore] hectares of 2000," the report said.

Experts said poor soil health has a direct impact on the country's life, agriculture, and the environment.

They said the country's soil is deteriorating mainly due to the excessive use of chemical fertilisers, rising salinity, industrial pollution, deforestation, and the improper dumping of electronic and medical wastes.

They also blamed the population boom, temperature rise, and excessive cultivation for the soil

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

MALAYSIA ENTRY

KL unlikely to extend deadline for Bangladeshis

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Malaysia has no plans to extend the May 31 deadline for foreign workers' entry into the Southeast Asian country even though Bangladesh appealed for allowing in 17,000 Bangladeshi migrants who have visas but missed the deadline.

Malaysian Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail told reporters in Penang yesterday that all factors, including quota approval, health checks, visa processing, and flight arrangements, were considered before setting the May 31 deadline.

"So, if you ask me whether there would be an extension of time, the answer is no. We announced the May 31 deadline a long time ago," reported Malaysian daily

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

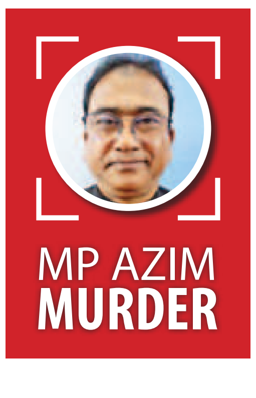
Liquid waste flowing into the Shitalakkhya from a storm sewer. In the absence of consistent and robust measures to protect them, our rivers continue to be victims of extreme pollution for years on end. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

The murder plan was finalised at a Kolkata eatery

Arrestee 'confesses' to court

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER**



It was Tanvir Bhuiyan who lured the Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim Anar to Kolkata as part of a mission to kill him.

He even assisted in the murder, which took place at a flat in Kolkata's New Town, and ensured the death by pressing a pillow to Azim's face.

Tanvir crossed the Benapole border and went to Kolkata on May 6 as per the plan, made by his uncle Amanullah alias Shimul Biswas, who coordinated the killing.

Tanvir took a room in a residential hotel named "Trishib" in New Town and held meetings there with Amanullah multiple times to discuss the execution.

He disclosed all these details in a confessional statement before a Dhaka court yesterday, said sources at the court and the Detective Branch of police.

After recording his statement, the court sent Tanvir to jail.

Earlier at noon, Mahfuzur Rahman, the investigation officer of the abduction case and also a senior assistant commissioner of DB, produced Tanvir before the court.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

No more structures in Rohingya camps: PM

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government will not allow new structures in Rohingya camps.

"It would not be wise to allow new structures in Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar as ecological imbalance has been caused due to massive deforestation," she said.

The PM said this while Japanese Special Envoy for National Reconciliation in Myanmar Yohei Sasakawa called on her at the Gono Bhaban.

The PM's speech writer Md Nazrul Islam briefed reporters afterwards.

Hasina said if Rohingyas are taken to Bhashan Char, their quality of life will improve.

She sought the Nippon Foundation chairman's support for the repatriation Rohingyas to Myanmar.

Yohei Sasakawa lauded the accommodation facilities of Rohingyas in Bhashan Char, and said that Nippon Foundation is keen to providing training to the Rohingyas to boost their income as well as education to Rohingya children.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hands over a cheque of Tk 5 crore to Palestine Ambassador Yousef SY Ramadan at the Gono Bhaban yesterday. The money is meant for aid to the Palestinian people.

PHOTO: **PID**

14 MONEY LAUNDERING CASES

PK Halder's associate Bashudeb, his wife sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent Bashudeb Banerjee, an associate of PK Halder and the then director of International Leasing and Financial Services (ILFS), and his wife Papia Banerjee, also a director of the institution, to jail after rejecting their bail petitions in 14 money laundering cases.

Prashanta Kumar Halder, known as PK Halder, a former managing director of NRB Global Bank, is reportedly involved in Tk 10,000 crore loan scam. He was arrested in Ashoknagar, India on May 14, 2022.

Judge Mohammad Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after the couple surrendered before it, seeking bail in the cases, said ACC Public Prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kajol.

Earlier on May 23, the Supreme Court directed the couple to surrender before the trial court concerned by June 4 in connection with money laundering cases against them.

The apex court also scrapped the High Court orders that on May 9 granted anticipatory bail to Bashudeb and Papia in 14 and five money laundering cases respectively.

It asked the lower court concerned to dispose of the bail petitions if Bashudeb and Papia filed the petition after surrendering in accordance with the law.

Land the size of Dhaka city

FROM PAGE 1

degradation in Bangladesh.

The Barind tract in the north of the country is being exposed to desertification due to water scarcity, while the coastal region in the south is being exposed to serious salinity.

"We are in a vulnerable situation. We are seeing a trend of expansion of draught areas in Bangladesh due to poor rainfall and depletion of groundwater," said Md Harunor Rashid Khan, professor and chairman at the department of soil, water, and environment at Dhaka University.

He said apart from man-made disasters, Bangladesh is also witnessing the impacts of climate change in the forms of cyclones, flooding, and temperature rise.

Due to excessive use of fertilisers, beneficial microorganisms in the soil are rapidly declining. Plants are not receiving necessary nutrients from the soil. Even after the excessive use of fertilisers, some plants are not growing, he said.

Experts said soil degrades and neutralises naturally, but over the last 50 years the neutralisation has not happened due to human interventions and climate change.

They said now the soil is not getting any rest from agricultural production as almost all land available is being used for cultivation round the year. And high-yield crops are being grown, which puts extra stress on the soil.

"At the cost of soil health, we are getting food. The soil does not get rest, and we harm the microorganisms in the soil by using chemical feritilisers and pesticides. In Bangladesh, scarcity of land is a big issue and degradation of soil is a double blow," said ASM Fazle Bari, an associate professor of the department of soil science at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University.

Meanwhile, the government has set a target to improve soil fertility on 2,000 sq km by 2030.

Environment Minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury said, "We have identified the zones where the land has degraded. We will take up zone-specific projects to address the crucial land degradation issue, and the FAO [Food and Agriculture Organisation] is cooperating with us. Apart from this, the government is also planning to take up projects to address the issue."

He said of the 23 lakh hectares of forest land, approximately 5.3 lakh hectares have degraded. The deforestation rate is about 10,000 hectares a year.

"We plan to restore 2 lakh hectares by 2030 and will work with development partners and allocate government funds to achieve this."

Modi wins but resurgent

FROM PAGE 1

Democratic Alliance (NDA) was seen getting a two-thirds majority and more.

"The NDA will form the government for the third time. PM Modi will be sworn in for the third time. Congress will sit in opposition for the third time," said BJP spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill.

"Introspection about the slide and the decrease in the seats will be done threadbare. We will put our ears to the ground," he said.

Modi, 73, who first swept to power in 2014 by promising growth and change, is seeking to be only the second prime minister after India's independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru to win three straight terms.

Two key regional allies in the NDA endorsed Modi as the next prime minister, rejecting local media speculation that they could be wavering in their support or possibly switch sides.

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Janata Dal (United) said their pre-poll alliance with BJP was intact and they would form the next government.

The BJP's numbers were likely pulled down by the party's poor showing in the country's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, which also sends 80 lawmakers to parliament. The party was leading in 33 seats in the state, down from the 62 it won in 2019, with analysts saying bread-and-butter issues had overshadowed the BJP's appeal to the Hindu majority.

In Maharashtra, the INDIA bloc won or was leading in 29 seats while NDA won or was leading in 18 seats. The state sends 48 lawmakers to the Lok Sabha.

Analysts also said a grand temple to the Hindu god Lord Ram that Modi inaugurated in January had not boosted the BJP's fortunes as it was expected to.

Celebrations had already begun at the headquarters of Modi's BJP before the full announcement of results.

But the mood at the Congress headquarters in New Delhi was also one of jubilation.

"BJP has failed to win a big majority on its own," Congress lawmaker Rajeev Shukla told reporters. "It's a moral defeat for them."

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was also defiant.

"The country has unanimously and clearly stated, we do not want Narendra Modi and Amit Shah to be involved in the running of this country, we do not like the way they have run this country," Rahul Gandhi told reporters, referring to Modi's powerful number two, Home Minister Shah. "That is a huge message."

He said Congress would hold talks with its allies today and decide on the future course of action when asked if the opposition would try to form a government.

The result also worked as a shot in the arm for Congress after two humiliating defeats at the hands of Modi's BJP in the previous two elections.

Tight budget in austere times

FROM PAGE 1

crunch, and the financial distress.

"It is difficult for the finance minister to handle the situation politically, but it is needed for the economy."

He said those who supported the government during the last election will try to reap the benefits. Therefore, he urged the finance minister to strike a balance between the economic needs and the interests of big players.

"Success will depend on that balance only."

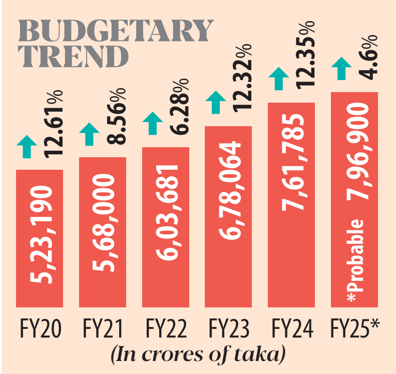
Mostafa Kamal, the previous finance minister, placed his first budget in 2019-20 when it was 12.61 percent bigger than the previous one. His predecessor AMA Muhith presented a 12.59 percent larger budget in 2013-14.

Yesterday, finance ministry officials said the government's prime target is to contain inflation, resolve the dollar crunch and achieve a moderate GDP growth.

Average inflation grew 9.73 percent in the first 11 months of the current financial year, which was 8.64 percent during the identical period a year prior. In 2022-23, the average inflation rate was 9.02 percent, far higher than the average of 6 percent in recent years.

When it comes to the foreign currency regime, Bangladesh has been witnessing one of the worst dollar shortages in recent times, as higher outflows of the American currency owing to escalated commodity prices and money laundering exceeded inflows.

The economic growth was one of the major victims of the current crisis. The country registered a 5.82 percent growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in 2023-24, up from 5.78 percent in FY23. This was, however, lower than in previous years.



The economic growth target was set at more than 7 percent in the current fiscal year, and the target for next year is likely to be 6.75 percent.

The government has also set an ambitious inflation target of 6.5 percent.

In the upcoming budget, the government is likely to contain the budget deficit to 4.6 percent of GDP, a level last seen a decade ago. The deficit is likely to be Tk 2,57,000 crore.

The government has plans to get foreign loan and grant allocations of Tk 1,00,000 crore. The rest of the Tk 1,57,000 crore of deficit will be met by domestic borrowing.

According to the officials, the bank borrowing target for FY25 will be more or less the same as the current fiscal year's Tk 1,32,000 crore.

"It is to avoid the crowding-out effect for the private sector," said an official.

Zahid Hussain said under the economic circumstances, the budget deficit should be less than Tk 2,30,000 crore.

"It will be good for containing inflation and curbing the foreign exchange pressure. Besides, the private sector will get sufficient loans."

The government has for the first time reduced its funding for the Annual Development Programme.

The highest expenditure for FY25 would likely be for interest payments at Tk 1,29,000 crore. Subsidies may cost Tk 1,12,000 crore while government officials' salaries and pensions may total Tk 1,00,000 crore.

In revenue collection, the government is likely to set an achievable target of Tk 5,40,000 crore, an eight percent increase over the previous year's.

The target for the National Board of Revenue is likely to be Tk 4,80,000 crore.

The budget may include an opportunity for legalising undisclosed wealth by paying 15 percent tax.

'A victory that feels like defeat'

FROM PAGE 1

Sabha, a much-needed recognition of the strength of the principal opposition party with national footprints and a far cry from BJP's vision of a "Congress-mukt Bharat."

The result will also consolidate Congress's pole position in the opposition alliance and allow it to control some regional allies like TMC.

The principal opposition party banked on three factors to fight the election this time: the formation of INDIA bloc, its manifesto raising the bread and butter issues like inflation and joblessness, promising a slew of cash doles as well as appealing to caste groups and its sustained campaign to protect the Constitution to safeguard the reservation.

Several factors are behind NDA's result this year. Modi's consistently pressing hard with a polarising narrative for much of the electioneering to counter his political rivals, the law of diminishing return of the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya issue and the remarkable rise of INDIA, a loosely-crafted opposition alliance of 28 parties less than a year ago – all have played their parts. It also shows that every emotive issue, however appealing, has a shelf life and creates fatigue among voters if played repeatedly at the expense of other more pressing issues.

The INDIA bloc made deep inroads in several politically crucial Hindi heartland states including Uttar Pradesh which sends the highest number of lawmakers to the Lok Sabha (80). The alliance has made steady headway in Rajasthan, Bihar, Haryana and Jharkhand. The Hindi-speaking belt has 225 seats.

In Uttar Pradesh, Akhilesh Yadav-led Samajwadi Party made a turnaround like a phoenix rising from the ashes. SP has now become the third largest party in parliament with 38 MPs at the time of writing this.

UP played a big role in BJP's 2014 landslide victory with the party winning 71 seats of 80. BJP held its ground in 2019 by winning 62. In 2019, Samajwadi Party won just five seats, Congress one and Bahujan Samaj Party 10.

Another state where BJP has lost considerable ground is Maharashtra, India's most industrialised state, especially after the saffron party played a role in the split of the two regional heavyweights Shiv Sena, its former ideological ally, and NCP.

Behind the remarkable turnaround for Samajwadi Party are some interesting factors which appear to have given them an upper hand over BJP.

One of the factors that worked in favour of SP was getting the caste calculus right in the ticket distribution strategy. Unlike previous elections, the SP this time prioritised non-Yadav, and other backward caste candidates. It worked as it attracted voters who rallied behind BJP in the past 2 elections.

While SP fielded only five Yadavs, all from the family of party chief Akhilesh Yadav, it gave 27 tickets to non-Yadav OBCs, 11 to upper castes, including Brahmins, Thakurs, Vaishyas and one Khatri, four to Muslims, besides 15 Dalit candidates in reserved constituencies. Also, SP changed its nominees in several constituencies after taking feedback from the ground.

On the other hand, BJP, which contested 75 seats in UP this time put up 34 upper caste candidates, and 25 OBCs, including one Yadav and the remaining 16 to scheduled castes.

Unlike BJP which concentrated more on blitzkrieg through grand rallies featuring Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the poll campaign of SP-Congress combine settled for less grandiose events and instead focused on reaching out to local communities. The SP's victory is well spread out across UP. It has won seats in western, central and eastern parts of India's most populous state. It also gained seats in Bundelkhand which was electorally dominated by BJP in the last two Lok Sabha elections in 2014 and 2019.

And finally, Modi's larger-than-life persona loomed large over the election. Across India, his face was splashed in posters, graffiti and ads on TV and the print media. This was as much due to the BJP as to the opposition which, despite repeatedly terming the election as a battle of ideologies, constantly targeted Modi keeping him in the discussion. So much so that it became Modi versus the rest story.

KL unlikely to extend deadline

FROM PAGE 1

New Straits Times, quoting Saifuddin.

Malaysia had set the deadline for foreign workers amid alleged exploitation of Bangladeshi migrant workers.

Four UN independent experts said recruitment fees for the Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia ranged between $4,500 and $6000, which is the highest in the world and that many of them were risking destitution and detention.

According to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment, and Training (BMET) of Bangladesh, as of May 31, it granted emigration clearance to 4,93,642 workers, but 4,76,672 could leave for Malaysia by the deadline, meaning around 16,970 failed to go.

Saifuddin said, "Between May 28 and 31, we recorded the entry of more than 20,000 foreign workers into the country. Some of them obtained their visas as early as November last year."

He questioned why employers waited so long to arrange for their workers' arrival if they were urgently needed.

Bangladesh had requested a special one-off period to allow the workers to enter Malaysia, but Saifuddin reiterated that the current projection for foreign workers, including those leaving through check-out memos, was 2.6 million by the end of December, surpassing the Economic Planning Unit's projection of 2.5 million.

"For the manufacturing, services, and construction sectors, we have met the foreign worker needs projections. For farming and agriculture, we will process according to the approved quota with no new approvals, considering each case individually," he said.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment of Bangladesh has issued a circular asking the aspirant migrants, who failed to go to Malaysia despite having emigration clearances and BMET smart cards, to provide detailed information to the email (enquiry.committee.malaysia@gmail.com) by June 8.

The information should include name, full address, mobile phone number, name of the recruiting agency, passport number, and copy of the BMET smart card.

MIGRANTS' CONTRIBUTION

Volker Türk, UN high commissioner for human rights, has called for Malaysia to stem hate speech and disinformation campaigns against migrants and refugees, and appreciate and respect the manifold contribution of the migrants.

In a statement yesterday following a two-day visit to Malaysia, he quoted a research commissioned by his office and said a clear majority of Malaysians see the benefits that migration brings to the country's economy and society.

Mamata aura prevails as BJP stumbles

FROM PAGE 1

and land-grab in Sandeshkhali by some ruling party leaders.

It must have been a sweet payback time for TMC this time. The party had been seething after the previous national polls in the state when it won 22 seats and BJP pulled off a surprise, winning 18 seats out of nowhere to emerge as the main opposition in the state despite a rickety organisational presence and lack of charismatic leaders.

In this year's polls, BJP also suffered two heavy defeats. Two of its key leaders -- Dilip Ghosh and SS Ahluwalia -- lost in Bardhaman-Durgapur and Asansol constituencies respectively.

Already in sharp decline in West Bengal since it was voted out of power in 1977, Congress too suffered a big blow when its state chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury lost to debutant Yousuf Pathan, former India cricketer and TMC candidate, by 85,022 votes in Baharampur constituency. This is the first time TMC won the Baharampur seat.

Another senior Congress leader Pradip Bhattacharya was in third position behind TMC turncoat Tapas Roy of BJP in Kolkata Uttar constituency.

The results in West Bengal in the 2024 election belied exit polls projection of substantial gains for BJP. At least two exit polls, Matrize and Jan Ki Baat, had allocated 21-25 and 21-26 seats to BJP, respectively.

However, in the Tamluk constituency, BJP candidate Abhijit Gangopadhyay has taken a lead of 76,867 votes against his closest competitor, Debangshu Bhattacharya of TMC.

Gangopadhyay, who entered politics by joining the BJP immediately after quitting as a judge at the Calcutta High Court, has been at the centre of political discourse due to his judgements on various scams related to education in the state. During his tenure as a judge, Gangopadhyay issued multiple orders directing the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to investigate allegations of bribery and other irregularities in the recruitment process of teaching and non-teaching staff in West Bengal government-sponsored and aided schools.

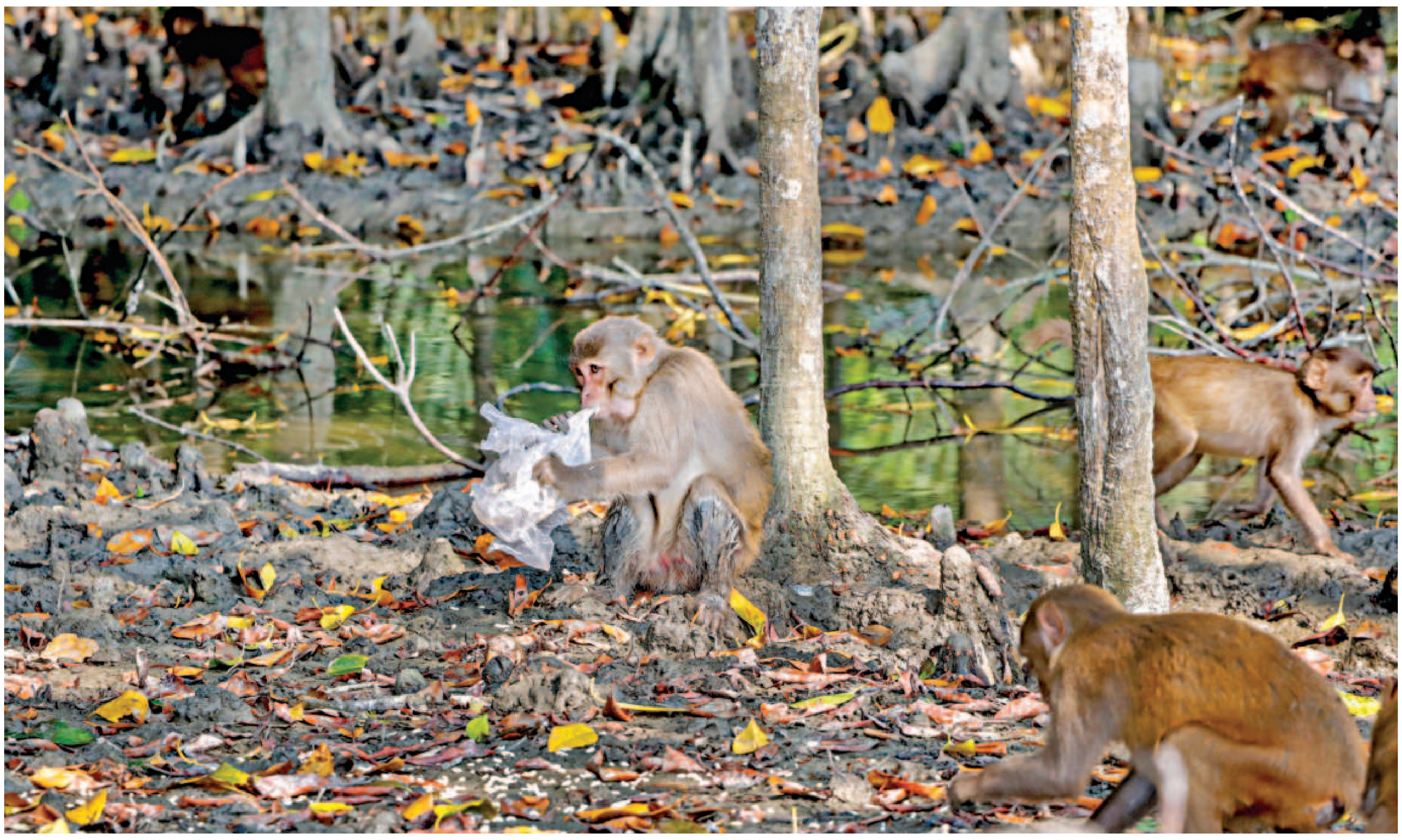


PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

WORKERS MISSING DEADLINE

Baira blames Malaysian govt, expat ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Association for International Recruiting Agencies yesterday denied responsibility for the debacle involving approximately 17,000 aspiring migrant workers who missed the May 31 deadline to fly to Malaysia.

Instead, it attributed the mismanagement to the Malaysian government and Bangladesh's Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment.

The claims were made at a press conference held at the Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunessa Mujib Convention Hall on the capital's Minto Road.

Representatives from around a hundred private companies accused of irregularities in the recruitment process attended the event.

"The Malaysian government continued issuing visas even after the May 31 deadline. E-visas were issued on June 2, which is peculiar. Yet, our ministry granted clearances despite knowing that it was impossible to arrange flights for them," said Baira Secretary General Ali Haider Chowdhury.

Around 2-3 percent of BMET-certified workers fail to travel to their destination country, primarily because companies are blacklisted for misconduct or due to ticket unavailability, said Mohammad Ruhul Amin Swapan, former secretary general of Baira.

He said the number of Malaysia-bound workers missing the May 31 deadline was no more than 5,000-6,000, contrary to the expat ministry's figure of 16,970.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PLASTIC POLLUTION invades the Sundarbans

DIPANKAR ROY, KHULNA

A group of primates wrestled with a plastic bag caught in the tangled roots of a mangrove tree. Their screeches echoed through the dense forest as they tore at the flimsy material, desperate for the scraps of food trapped inside.

This wasn't natural, little did they know about the harmful impacts of plastic or polythene on wildlife, or the forest they live in.

In a recent visit to the forest (before cyclone Remal), this correspondent observed that single-use plastics, used in Khulna and other areas near the Sundarbans, have made their way into the forest.

Besides, plastic bottles were seen scattered along the banks of Bhairab river near the forest.

Researchers have found that fish in the rivers and seas had plastic in their stomachs. This plastic, eventually, makes its way into the human system.

Back in January 2020, the High Court directed a ban on single-use plastics in hotels, motels, and restaurants in coastal areas. But three years on, the plastic menace continues unabated. The lack of enforcement and public awareness has turned this issue into an environmental crisis.

The ease of use and ready availability of single-use plastics have made them a ubiquitous part of daily lives. But this convenience comes at a steep cost -- the cost of a choked ecosystem, poisoned wildlife, and ultimately, public health.

Shamim Ahsan, a hotelier in Khulna city, started using single-use plastics due to customer demand and the ease of cleaning. Since the pandemic, many customers prefer plastic glasses and one-time plates, he said.

He said hotel, motel, and restaurant owners find these plastics convenient and cost-effective.

HM Alauddin, a resident in Tutpara area, said, "There are at least 15 to 16 plastic factories in Labonchhara, Tutpara, Rupsa and Phulbari Gate areas of Khulna city. These plastic factories operate late at night. And from here the plastic reaches the buyers through different hands. The biggest destination for plastic is Borobazar of Khulna."

Back in January 2020, the High Court directed a ban on single-use plastics in hotels, motels, and restaurants in coastal areas. But three years on, the plastic menace continues unabated.

On March 29, 2023, the environment minister prohibited the use of single-use plastic in the Sundarbans.

Babul Howladar, Khulna coordinator of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan, said despite occasional raids by law enforcers, their efforts lack consistency.

According to the KCC's Conservancy Office, Khulna city generates 1,200 to 1,600 tonnes of waste daily, including 25 to 30 tonnes of plastic waste, with 10 to 15 percent being single-use plastics. Additionally, 5 to 6 lakh single-use plastic bags end up in drains and water bodies, said Anisur Rahman, KCC's chief conservancy officer.

Mahfuzur Rahman Mukul, Khulna divisional coordinator of BELA, said single-use plastics from areas like Jashore's Nowapara and Khulna's Borobazar are polluting the rivers and canals of the Sundarbans, threatening coastal livelihoods and biodiversity.

He emphasised the importance of using clay cups or other alternatives.

Abdullah Harun Chowdhury, professor of Environmental Science at Khulna University, emphasised the need for an "Environment Protection Police Force" to enforce the law banning 55-micron thick polythene bags.

He explained that plastic in coastal areas is entering the food chain through fish, affecting their reproductive process and growth. This plastic pollution also impacts other aquatic animals, he added.

Dr Abu Naser Mohsin Hossain, divisional forest officer, Sundarbans West, said they have informed all tour operators that single-use plastics are completely banned in the Sundarbans.

"Recently, we have fined a trawler Tk 30,000 for using plastics," he said.

He said the main challenge is that plastic is entering the Sundarbans through rivers and canals of the city. "We can't control the use of plastics in city areas. The authorities concerned should be more proactive in this regard," he said.

"Ask For Our Planet" is a collaboration between The Daily Star and the UNDP in Bangladesh, launched for Environment Day 2024. Our goal is to connect readers with national climate champions, allowing them to ask questions about pressing environmental issues such as pollution, climate change, waste management, declining groundwater levels, and sustainability. Here, we connect readers with Professor Emeritus of BRAC University and water resource and climate change specialist Dr Ainun Nishat.

'We should push for renewables'

Question: What practical and effective measures can be implemented to mitigate the effects of urban heat islands and improve thermal comfort for residents in Dhaka, considering the increasing frequency and intensity of heat waves?

Asked by: **Mehnaz Lameesha Rahman** (Dhaka University)

Ainun Nishat: We have to understand the intensity and frequency of heatwaves in the coming years. To improve thermal comfort, the best possible way would be massive tree plantation and afforestation. If we can cover the whole country with large trees, which might take a few years, that is the best way to make all the urban areas much cooler. The heatwaves are coming from possibly Western Asia and this is a result of changes in global air circulation patterns. As such, the circulation of atmospheric air is going to change and more hot days will be coming.

ASK FOR OUR PLANET

What role do you envision renewable energy sources playing in Bangladesh's future, and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

4TH PHASE

57 upazilas go to polls today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fourth phase of the upazila parishad election will be held in 57 upazilas today, with 229 chairman candidates participating.

Among them, 160 are businessmen, and 126 candidates have wealth exceeding Tk 1 crore, according to Shujan.

In an online press briefing yesterday, Shujan disclosed its analysis of 1,874 chairman candidates across 459 upazilas, covering income, education, profession, legal cases, and income tax information.

Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumder said, "There is a lack of voter participation, competition, and party involvement. This situation has arisen because people have lost trust in the institutions responsible for conducting the elections."

In the first three phases, voter turnout was 36.1, 37.57 and 36.24 percent, respectively.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Automobile repair shops to come under regulations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authority is going to bring automobile repair shops under a regulation to ensure quality.

Such shops have increased in recent years with the rise in the number of vehicles.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority has already formed a committee to give recommendations on how those workshops could be given licence following the rules of the Road Transport Act.

BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder yesterday revealed the information while exchanging views with the members of Reporters for Rail and Road, an organisation of reporters working on rail, road and transport related issues, at BRTA headquarters.

As per section 64 of the Road Transport Act-2018, no person or organisation will be allowed to open or operate a workshop without receiving a licence from the authority and paying a certain amount of fine.

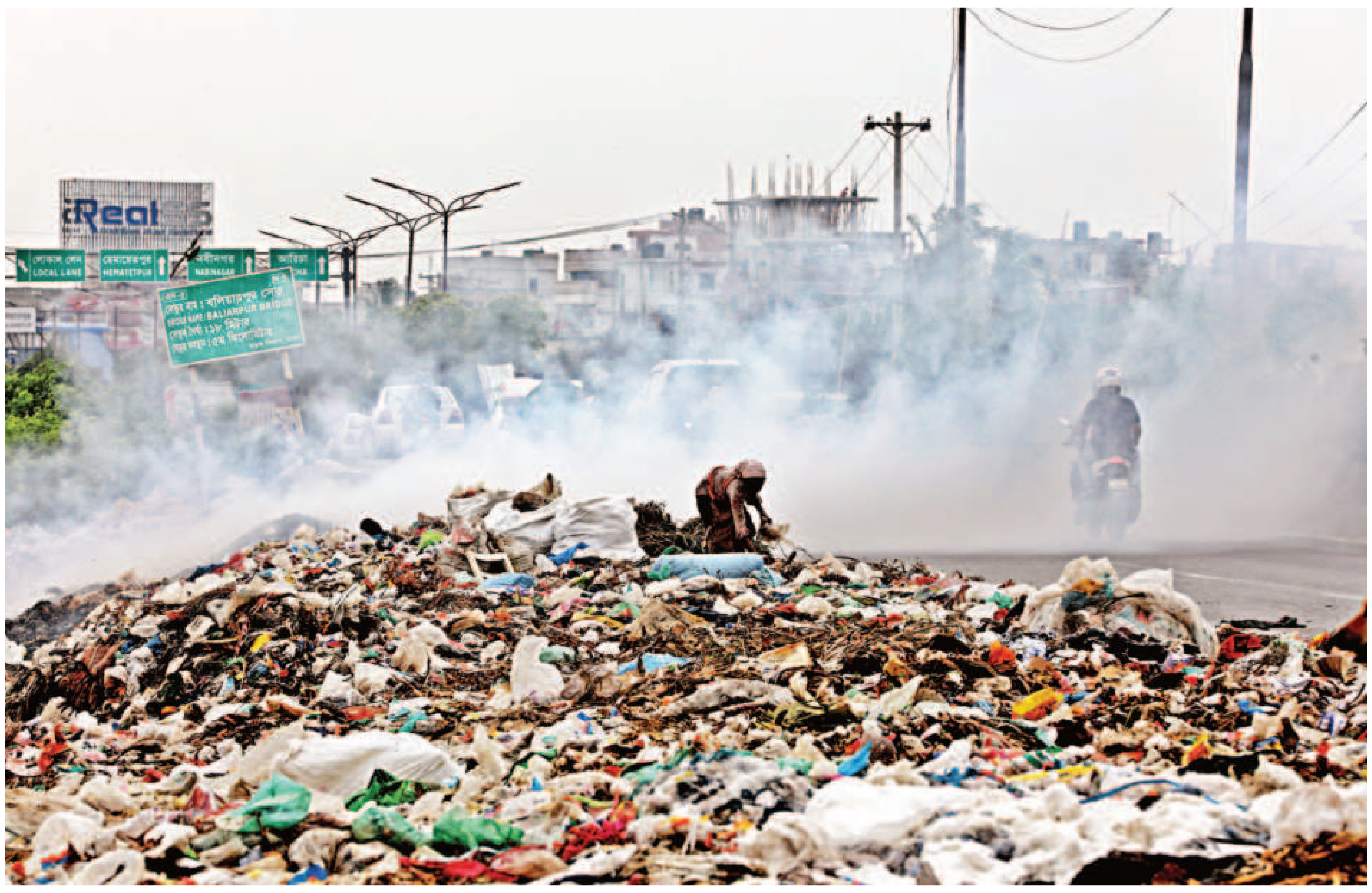
The workshops, which were established even before the enforcement of the act, have to take licence, it said.

A person or organisation may face fines up to Tk 1 lakh and the authority may seal off the workshop in violation of the act.

BRTA officials said thousands of workshops mushroomed in the country to repair vehicles or building bodies for automobiles.

But many of those workshops use sub-standard materials compromising the standard of the vehicles, which is ultimately posing serious risk for road safety, they said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



Large heaps of trash like plastic wastes, tree branches and clothes are being burned near the Baliarpur Bridge in Savar. The toxic fumes not only impact the health of passersby but also reduces visibility on the road. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Education confce to begin in port city Friday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Frobel Academy and Frobel Play School in Chattogram will organise an educational conference on Friday and Saturday.

The event titled "Envisioning Education for the 21st Century: A Pathway to Innovation and Inclusion" will be held at the port city's Navy Convention Centre.

To this end, a press conference was held at Frobel Academy yesterday.

Educators from Dhaka, Chattogram and India will participate in the conference, joined by over 800 teachers, said Sabeen Aameir, CEO and director of Frobel Academy. A total of eight keynote presentations, four workshops and panel discussions will be held in the conference, said Sabeen, director of BSRM Group.

Huwra (Tehseen) Zohair, principal and director of Frobel Academy and Frobel Play School, also spoke.

FOR THE 21ST CENTURY
A PATHWAY TO INNOVATION AND
PRESS CONFEREN
FROBEL ACADEM

Speakers at a press conference at Frobel Academy in Chattogram yesterday. The academy and Frobel Play School will organise a conference for the educators of public and private educational institutions in the country on Friday and Saturday. The two-day event titled "Envisioning Education for the 21st Century: A Pathway to Innovation and Inclusion" will be held at Navy Convention Centre in the port city. According to the organisers, educators from Dhaka, Chattogram and India will participate in the conference, to be joined by over 800 teachers. Besides, a total of eight keynote presentations, four workshops and panel discussions will be held at the conference.

PHOTO: **STAR**

335 illegal brick kilns shut down in Rangpur div

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday submitted a report to the High Court, saying that operations of 335 illegal brick kilns out of total 502 in three districts of Rangpur division have been closed in compliance with its directives.

The government has stopped the operations 114 illegal brick kilns out of total 172 in Rangpur; 87 out of total 155 in Gaibandha and 134 out of total 175 in Dinajpur, according to the compliance report.

Assistant Attorney General Kalipada Mridha placed the report on behalf of Rangpur's divisional commissioner before the HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil during hearing on a writ petition as per its previous directive.

The bench ordered the government to close the remaining brick kilns.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 5

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-45	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-50	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Automobile repair

FROM PAGE 3

BRTA is going to bring these workshops under the regulation around one and a half year after the rules of Road Transport Act-2018, came into force in December 2022.

BRTA, under the section 156 of the rules, on April 29 formed a committee at every division to give recommendations on how to provide licences to the workshops, an official said.

SPEED LIMIT

Speaking at the programme, Nur Mohammad said they have enacted the Speed Limit Guideline considering many things including the roadside environment to reduce road crashes.

Mahbub-E-Rabbani, director (road safety) of BRTA, said the United Nations has endorsed the setting of a 30km per hour maximum speed limit wherever pedestrians, cyclists or other vulnerable road users mix with vehicles.

"So, we have to comply with the matter too," he added.

57 upazilas go

FROM PAGE 3

Prominent jurist Shahdeen Malik highlighted public skepticism about these numbers, saying, "The electoral system doesn't exist now by any means. There is no democratic accountability. The local government has become a tool for the central government to control the grassroots."

Shujan's findings indicate that in the last three phases, 87.43 percent of elected chairmen are Awami League leaders who participated as independents. In 334 out of 382 upazilas, the chairman was from the AL.

Among the 1,874 candidates, 56 percent are graduates, 67 percent businessmen, 11 percent farmers, and 5.98 percent lawyers. Forty percent of candidates have an annual income between Tk 2 lakh and Tk 5 lakh, while 37 percent between Tk 5 lakh and Tk 25 lakh.

A total of 76 candidates (4.06 percent) have annual incomes exceeding Tk 1 crore, and 611 (32.6 percent) have wealth over Tk 1 crore.

The top five wealthiest candidates are Ferdousi Islam of Narsingdi's Shibpur upazila, SM Jahangir Alam Manik of Noakhali's Senbag, Md Mirajul Islam of Pirojpur's Bhandaria, Rehana Begum of Cumilla's Homna, and Sudhir Chowdhury of Dhaka's Dhamrai.

The final phase of the election will be held on June 9.

Baira blames

FROM PAGE 3

"Meanwhile, we are collaborating with the government to either facilitate their travel or a refund," he added.

Lawmakers Nizam Uddin Hazari, Benjir Ahmed, Masud Uddin Chowdhury and Baira President Mohammad Abul Bashar also attended the conference.

Benjir is also the president of the parliamentary body on home ministry.

Nizam denied the existence of any syndicate within recruiting agencies. He said this in response to a question on how he managed to send 8,300 workers to Malaysia in the last two years while only 300 in the years before.

He claimed he wasn't directly involved in sending workers or processing visas but rather facilitated the process.

He said a certain group is attempting to discredit them through various means.

Contacted, State Minister Shofiqur Islam Choudhury said the ministry was not responsible for the e-visas issued by the Malaysian government.

"I think there is no point in blaming anyone for the current crisis. Legal action will be taken as per the investigation. No one will be exempt," he said.

Replying to other claims from Baira that the number of workers who could not go to Malaysia will not be more than 5,000 to 6,000, the minister said, "We have formed a probe body which will investigate the overall irregularities related to the crisis."

We should push

FROM PAGE 3

what steps should the city take to transition towards more sustainable energy solutions?

Asked by: **Nawwar Fatima Procheta** (Mirpur Kalshi, Dhaka)

Ainun Nishat: Total energy production in Bangladesh per capita is still low. Therefore, mitigation should not be a target for Bangladesh. However, we should push for renewable energy by utilising the technologies that are in practice, like solar energy, and bringing in the new technologies that are emerging. One is wind energy, and technology has improved -- the wind we have should be able to provide sufficient energy. Hydrogen technology is also coming up, and energy saving should be aimed at.

Question: How can we restore the polluted Buriganga, especially considering the reduced river transportation due to the construction of the Padma Bridge? What strategies can be implemented to clean up the Buriganga and mitigate pollution effectively?

Asked By: **SMM Musabbir Uddin** (Segunbagicha, Dhaka)

Ainun Nishat: It is possible to restore the water quality of Buriganga and all the rivers next to major cities. We have the necessary laws and permission in our constitution. The government must take strong measures to control pollution by enforcing the 1995 Act or the 1997 Regulation. The government has sufficient instruments to control river pollution. Many of the major rivers in the industrial belts of major cities, like London, were highly polluted. Now, the Thames is clean. If they can do it, we should be able to clean the Buriganga and our river systems as well.

EMBASSY OF SWEDEN

TRADE FACILITATOR

The Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka is recruiting a TRADE FACILITATOR with expertise and experience from working with trade and business in an international and/or a Nordic / Swedish context. To know more about the Swedish Embassy, please visit: https://www.swedenabroad.se/en/embassies/bangladesh-dhaka/

The Embassy is now looking for a qualified TRADE FACILITATOR for the Political, Trade and Communication Section. Reporting to the Head of the Section and requiring to work closely with the Ambassador and the thematic program officers in the Embassy, the main task will be to contribute to achieving the objectives of Swedish Government's trade priorities, promoting trade and investment between the two countries and promote Swedish companies who already have business in Bangladesh or wan to establish themselves in the country. **For details, please visit https://proedge-asso.com/careers**

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- University degree in Economics or Business Administration or equivalent academic qualification.
- At least two years' experience in similar roles in international organizations, Embassies, large non-governmental organizations or private sector/international business.
- Ability to initiate and work independently, as well as capacity to meet deadlines with a high level of quality and accuracy.
- Analytical and problem-solving skills, and ability to communicate in a clear and concise way.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Very good knowledge of written and verbal English.
- High proficiency in Excel and MS Office; IT literacy.

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Receipt of application will not be acknowledged.
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06-08 JUNE 2024
Venue: International Convention City Bashundhara, Kuril, Dhaka

Time: 10:00am - 07:30pm
Hall-04, 04A

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Centre for Advanced Research in Sciences (CARS)
University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000

Invitation for Tender (National)

Date: ২১-০২-১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ
04-06-2024 খ্রিষ্টাব্দ

SL. No.	Name of supply	Last date of sale of tender documents	Last date of submission of tender documents	Date & time of opening of tender documents	Place where detailed information will be found
01	**Tender Ref. No. CARS/ST/P-368/OTM/2024** Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Equipment for different laboratory at CARS	**02-07-2024** Up to Office Hour	**03-07-2024** Up to 10.30am	**03-07-2024** 11.00am	www.cars.du.ac.bd or Notice Board at the CARS University of Dhaka

Director
Centre for Advanced Research in Sciences (CARS)
University of Dhaka

GD-937

Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh
Strengthening Development Budget Management Capability through Establishing A New Database System (SDBM) Project
Programming Division, Planning Commission
Room-13, Bhaban-02, Ministry of Planning, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (For Selection of Individual Consultants)

Corrigendum

Sl. No.	Defined Problem	Solution/ Decision
1	Published as "Item No. 8 Procurement Method" mentioned as "Quality Cost Based Selection (QCBS)"	Should be read as "Item No. 8 Procurement Method" to be replaced by "Individual Consultant Services (ICS)"
2	Published as "Item No. 10 EOI Closing Date and Time" mentioned as "11.06.2024 Time: 13:00 hours BST."	Should be read as "Item No. 10 EOI Closing Date and Time" to be replaced by "12.06.2024 Time: 13:00 hours BST"

4. 6. 24
A.H. M. Anwar Pasha
Project Director &
Joint Chief (Joint Secretary)

GD- 939

BUILDING SALE FOR RENT

30,000/- per floor building with 5 floors with 104 for Decimal land for any factory/warehouse/store in a pleasant environment next to Ward Commissioner House No.8 Harinachala Konabari. Facilities: The entire building is protected by high walls, ample parking facility in front of the building with good loading and unloading facilities, every floor is tiled and emergency exit stairs are present, 750 KVA capacity gas generator, 400 KVA and 110 KVA capacity diesel generators and 7 Tons of boilers exist. Electricity and gas connection and deep tubewell are available.

Contact : 01756-691938, 01712-717811

Price Sensitive Information

This is for information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Bank Asia PLC. in its 528th meeting held at 4.00 p.m. today on 4 June 2024, at Bank Asia Tower, 32 & 34 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215, has approved the issuance of Seven-Year Floating Rate Non-Convertible Subordinated Bond with an issue price of Tk. 8,000,000,000.00 (Taka eight billion) through private placement to raise regulatory capital (Tier-2) of the bank as per Basel III norms, subject to the approval of regulatory authorities.

Dated : Dhaka
04 June 2024

Bank Asia

Bank Asia PLC.
Corporate Office:Bank Asia Tower,
32 & 34 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue
Kawran Bazar, Dhkaka-1215

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
Bangladesh America Maitree Project
brac
Call for Expression of Interest (EOI)

Bangladesh America Maitree Project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by BRAC, calls for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from local organizations seeking grant funding in selected thematic areas for the fiscal year 2024 grants program. Through the EOI process, eligible local organizations will be invited to submit proposals centered around innovative solutions led by local initiatives.

Detailed information is included in the call for EOI document. Interested organizations are expected to complete a pre-qualification questionnaire (Google Form) and submit relevant documents before **5:00 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time) on 29 June 2024**. The Maitree project will facilitate virtual application development workshops for all interested parties on 11 June and 24 June respectively.

Access the EOI document via this link:

https://brac.net/maitree-project

NB: Pre-qualification questionnaire submission form, workshop registration form links and contact information are embedded in the EOI.

BRAC, BRAC Center, 75, Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh
T: 02 2222 81265, E: info.maitree@brac.net, W: www.brac.net

Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Harirampur, Manikganj
web: www.lged.gov.bd

উন্নয়নে গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র।

Memo No: 46.02.5628.000.14.382.22-357
Dated: 04/06/2024

Tender Notice

Invitation for Tender (Works) No. 08/2023-24

e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following work, details are given below:

SL. No.	Tender ID No.	Package No & Name of Scheme	Tender Method	Last selling Date & time	Last Time for Tender Security Submission	Closing & Opening Date & time
1.	995470	Construction of RCC Slab Bridge of Azimnagar to Lesraganj beside Basantapur Bazar at Azimnagar UP under Harirampur Upazila, Dist: Manikganj. (Package No: e-Tender/ADP-2023-24/01)	LTM	19 June, 2024 at 12:00 PM	19 June, 2024 at 1:00 PM	19 June, 2024 at 4:00 PM
2.	995536	Installation of Guide Wall at Jhitka Ujanpara Mosque to House of Shahid at Balla UP under Harirampur Upazila, Dist: Manikganj. (Package No: e-Tender/ADP-2023-24/02)				
3.	995568	Improvement of Brick Flat Soling (BFS) road from Dagirchar Salam Mahmud Agriculture Field to small Bahadurpur Bridge at Gopinathpur UP under Harirampur Upazila, Dist: Manikganj. (Package No: e-Tender/ADP-2023-24/03)				

These are online tenders, where only e-Tender's will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the national e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branch. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) also from email: ue.harirampur@lged.gov.bd.

4.06.24
(Mazharul Haque Akand)
Upazila Engineer
LGED
Harirampur, Manikganj.

GD-940

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
office of the Executive Engineer
PWD Division, Barguna.
Tel & Fax No: 02479930040
www.pwd.gov.bd

Memo No-25.36.0400.140-1469
Date: 02.06.2024

e-Amendment/Corrigendum Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System Portal (http:/www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Barguna for the Procurement of :

Tender ID No	Amendment Description	Type, Method	Publishing Date & Time	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
992841	Correction in Tender Documents Section-06	NCT OTM	28-May-2024 22:00	09-Jun-2024 12:00	09-Jun-2024 15:30	09-Jun-2024 15:30

All other terms and conditions of the tender document will remain unchanged.

This is an online Tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender Registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http:/www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to deposited online through any schedule bank.

Further information and guide lines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk. (www.eprocure.gov.bd , helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

(Subrata Biswas)
Executive Engineer
PWD Division, Barguna.

GD- 936

WHO SAID WHAT

"Assure countrymen that to fulfil their aspirations, we will move forward with new energy, new enthusiasm and new resolve."

Indian PM
Narendra Modi

"I was confident that the people of this country would give the right response."

Indian opposition leader
Rahul Gandhi

"The public has taught a lesson to BJP in this election."

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief
Sharad Pawar

"It's a fair assessment to say 400 at the moment certainly looks distant."

BJP spokesman
Nalin Kohli

LOK SABHA ELECTION 2024

What a third term for Modi means for the world

AFP, *New Delhi*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has won a third term in power yesterday, leading a country with the world's biggest population and fastest-growing economy.

The 73-year-old Hindu nationalist leader, who is pushing for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, has been courted by the United States and European allies as a counterweight to China. Here is how a third term for Modi could build on a decade of his diplomatic ambitions.

UNITED STATES, EUROPE

President Joe Biden hosted Modi for a state dinner last year and has called ties with India the "defining partnership of the 21st century".

In February, Washington approved a $4 billion sale of state-of-the-art drones to India, the latest bolster to India's defence in a counterbalance to neighbouring China.

That deepening of ties has come despite rights groups sounding the alarm about threats to India's democracy and increased discrimination towards the 200-million-plus Muslim minority.

India also has strong ties with European countries. With France, it hopes to expand multi-billion-dollar deals including the sale of Rafale fighter jets.

CHINA

Relations between the world's two most populous countries slumped in 2020 after their troops fought a deadly high-altitude skirmish along their 3,500-kilometre frontier.

Modi's right-wing government has pumped billions of dollars into border infrastructure and boosted military spending by 13 percent last year -- but it is still barely a quarter of China's.

RUSSIA

New Delhi and Moscow have ties dating back to the Cold War and Russia remains by far the biggest arms supplier.

India has shied away from explicit condemnation of Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, abstained on UN resolutions censuring Moscow, and snapped up cut-price Russian crude oil supplies.

Modi in March congratulated President Vladimir Putin on his re-election.

PAKISTAN

Modi's government has refused to engage with Pakistan since accusing Islamabad of cross-border terrorism.

In 2015 Modi made a surprise visit to Lahore but relations plummeted in 2019. But in March, Modi congratulated Pakistani counterpart Shehbaz Sharif on his return to the premiership. It was a rare expression of goodwill between leaders of two rivals.

'GLOBAL SOUTH'

Modi has also projected India as a key member of the BRICS club of emerging economies, and this week called New Delhi "a strong and important voice of the Global South". It was under Modi's watch that the African Union bloc joined the G20, with India arguing developing nations need a greater say in global decision-making.

Modi's key allies stand by him despite weaker showing

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

Two key regional allies in Narendra Modi's coalition have endorsed him as India's next prime minister, their spokespeople said yesterday, after trends showed Modi's party was falling short of a majority in a general election.

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Janata Dal (United) said their pre-poll alliance with Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)was intact and they would form the next government.

Their comments came after media speculation that the opposition alliance, which is doing much better than expected, was also in touch with them.

N Chandrababu Naidu's TDP, based in the southern coastal state of Andhra Pradesh, is currently the second-biggest party in Modi's National Democratic Alliance (NDA) after the BJP. Naidu, who allied with the opposition the last time, has in the past spoken about loan waivers for farmers and privatisation of air and sea ports.

"TDP has a pre-poll alliance with NDA and it will continue, no doubt about that," said party lawmaker K. Ravindra Kumar. "PM Modi and Naidu have congratulated each other."

Party spokesperson Jyothsna Tirunagari said: "TDP has always shared a vision with PM Modi and he remains our PM face."

Gandhi siblings shine in INDIA's stellar show

NDTV ONLINE

From 'pappu' to 'shehzade', Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has been the prime target of BJP's ridicule for years. Jabs at the Gandhi family have been the BJP leader's main line of attack at the main opposition Congress in every election over the past decade.

But as Congress inches towards a 100-seat tally in this Lok Sabha election -- its best show in a decade -- and the INDIA bloc's tally defies all exit polls, the Gandhi siblings have played a central role.

Rahul virtually launched his campaign with a Bharat Jodo Yatra across the length and breadth of the country. While the actual impact of the yatra in terms of Lok Sabha seats won is a subject of data and debate, there is no doubt that his public interactions on the trail brought him out of television screens to the people and contributed to shattering the perception the BJP had created of him.

Visuals of Rahul petting puppies, hugging people and chatting with people from every section of the society, from students to truck drivers to mechanics, showed a side of him the country had not seen before.

As for Priyanka Gandhi, many had expected her to contest the polls this time, and questions were raised when she did not. In her response, Priyanka has said in several interviews that it was a conscious decision. If both she and Rahul contested the election, they would get tied up with campaigning in one constituency, she had said, adding that the plan was to keep her free for rallies.

As Rahul travelled across the country to address rallies of the INDIA bloc, Priyanka also took up the task of leading the Congress's campaign in family strongholds Amethi and Raebareli.

BJP candidate concedes defeat in Ayodhya

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party yesterday conceded defeat in a constituency where the inauguration of a grand Hindu temple just months ago by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was seen as an event that would cement his legacy and the party's poll victory.

Results showed the BJP's candidate, Lallu Singh, had lost the Faizabad constituency to Awadhesh Prasad, the candidate of the socialist-leaning Samajwadi Party, by a margin of over 50,000 votes.

Smriti Irani loses battle for Amethi

THE HINDU ONLINE

In a big upset for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, Union Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Irani, dubbed a giant slayer after she defeated Rahul Gandhi from the seat in the 2019 elections, lost to Congress's Kishori Lal Sharma in the Amethi constituency in Uttar Pradesh.

According to the EC data, Sharma won by a margin of over 1,67,000 votes. Irani received 3,72,032 votes. Taking to X, Irani said she will be forever grateful to people who supported her in victory and loss. Amethi is one of the important seats in the state and exit polls had predicted a close fight.

'Exit polls were not reflective of the reality on the ground'

Says Congress spokesperson

AGENCIES

Congress spokesperson Shama Mohamed said leaders of the opposition knew that exit polls showing a wide-margin of victory for Modi's alliance were not reflective of the reality on the ground.

"Of course, we always said that the opposition is going to do well in this election," Mohamed said. "You have to understand that there is a lot of unemployment in India, the price rise is huge."

"There is the capture of various institutions for example," Mohamed added, referring to the opposition's allegations that Modi's government has consolidated power at key institutions, including the country's election commission.

Palestinians mourn for their relatives killed during Israeli bombardment of a house in al-Bureij refugee camp, at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: **AFP**

POST-POLLS SOUTH AFRICA

ANC weighs up partners from free-marketeers to Marxists

REUTERS, *Johannesburg*

The African National Congress was holding high-stakes internal talks yesterday about which parties it should approach to form South Africa's next government, with diametrically opposed Marxists and free-marketeers on the menu of options.

After 30 years of dominance since Nelson Mandela led it to power in the 1994 elections that marked the end of apartheid, the ANC lost its majority in last week's national vote. It remains the largest party but can no longer govern alone.

Voters punished the former liberation movement for high levels of poverty, joblessness and inequality, rampant crime, rolling power cuts and corruption - problems that have held South Africa back and will challenge the next government.

It will have 159 seats out of 400 in the new National Assembly, while the free-marketeer Democratic Alliance (DA) will have 87. The populist uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) will have 58 seats, the Marxist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) 39, the socially conservative Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) 17 and the far-right Patriotic Alliance (PA) nine.

"The ANC is still trying to make up its mind about what it wants to do," said Charles Cilliers, co-founder and head of strategy for the PA, which calls for the mass deportation of undocumented immigrants and the return of the death penalty.

"Everyone is reliant on the ANC coming to a decision. There's a lot of pressure on them from big money, from big business in South Africa, to work with the DA," he told Reuters.

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B. Sc. in Industrial and Production Engineering (IPE)
B. Sc. in Mechanical Engineering (ME)
Faculty of Business and Social Sciences
Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)

ADMISSION SCHEDULE

- **Application Date:** 06.06.2024 (Thursday) - 23.06.2024 (Sunday)
- **Date of Verification of FF, RA and O and A-Level Application:** 27.06.2024 (Thursday) (from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm)
- **Publication of the Shortlisted Candidates:** 02.07.2024 (Tuesday)
- **Date of Admission Test:** 06.07.2024 (Saturday)
- **Publication of Merit List:** 18.07.2024 (Thursday)
- **Modification of Program Choice:** 19.07.2024 (Friday) - 21.07.2024 (Sunday)
- **Publication of Merit List with Selected Program:** 25.07.2024 (Thursday)

QUALIFICATION

Category 1: ENGG. Program(s), ENGG.+ARCH. Program(s) and,
Category 2: ARCH. Program

- HSC (Science) with Math, Physics, Chemistry
- GPA in HSC: Minimum 3.5 (with additional subject)
- Minimum total of SSC and HSC GPAs: 8.0 including additional subject

For O-Level and A-Level/ Equivalent

- O-level or equivalent (with at least five subjects including Math, Physics, Chemistry & English)
- A-level or equivalent with Math, Physics & Chemistry with minimum equivalent GPA of 3.5
- Minimum equivalent total of O and A-level GPAs: 8.0
- Grade equivalence: A*/A=5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, and E = 1

Category 3: BBA Program

- SSC and HSC or equivalent from any discipline
- Minimum total of SSC and HSC GPAs: 7.0 including additional subject with at least 2.0 at any level

For O-Level and A-Level/ Equivalent

- The candidate completed a minimum of five subjects in O-level and two subjects in A-level
- Minimum equivalent total of O and A-level GPAs: 7.0 with at least 3.0 at any level.
- Grade equivalence: A*/A=5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, and E = 1

NOTE

- Applicants from Category 1 with an option for ENGG.(only) have to sit for a Common Admission Test (Mathematics + Physics + Chemistry + English) for 1 hour and 45 Minutes.
- Applicants from Category 1 with an option for ENGG.+ARCH. and Category 2: ARCH. have to sit for an additional 1 Hour and 30 Minutes 'Drawing Test' after appearing in the Common Admission Test (Mathematics + Physics + Chemistry + English)
- Applicants from Category 3: BBA Program have to sit for Admission Test (English + General Mathematics + Information and Communication Technology) for 1 hour and 45 Minutes , starting at the same time as Engineering Common Test.

As per Private University Act 2010, 3% of the total seats is reserved for **sons/daughters** of Freedom Fighters (FF), and another 3% for poor and meritorious candidates of Remote and Undeveloped Areas (RA).

- Candidates have to apply through the website (https://iums.aust.edu/admission/) by paying the necessary application processing fees through bKash.
- Candidates who have passed SSC or O-level or equivalent examinations in 2019 and onwards, and HSC or A-level or equivalent examinations in 2021 and onwards can apply.
- Detailed application procedures and other information are available on the University Website (http://admission.aust.edu).

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Shimana passes away at 39, showbiz mourns tragic loss

Model and actress Rista Laboni Shimana breathed her last yesterday at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), succumbing to severe complications from a brain haemorrhage at the age of 39. The talented artiste, who rose to fame through the 2006 Lux-Channel i Superstar competition, left behind two children, eight-year-old Shreshtho, and three-year-old Sworgo.

ZAHID AKBAR

The heartbreaking scene at the Channel i building around noon saw Shimana's children innocently playing near a condolence book, unaware their mother's untimely demise had forever altered their lives. "Look, Mom has come. Let's go and see her, Sworgo," Shreshtho remarked as the ambulance carrying his mother's remains arrived. Little did they know, this would be the last time they ever saw her.

A little distance away, we could hear the heartbreaking cries of a devastated mother. She was still numb from the loss of her daughter. Unable to control her emotions, she hugged Salahuddin Lavlu and wept inconsolably. She couldn't grasp losing her daughter at such a young age. "I really can't believe she is gone just like that. Why did it have to be her?" she sobbed, tears rolling down her cheeks. Her trembling hands clutched her daughter's photo, unable to comprehend the tragedy.

Shimana's colleague, director Salahuddin Lavlu, lamented, "She messaged me a month ago, saying she wanted to return to work. I told her I wasn't working on anything at that moment but would let her know as soon as I started something new. Now, I will never be able to cast her, as she has left us too soon." Lavlu had directed Shimana in the acclaimed drama ***Sakin Sarisuri***, which brought her widespread recognition for her role as Kakoli.

Actor Chanchal Chowdhury expressed his condolences on his social media, stating, "Shimana... You've crossed from life into the realm of death...! May you find eternal peace in the infinite beyond. Our hearts ache with sorrow for you. Countless memories linger...!"

Director Chayanika Chowdhury shared a photo of the late actress' children, captioning, "I'm at a loss for words...My heartfelt prayers go out to the two children. May she find peace in the afterlife, and may the One above watch over her children. I pray that all motherless children around the world find comfort, care, and happiness."

The talented actress emerged in the entertainment industry through the 2006 Lux-Channel i Superstar contest. In addition to her television work, she made her silver screen debut in Tauquir Ahmed's film ***Daruchini Dwip***. In terms of her recent work, she appeared in Biplob Haider's ***Roshni*** last year, playing the role of a journalist, after a six-year break due to family commitments.

Shimana's battle began around two weeks ago as she suddenly fell ill on the night of May 21. Around 11:30pm, she was rushed to a private hospital in Dhanmondi, where it was discovered that she had suffered from a brain haemorrhage. The following day, she was transferred to another hospital in Dhanmondi for better treatment. Eventually, on doctors' advice, she was admitted to the National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospital in the capital's Agargaon, where she underwent brain surgery on May 25.

Despite undergoing surgery, her condition remained critical, leading to her transfer to the BSMMU, where she was put on life support last Wednesday (May 29). Tragically, she passed away around 6am yesterday.

The first *janaza* was held at 12:30pm at the Channel i building on the same day. She was laid to rest at her family graveyard in Nakla upazila, Sherpur, later in the evening.

As the nation mourns the devastating loss of the 39-year-old's talent and vibrant spirit, Shimana's colleagues and loved ones struggle to come to terms with her tragic and untimely passing, ensuring her legacy lives on.

Actor Chanchal Chowdhury expressed his condolences on his social media, stating, "Shimana... You've crossed from life into the realm of death...! May you find eternal peace in the infinite beyond. Our hearts ache with sorrow for you. Countless memories linger...!"

PHOTOS: **COLLECTED**

Arjun Rampal to walk on ramp in Dhaka this month

Bollywood heartthrob Arjun Rampal is set to visit Dhaka this month, after 14 years. The actor, known for his fantastic performance and charismatic personality, has impressed audiences worldwide and made a name for himself.

Arjun Rampal will be in Dhaka on June 7 to attend the upcoming fashion show titled ***BHN Experiences Presents Blue Drops by Zurhem***.

Zurhem announced the news on their social media with a personalised video from the actor, confirming that he will be walking the runway in Dhaka this month.

This event is being exclusively organised for Zurhem's loyal and frequent customers, and attendees must register to attend the fashion show.

Sabina Yasmin returns home after months of treatment abroad

Legendary singer Sabina Yasmin has returned to Bangladesh after undergoing treatment for three and a half months at Singapore General Hospital.

The singer arrived back in Dhaka on May 31 and is currently recuperating at her home.

Recently, a family source confirmed to the media that the singer's health is stable. However, she will need to return to Singapore later this month for regular medical check-ups.

Yasmin initially travelled to Singapore last February for a routine medical examination. During the check-up, doctors discovered a dental issue, necessitating surgery on February 7.

NEWS

Tigers' injury woes in WC continue

FROM PAGE 12

The pacer went through the grind in an indoor session on Monday, trying to get back his rhythm.

While Bangladesh Cricket Board's medical department were hopeful of Taskin's recovery when talking to The Daily Star earlier last month, there may be a risk involved in Taskin pushing himself too far. Fellow quick Shoriful Islam, meanwhile, is unlikely to play the Sri Lanka fixture after having injured his bowling hand during the warm-up fixture against India on June 1 and needed six stitches afterwards.

Bangladesh's batting has already been under fire in recent series, and with the most promising among the three departments in the Tigers' dugout still in doubt for World Cup games, the backup options would also be kept ready. Bar Hasan Mahmud, there are no other options for the recovering speedsters.

Given Bangladesh's first two World Cup matches are against Sri Lanka and South Africa, failure to win any of those two affairs can make or break their tournament, leading to certain elimination from the first round.

Meanwhile, criticism of wickets and grounds in the USA has been a big talking point among experts. Whereas Canada and the USA played out a high-scoring game in Dallas, the venue for Bangladesh's first game, Sri Lanka were thumped by South Africa in New York where the ground was inadequately prepared and the wicket made for a low-scoring affair. Cricket commentator Harsha Bhogle went as far as saying that cricket will not gain ground in the USA, with playing surfaces and outfields of that quality.

There are plenty of questions for the tournament organisers to answer in this regard. However, with wickets unlikely to alter in the next few days, Bangladesh are faced with multiple hurdles as they seek to regain lost confidence.

Benazir may not appear

FROM PAGE 12

IGP and his family had left the country.

On May 28, the ACC issued a notice to Benazir Ahmed and his family for interrogation over the allegations that he amassed illegal wealth through corruption. According to the notice, Benazir Ahmed was summoned on June 6, his wife Zeeshan Mirza and two daughters on June 9.

Sources said, considering how things stand, it is unlikely that Benazir Ahmed will appear before the ACC for questioning tomorrow.

Meanwhile, Benazir's lawyers did not provide any information about the whereabouts of the former IGP and his family and refrained from commenting on whether he will appear before the ACC.

Sources at immigration police confirmed to The Daily Star that Benazir Ahmed and her family members left for Singapore on a Singapore Airlines flight on the night of May 4.

A reliable source close to Benazir said that Benazir went to Singapore with some of his wife's medical documents. However, he did not confirm whether Benazir is currently in Singapore or any other country.

Moreover, it is uncertain how the corruption charges against Benazir will proceed as he is not in the country.

Speaking on the issue, ACC Chairman Mohammad Moinuddin Abdullah told The Daily Star, "We have requested him [Benazir] to submit a statement on the corruption allegations raised against him. He is expected to come and speak on his behalf. That is what we are hoping for."

"We don't really know where he is right now. We have not issued any travel ban against him or any of his family members," he added.

"The investigation team is probing allegations of corruption against Benazir Ahmed. If they think they need to summon him again to get his statement, they can do so. The investigation committee is completely independent."

The murder plan

FROM PAGE 1

In his statement, Tanvir further said the killing was planned as per the instructions of Aktaruzzaman, who had been in India for some time and then returned to Bangladesh.

The last meeting, which firmed up the murder plan, was held at a restaurant named "O2" near the Kolkata Airport, in the presence of Aktaruzzaman. He is now in the USA, court sources said.

Amanullah, Mostafizur Rahman, Jihad Howlader, Tanvir, and Siam, among others, were present at the meeting.

About how the lawmaker was lured, the sources said Tanvir had assured Azim that arrangements were made to pay back all the dues of his business.

On Monday, another arrestee, Celesty Rahman, confessed before the court.

Meanwhile, a Bangladesh police team, which went to Nepal on June 1 following information that another suspect, Siam Hossain, was arrested, returned home yesterday. Nepal police arrested Siam, acting up on Bangladesh's alert.

However, there are complications in bringing back Siam due to the absence of an extradition treaty between Bangladesh and Nepal.

Siam might be handed over to India instead, where a murder case was also filed against him for the lawmaker's killing, sources said.

Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (DB) of DMP, who led the police team in Nepal, yesterday said both countries (India and Bangladesh) have the same intention in this regard.

"We are exchanging information. Whether Nepal hands over the accused to India or to us, there will be no problem in the investigation. The Indian police team came to interrogate the three arrestees – Aktaruzzaman, Celesty, and Tanvir -- in Bangladesh, while we went to India to interrogate Jihad Howlader."

He further said that Siam was close to the mastermind Aktaruzzaman.

"If Kolkata police gets Siam in its custody, it will be very helpful in getting more evidence. We'll also get the chance to interrogate him ourselves."

Addressing reporters at the airport, Harun said Siam went to Nepal via Muzaffarabad after abducting and killing the lawmaker in Kolkata, adding that MP Azim's phone was activated in Muzaffarabad as Siam used it to make some calls.

He further said they have received important information and footage from Kathmandu Police about Siam, which will be useful in the investigation.

Benazir, Aziz have nothing to do

FROM PAGE 12

"Who had created former IGP Shamsul Huda and SP Kohinur?" he said.

Quader said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir might have forgotten that his party's acting chief is a convict on the run.

On the other hand, Hasina is well-known at home and abroad as an honest politician, and there is no scope for raising question about her honesty, he said.

The AL general secretary said Khaleda has been sentenced on corruption charges and she can receive treatment at home as her jail term has been suspended due to the generosity of the prime minister.

"This BNP is now talking about corruption and money laundering," Quader said.

He said BNP is now trying to portray their corrupt convicted leader Tarique Rahman as a good person.

Quader said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (SHUJAN) and BNP make comments in the same tone. "Are TIB and SHUJAN the B-team of BNP?"

The meeting was moderated by Dhaka City North AL General Secretary SM Mannan Kachi, with its President Sheikh Bazlur Rahman in the chair.

Flood situation worsens further

FROM PAGE 12

Floodwater enters the city through drains and canals as the rivers surrounding the city are overflowing, said Sajlu Lashkar, public relations officer of Sylhet City Corporation.

Amid this situation, Zakiganj and Kanaighat upazila parishads go to polls today.

"The flooded polling stations have been changed. We have taken all-out preparations to hold the elections," said Returning Officer Imrul Hasan, who is an additional district magistrate of Sylhet.

Meanwhile in Sunamganj, hundreds of people have been affected by the flood in the district. Many roads have been submerged, disrupting communications, said locals.

14-party allies vent anger

FROM PAGE 1

and corruption, for which the government is to ultimately blame, they said.

"Since Awami League alone is in power, why should the partners take responsibility for the government's misdeeds?" one partner asked.

Top leaders of several allies also expressed their frustration over the government's inaction and silence about market manipulation and corruption, especially in the banking sector, when the culprits are already identified.

The meeting was held at Amu's Eskaton residence in the capital. It was a follow-up meeting after AL chief Sheikh Hasina, also the prime minister, sat with them on May 23.

At the beginning of the meeting, Amu informed the AL's plan to go for united programmes to counter anti-state and anti-government propaganda, but the alliance partners rejected the idea, said meeting sources.

After the meeting, Amu told reporters that there were some confusions among some alliance partners, and that they will organise joint programmes after "resolving the disputes".

In response to Amu's proposal for joint programmes at the meeting, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu, Jatiya Party (Manju) Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju and Tarikat Federation Chairman Syed Nazibul Bashar Maizvandari said they do not even know how the AL view this partnership.

They added that they now wonder whether the alliance exists anymore or whether it is relevant now.

AL leaders are now raising questions about the partners' organisational strength and vote bank, but the alliance was formed out of a political necessity, and that AL termed the alliance its "ideological" partners, they said.

Inu alleged that candidates from the 14-party were not allowed to win in the January 7 national election as part of a pre-planned strategy.

AL shared only seven seats with its three partners in the election, down from 16 in the 2018 polls.

Maizvandari demanded an explanation as to why the partners were not offered their desired seats and what problem would the AL have had if some of the partners won some seats.

He said they are aware how the election was conducted and how many of the AL candidates actually won the election, according to meeting sources.

Some 14-party leaders told Amu that the AL is now seeking to go for joint programmes since the government is facing some difficulties on multiple fronts, but they will be "thrown aside" again once the crisis is over.

Manju, a seven-time lawmaker from Pirojpur-2, said he was defeated by a so-called AL independent candidate, whose family had questionable roles during the 1971 war, through use of police force.

"Awami League always talks about the spirit of the Liberation War, but in many cases its activities don't match its claims," he said.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader is expected to sit with the alliance partners on June 12 in efforts to bridge the gap.

Pressure

FROM PAGE 12

Biden added that he had a "major disagreement" with Netanyahu over the post-conflict future of Gaza, and said Israel had engaged in "inappropriate" conduct during the offensive.

But for now, the Gaza offensive raged on unabated yesterday, with the Israeli military reporting more air and artillery strikes and ground combat against Hamas, and Palestinians bemoaning more civilian deaths.

Overnight bombardment hit targets in Gaza City and the southern Rafah area, said AFP reporters and witnesses.

Four bodies were retrieved from a bombed house in the Bureij camp in central Gaza, and three more from the rubble of a destroyed building in Gaza City, Gaza's civil defence agency said.

Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip has killed at least 36,550 Palestinians and wounded 82,959 since October 7, the Palestinian enclave's health ministry said yesterday. A total of 71 Palestinians have been killed and 182 wounded in the past 24 hours, the ministry said in a statement.

OUR LAND OUR FUTURE

We are #GenerationRestoration

‘Ask For Our Planet’ is a collaboration between The Daily Star and the United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh, launched for the World Environment Day 2024. Our goal is to connect our readers with national climate champions, allowing them to ask questions about pressing environmental issues such as pollution, climate change, waste management, declining groundwater levels, and sustainability. We believe that by obtaining and acting on these answers, we can make a significant contribution to mitigating or even reversing the adverse effects of climate change.

ASK FOR OUR PLANET

Ideation partner
MISSION SAVE BANGLADESH

A joint initiative of
The Daily Star
UNDP

“Citizen action, collaboration vital for compliance”

NAHIM RAZZAQ
MP, Convenor, Climate Parliament Bangladesh
Member, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Why has the government’s initiative to shut down illegal brick kilns become ineffective?
Asked by: **Md Afzal Hossain Nayeem**
(Mohammadpur, Dhaka)

Over the years, multiple governments have taken initiatives to have compliance with Bangla Brick manufacturing to the extent of threatening to shut down operations, demolish unauthorised units or bar the renewal of trade licenses. However, nothing seems to deter the legally and illegally operated brick manufacturers from adopting eco-friendly alternatives.

It’s merely a matter of willingness. Alternative methods such as Fixed Chimney Klin, Zigzag Klin, Vertical Shaft Brick Klin or Hybrid Hoffman Klin are all considered Green technology. Concrete bricks or Hollow bricks are also eco-friendly. Furthermore, former finance minister late Abul Mal Abdul Muhit initiated “Green Financing” particularly keeping this technology in mind. However, it was not successful in bringing the desired outcome.

Imminent action should be taken to make the industry compliant and total shut down of those who don’t.

As a volunteer, what can we do to reduce plastic bag usage in markets where people prefer them due to lower cost? Can Bangladesh implement a plastic ban like India, and how can we raise awareness as citizens?
Asked by: **S. M. M. Musabbir Uddin**
(Segunbagicha, Dhaka)

Despite numerous initiatives by civil society, environmentalists, city planners, legislators and others, the use of single-use plastic continues. Sufficient awareness programmes have been initiated to use alternative products. Unfortunately, these measures have not delivered the desired outcome.

We should completely ban the manufacturing and use of single-use plastic in Bangladesh. We have cheap alternatives in place. Government bodies like city corporations, businesses and other stakeholders should engage in imposing strict guidelines to this end. There should also be a stringent penalty for non-compliance. Simultaneously, citizen action is required to boycott single-use plastic.

Despite creating environmental policies since the 1980s and publishing the Solid Waste Management Rules 2021, why have these rules not been implemented effectively by 2024?
Asked by: **Jerin Sultana Lalkhan bazar**,
Chattogram

Unfortunately, these ordinances are not properly coordinated. The mismanagement is caused by our lack of oversight. I’m a firm believer in citizen action and collaboration. Stakeholders should seek an action plan and strict deadlines to ensure compliance on legislative and executive levels. Everyone, including individuals, businesses and other stakeholders should be held accountable for their actions.

“We need to coexist with nature”

IQBAL HABIB
Architect, Vice President, Bangladesh Environment Movement

As an architect, how do you think sustainable infrastructure design principles can be integrated into Dhaka’s urban planning and construction projects?
Asked by: **Mahzuza Maria Biva**
(Bashabo, Dhaka)

The answer to this question is embedded importantly into the very definition of sustainability defined by SDG 11. Primarily, all urban development projects and initiatives must aim towards ‘equity’, to confirm the inclusivity in terms of its accommodation, use and management.

Secondly, the goal to be “economic” has to be achieved in their implementation. Being economic implies ensuring the adaptation of local knowledge, technology, and available materials and techniques.

Last but not least, the environmental concerns and their impact must be addressed by urban projects during their very initiation phase and continued throughout the implementation and management phases. Environmental issues concern human beings and biodiversity equally, so our responses need to be from a holistic perspective.

What role can green building technologies and practices play in reducing the carbon footprint of Dhaka’s environment while improving the city’s overall livability?
Asked by: **Ryad Ahmed**
(Dortmund, Germany)

Dhaka is one of the most densely populated cities in the world. All sectors and infrastructures will benefit if we adopt “nature-based” solutions considering the local climate and environment. These solutions can be enforced through incentive-based encouragement programmes for land owners, developers, and government agencies.

We also need to make efforts to “coexist” with nature, through our compassion and empathy towards our surroundings. Blindly adopting foreign templates of heavily energy-dependent structures should be discouraged to reverse the “heat island” the urban residents find themselves in. Simultaneously, Bangladesh National Building Code should be thoroughly updated.

How can the preservation and restoration of Dhaka’s existing greenery, water bodies, and natural habitats be better integrated into urban development plans?
Asked by: **Jayedul Hassan**
(Osaka University, Japan)

Every city must have its ‘Urban Greenery Policy’, a customized implementation approach based on the area’s soil and climate conditions, and historical data on vegetation. Instead of allocating a budget for celebrations of target fulfilment, we need to allocate a budget for nourishing, pruning and maintaining plants and vegetation through professional consultation and proper training.

Protection, monitoring and restoration initiatives are our current priority. We also need to be sensitive to the biodiversity of specific areas, by fostering local plant breeds and knowledge.

“NGOs, communities must complement each other”

SYEDA RIZWANA HASAN
Supreme Court Lawyer and the Chief Executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association

What strategies can be implemented to empower grassroots stakeholders in rural communities to actively participate in environmental and conservation efforts?
Asked by: **K.M. Nayeem Farhan**
(Shahzadpur Gulshan, Dhaka)

The environmental laws in the country have clear provisions for public consultations before Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports of industries or projects that fall within the red category are approved. If complaints are registered, the Director General of the Department of Environment (DoE) is under a legal obligation to take measures required to redress the community grievances. These measures also include holding public hearings on such issues. Communities need to be made aware of their rights to participate, receive information and redressal under national laws. Civil society actors can invest in empowering the communities on a national level with technical knowledge, connections, capacity building, and facilitating their access to redressal mechanisms for a national-level development process.

What role can civil society organizations, such as NGOs and community groups, play in promoting environmental justice and protecting marginalized communities?
Asked by: **Arman Zaman Chowdhury**
(Shantinagar, Dhaka)

The NGOs and community groups can complement one another in their efforts to promote environmental justice. NGOs can work with communities to fact-check information regarding development projects that might be exploitative and guide community members in collecting evidence and monitoring grassroots-level conditions. The NGOs can effectively engage with the media. NGOs also can draw national attention to local issues by collaborating with community groups that bear the brunt of environmental injustices.

What are some successful examples of grassroots-led environmental initiatives in developing countries? What can we learn from them?
Asked by: **Amarah Gilani**
(Mirpur DOHS, Dhaka)

Countering the false solutions by the profit-driven sectors, the grass-root level successes on environmental matters are aplenty. Starting from the preservation of seeds and defending natural and safe agriculture to innovating integrated water resource management models with different high-efficiency, low-cost technologies to counter water scarcity issues in disaster-prone areas. When the government justifies tree felling on the grounds of funding the beneficiaries of its social forestry program, we see rickshaw pullers and school teachers setting inspiring examples of tree plantation and biodiversity conservation. To address the negative impacts of climate change, people are converting their water-logged lands into vegetable farms, accessing potable water through online payment, engaging in inventing seeds that are natural disaster-prone and many such initiatives.

“Multi-stakeholder dialogues beneficial for resource mobilization”

ARIF MOHAMMAD FAISAL
Programme Specialist - Environmental Sustainability and Energy, UNDP

How can UNDP support Bangladesh in effectively implementing international environmental agreements at the local level?
Asked by: **Samira Sattar**
(Khilgaon, Dhaka)

The UNDP can effectively support Bangladesh in implementing international environmental agreements such as the UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCDD, and Montreal Protocol through a multi-faceted strategy. This includes capacity-building programmes to enhance understanding among stakeholders, and policy support to local governments so that their policies align with international standards. Additionally, facilitating stakeholder engagement through multi-stakeholder dialogues and partnerships can foster collaboration and resource mobilization. The UNDP can also assist in mobilizing financial and technical resources for local projects , and promoting knowledge sharing and technology transfer.

How can UNDP ensure full inclusion of marginalized populations, particularly people with disabilities, in its ‘Climate Promise’ Programme?
Asked by: **Jahidul Islam**
(Mirpur, Dhaka)

The UNDP can implement several strategic actions in the Climate Promise programme to include people with disabilities. These include integrating disability perspectives into all climate policies, consulting with disability organizations, and ensuring their representation in policy-making processes. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans should explicitly address the needs of people with disabilities. The upcoming “circular economic strategy”, Net Zero Strategy, NDC investment plan should be also inclusive.

Targeted programmes should focus on disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies and adaptive infrastructure that is accessible to people with disabilities. Partnerships with Disabled People’s Organizations (DPOs) and collaboration with international and regional bodies are crucial for sharing best practices.

Are there any modern and readily available solutions to combat the deteriorating air quality in Dhaka?
Asked by: **S.M.M Musabbir Uddin**
(Segunbagicha, Dhaka)

Key strategies include enforcing stricter emission standards for vehicles and industries, transitioning to Euro VI standards, and phasing out obsolete brick kilns. Promoting low-emission zones and renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power are also crucial. Investing in electric and hybrid buses and expanding public transit infrastructure can significantly reduce private vehicle use.

Additionally, deploying air quality monitoring systems, encouraging emission control technologies like catalytic converters, and setting up air purifying towers in highly polluted zones and industrial scrubbers can be helpful. Urban planning should emphasize green infrastructure projects, along with zoning regulations to separate industrial and residential areas, community engagement and awareness-raising.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Sundarbans must be left alone to recover

Alarming rise of resort business surrounding it should be checked

The heavy battering that the Sundarbans took while trying to fend off fierce winds and tidal surges that came along with Cyclone Remal is beginning to be clearer. The forest department estimates infrastructural damage worth over Tk 6 crore within the forest. But that may be the tip of the iceberg as the actual damage—caused to its biodiversity—is impossible to quantify. The forest floor lies covered with uprooted trees and foliage, with animal carcasses being discovered every day. Experts say it might need 30-40 years to restore its natural balance. What, then, the Sundarbans requires is to be left alone to recuperate, not further assaults from the very people it protects.

Yet, that may be precisely what's in store for the forest, with an alarming rise of resort business surrounding it in recent years. As per a report by *Prothom Alo*, resorts are being built close to the Sundarbans, some extending into its rivers, despite environmental laws prohibiting construction or activities detrimental to the forest within 10 kilometres of it. So far, some 14 resorts have been built in Khulna and Satkhira by cutting down trees and filling up canals and low-lying areas, with eight more under construction. These resorts operate generators and air conditioning systems, causing noise, water, light, and soil pollution, as well as disturbing and even driving away the wildlife.

Since 2021, the number of resorts has increased fourfold to accommodate an ever-growing number of tourists. If the trend holds, experts fear it may not be long before the Sundarbans meets the fate of the heavily degraded Bhawal Forest in Gazipur. It's an irony that while the Sundarbans stands as our first line of defence against natural disasters in coastal regions, we are failing to defend it from our own actions. True, the rise in so-called community-based ecotourism has brought some benefits to local populations. But the lack of environmental scrutiny has meant that it has been totally unsustainable. The risk comes not just from resorts and cottages alone. Over the years, we've seen how various development projects, both private and public, have been undertaken despite protests from environmentalists.

This is not a healing environment for a forest that just took a heavy hit and will again be expected to do in case of future cyclones. We urge the relevant authorities to ensure strict enforcement of the environmental laws to preserve the Sundarbans. New developments must be halted, and existing resorts should be subjected to rigorous environmental scrutiny, preferably under a new legal framework for ecotourism business as recommended by those involved. We must prevent further degradation of this vital lifeline for Bangladesh at all costs.

Health budget must increase in real terms

Poor budget and budget execution causing suffering for people

In a country where a large segment of the population lives below the poverty line, public healthcare should have been a top priority for the government. Instead, an analysis by this daily shows that the healthcare budget has been decreasing as a percentage of the total budget since 2010. This has resulted in people spending more on healthcare out of their own pockets. So much so that Bangladesh has the second highest out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditure on health in the world, which is really concerning. Moreover, people are not even getting desired services despite spending considerable sums of money. Rather, those who can afford it often go for treatment abroad, draining our precious forex reserves.

The sorry state of the healthcare budget is not just limited to falling numbers. Corruption and irregularities in the sector, along with poor planning and execution of the budget, also add to the burden of costs on people. According to our report, a large portion of the healthcare allocation is actually spent on the salaries and perks of government officials as well as other regular expenditures, which does little to help the public. The saddest part is, while they are paying through their noses, a portion of the allocated money remains underutilised on a regular basis. This led to a reduction in the development budget for health by 25.53 percent—from Tk 16,204 crore to Tk 12,066 crore—in FY2023-24.

Considering the poor state of budget, budget implementation, and health services, it is imperative that the government finds innovative ways of financing and overhauling the health system with consultations from experts. The focus needs to shift from curative to preventive care, thus reducing our dependence on medicine, which makes up the main portion of our OPP health expenditure. Similarly, irregularities such as the mushrooming of unlicensed medical facilities must be stopped. We also must root out corruption in medical recruitment and procurement in public sector, which would help save money from the relatively meagre allocation this sector receives. All this will require astute leadership which the health ministry must be able to deliver.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Start of the Six-Day War

On this day in 1967, amid rising tensions with Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, Israel launched a pre-emptive air assault and soundly defeated those Arab countries in a war that lasted six days, notably seizing the Old City of Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip before a ceasefire.

Changing trade policy directions is imperative now

Dr Zaidi Sattar
is chairman of Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI).

ZAIDI SATTAR

The bell tolls for Bangladesh. November 24, 2026 is a historic milestone and could be a day of reckoning for the nation. Almost 50 years after it was classified by the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP) as a Least Developed Country (LDC), with the associated international support measures (ISMs) prescribed in its favour, Bangladesh will be graduating into a "developing" country under UN classification. ISMs will soon be phased out with consequent preference erosion in hitherto zero-tariff accessible markets. Tariff exemptions will soon be replaced with high tariffs that are typically imposed by most developed economies on textile products. That would mean stiffer competition for our RMG and some other exports.

No doubt, there are challenging times ahead. But resilience is instilled in our economic firmament. So economic challenges will have to be met with appropriate policy instruments that are available. The forthcoming FY2024-25 national budget must show that we mean business. Wherever we look, whether it is the tax system, banking governance or trade policy stance, the economy is crying for reforms—deep and structural, rather than cosmetic.

First, macroeconomic stability needs to be restored for the economy to return to its long-run path of stable growth. While policies for restoring internal balance is critical, i.e. moderating inflation through monetary and fiscal management, restoring sustainable external balance via exchange rate management and stabilisation of foreign exchange reserves with strong export and robust remittance inflows is just as crucial, without which macroeconomic stability could be short-lived and ephemeral.

Just as augmented revenue mobilisation in the current state of public finances warrants structural reforms of the tax regime, so too does the resurgence of the export sector, which needs to see another round of trade-oriented reforms to put our export performance back on track.

We could take a leaf out of our own book. There was a severe balance-of-payment crisis in 1990 that made fundamental trade policy reforms a *fait accompli*. But it was the trigger that unleashed the forces of rapid economic growth. It was the radical change of direction in trade policy (complemented by market orientation and deregulation) during much of the 1990s that changed the course of Bangladesh's economic history. It is now possible to make the assessment that after the first two decades of prevarication in trade policy, Bangladesh was able to change direction and get it right—at least partially so. Evidence shows that the country massively reaped the benefits of those changes in the subsequent decades, prompting a leading development economist to describe Bangladesh as a "development paragon." In my view, switching gears in trade policy in the 1990s from an inward-looking, import-substituting approach to an outward-looking, export-oriented one was the game changer.

Compared to the previous 20 years, the trade policy changes undertaken in the 1990s could be termed radical indeed, and included (a) sharp reduction and rationalisation of tariffs; (b) significant import liberalisation through removal of bans, quantitative restrictions (QRs), and import licensing (end of licence raj); (c) move from fixed to flexible exchange rates; and (d) limited convertibility of the current account. Overall, trade liberalisation during the 1990s was deep and transformative. In 2001, a seminal World Bank study on the impact of trade liberalisation on growth and poverty, titled *Trade, Growth and Poverty*, listed Bangladesh among the "globalisers" of the developing world, confirming through empirical evidence that these globalisers were experiencing rapid growth in incomes and declines in poverty.

One of the major disappointments on the economic policy front has been the lack of sustained progress in structural reforms in macroeconomic and trade policy areas. As a consequence, the external shocks of 2022 that rocked the economy have disrupted two decades of macroeconomic stability that was assiduously maintained to give the needed boost to economic growth and poverty reduction. The GDP growth averaged five to seven percent during this period, while the poverty rate fell from 57 percent in 1990 to 18.7 percent in 2022, prompting the World Bank to call Bangladesh "an inspiring story of reducing poverty"—2.5 crore lifted out of poverty in 25 years.

Developing Country
2026
LDC

VISUAL: **BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY**

With the FY2024-25 budget imminent, it is critical that policymakers reflect on the key challenges the economy faces on several fronts. As in the 1990s, the current situation warrants a radical approach to addressing some of the most critical issues of the day for restoring internal and external macroeconomic balance. While there has been a profusion of "what to do" messages from all and sundry, there is still a conspicuous void in the matter of trade policy direction to restore external balance, i.e. stabilise the balance of payments and build forex reserves. Here, while moving to a regime of exchange rate flexibility makes a good starting point, building forex reserves of the kind we have been used to will be the challenge of the decade.

Our trade policy regime suffers from at least two fundamental constraints. First, there is trade policy dualism, which essentially frames one policy for RMG exports with notable success, and another policy for the rest with little success to speak of. Second, there is persistence of anti-export bias of high tariff protection that simply makes sales in the domestic market far more profitable than exporting activity. Under this dualistic regime, we may continue to count on robust RMG export performance with little traction on the export of non-RMG products, no matter how much we improve logistics and trade facilitation processes. PRI research has revealed that numerous non-RMG exports have a high to moderate degree of competitiveness when matched with competing exporters globally, proving conclusively that competitiveness is not the stumbling block. It is logical to expect that if we have strong competitiveness in a labour-intensive product like RMG, there must be numerous other labour-intensive products like footwear, jute, cotton, specialised textiles, plastics, electronics, and light engineering that beckon for policy attention. The problem, now widely recognised, is the anti-export bias of the protection regime.

Mind you, the World Trade Organization (WTO), in its last review, noted that tariffs and para-tariff are the main instruments of Bangladesh's trade policy. That is where change must come, and now is the time—in budget or off. Persisting with a strategy of high output tariffs with input tariffs trending downwards is the prescription for taking the wind out of the sails of future export performance. Both must be rationalised together.

To build forex reserves, if the economy must resume strong export (and remittance) performance with a diversified basket of export products, it is imperative—and NOW—that we engage in another round of radical trade policy reforms and tariff rationalisation scheme, to stand shoulder to shoulder with other high-performing export economies like Vietnam, China, and Malaysia.

Our past export performance says we can. We already have a National Tariff Policy 2023 that incorporates many of the critical measures and policy directions that our trade policy needs in order to fuel both exports and their diversification. Adopting some of the measures and policies from the NTP 2023 could bring change to the trade policy firmament, moving it in the right direction. These will also facilitate our FTA negotiations, which are essentially stuck in the quagmire of our tariff structure. Will the FY2024-25 budget lay the groundwork for change?

Bangladesh's export potential has not been exhausted yet. A bright future of export success awaits us if we change trade policy direction now. A crisis always brings opportunity. This nation of over 17 crore should not be made to regret missing it this time.

Social registry won't solve selection issues

Fazley Elahi Mahmud
is a Social Protection Specialist and International consultant on Social Protection.

FAZLEY ELAHI MAHMUD

Bangladesh launched a life-cycle based social protection system following the adoption of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) in 2015 offering support to citizens in addressing the risks encountered at different stages of life, including pregnancy, early childhood, school age, working age and old age. The government has expanded coverage of social protection significantly in recent years. However, a key challenge remains in selecting the eligible persons to receive the benefits. According to 2016 Household Income and Expenditure Survey data, 46 percent of the participants were included by errors (inclusion error), while 71 percent of eligible persons were excluded from the benefits (exclusion errors).

To address selection errors, the government initiated the development of a National Household Database (NHD), which collected data of 35 million households in 2017 and 2018. However due to disruptions caused by Covid-19, the project was delayed, and the data collected became obsolete. Internationally such a database is called a "social registry" that stores poverty data and generates ranked lists of poor households for selecting the deserving participants by social protection programmes. However, it has several drawbacks that undermine its effectiveness.

Social registries often collect data through household surveys using the Proxy Means Test (PMT) method, that assigns scores to easily observable indicators considered proxies for household poverty. For instance, the NHD survey included indicators such as the number of rooms, type of roof, toilet facilities, water sources, ownership of television, ownership of land, receipt of remittance and family size. However, the correlation between these indicators and actual poverty is weak. This generated inaccurate list of eligible households particularly with high exclusion errors. A leading international think tank organisation, Development Pathways, evaluated PMT based selection outcomes of 19 programmes, revealing exclusion error rates ranging from 29 to 96 percent. Flagship cash transfer programmes of Indonesia, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Kenya excluded 82 percent, 48 percent, 73 percent, and 69 percent of eligible households, respectively. These excluded households have to wait for the next survey for reconsideration for inclusion and they will be excluded from all programmes that use the social registry. If there is no social registry, a household excluded from one programme has a chance to access another programme.

The PMT-based survey may incentivise households to engage in dishonest practices. For example, they might hide durable assets, such as a television at a relative's house, or not disclose information about receiving remittances. Thus, they can secure a favourable score to qualify for social protection, effectively being rewarded for their dishonesty. Conversely, households that honestly disclose information could be penalised by being excluded from the benefits.

Besides there is no static group as "the poor" because natural disasters, economic shocks and sickness can change poverty dynamics overnight. Family size, a key indicator in PMT method, also changes due to marriage, birth of new babies, death, divorce, split in families and so on. In Rwanda, 87 percent of households experienced changes in size just in three years from 2010/11 to 2013/14. As a result, the data in social registries become obsolete quickly, as happened for Bangladesh's NHD initiative and the social protection programmes continue to use the outdated data for years, until it is updated.

High costs discourage governments to update social registries frequently. For example, the Philippines conducted a second survey six years after the first survey in 2009. In Indonesia, no updating has been done since 2015. In Pakistan, there was a 10-years gap between two surveys. Despite the massive changes of poverty status across the world caused by Covid-19, no substantial trend of updating the social registries has been visible.

Also, there is a basic difference between Bangladesh's life cycle approach and the poverty targeted approach of social protection in terms of payment modality. Bangladesh makes social protection payments to individuals, e.g., pregnant women, disabled persons and elderly persons, recognising their rights, and valuing them as citizens. The poverty targeted programmes in countries like Indonesia, Philippines and Pakistan, make combined payments to household-representatives without considering the right to social protection and a fair distribution of benefits among household members, including disabled and elderly members. Social registries, based on household poverty data, are designed for the latter approach. Thus, it is not compatible to Bangladesh's life cycle based system.

Finally, the purpose of a social registry should not be confused with that of a Management Information System (MIS). A social registry provides data for selecting programme participants, while an MIS tracks how many people are accessing which programmmes, how many are children, women, members of marginalised groups, disabled persons, elderly persons, the amounts of benefits, the transfer schedule etc. Regardless of having a social registry, an MIS database is required to track social protection system's performance and gaps.

Despite high optimism in Bangladesh, a social registry will not solve the selection challenge in social protection. Bangladesh needs to consider a universal approach to social protection to address this challenge.

This opinion piece heavily draws on a report titled 'Social Registries: a short history of abject failure.'

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229,
Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

Newsroom: Fax- 58156306
reporting@thedailystar.net

Advertisement: 01711623910
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Subscription:
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WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Our forests are disappearing when we need them most

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Rysul Hasan
is research and documentation officer at BELA.

BAREESH CHOWDHURY *and* **RYSUL HASAN**

Bangladesh was once known for its lush greenery and biodiversity. But at present, the country faces significant challenges in preserving its forests, with the rate of deforestation almost double the global average due to land use change and human activities. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Bangladesh's forest cover is estimated to be 2.33 million hectares (15.78 percent of land), whereas the Forest Department says it is 2.57 million hectares (17.31 percent of land).

Over the past two decades, Bangladesh has witnessed a concerning loss of 8,390 hectares of humid primary forest, accounting for 3.5 percent of all tree cover depletion during this time. The country saw a significant decrease of 8.7 percent in the total area of humid primary forest.

Land use change, primarily driven by agricultural expansion, urbanisation and infrastructure development, has led to the degradation and fragmentation of forest lands in Bangladesh.

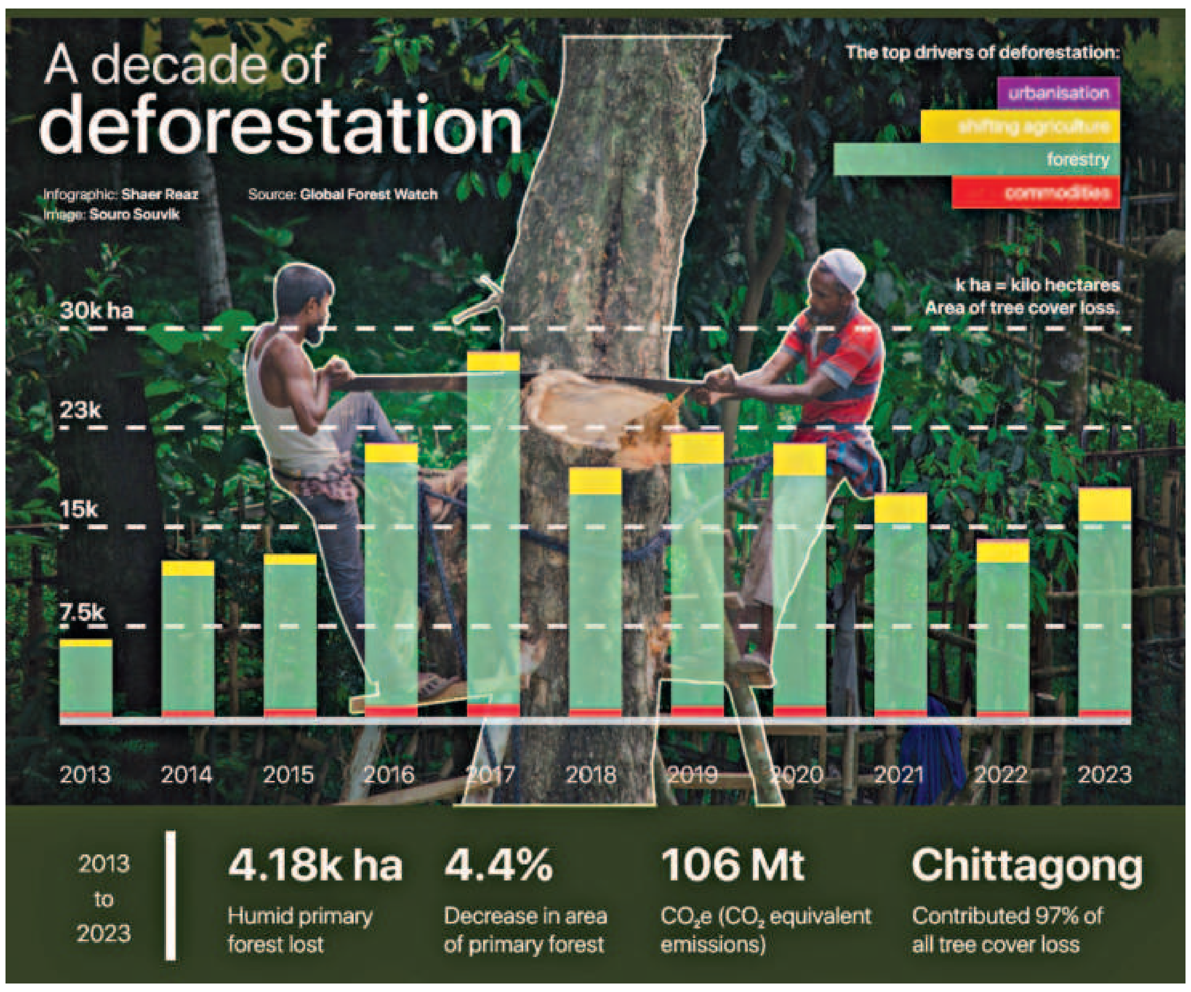
While agriculture is a cornerstone of our economy, finding a balance between agricultural productivity and forest conservation is crucial. According to a report in 1973, 9,749.98 hectares of Madhupur forest was completely covered with sal forest, whereas in 2015 the forest converted to acacia, pineapple, rubber, banana plantation, mixed forestry, agriculture and marsh, leaving only 2,671.99 hectares of actual sal forest. Initiated in 1989-1990 with ADB funding, social forestry cleared natural sal forests for exotic eucalyptus and acacia plantations of around 5,000 acres. In recent years, the Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) forests have been illegally razed for cassava farming, destroying rich biodiversity.

Social forestry initiatives, which involve planting fast-growing species like eucalyptus and acacia, aim to meet the demand for timber and fuelwood. However, these plantations are usually harvested within a short period, raising concerns about their long-term sustainability and ecological benefits compared to natural forests. These fast-growing species of trees tend to dominate their locales, preventing ecological and biodiversity balance. Eucalyptus consumes 18-20 times more water than many other species and can negatively impact the water table. In areas with more limited rainfall, such as in northern Bangladesh and along the Barind Tract, this exacerbates environmental impacts.

According to the Forest Department, social forestry in Bangladesh has caused significant ecological and social issues. From 1981 to 2022, as many as 105,283 hectares of woodlot plantations and 78,832 kilometres of strip plantations were established, predominantly with harmful exotic species such as eucalyptus and acacia. Fundamentally with social forestry, these are trees being planted to be cut down. This cannot possibly be a replacement for the protection of our natural forests and, as such, the modality of social forestry must be rethought.

Development projects have emerged as a major threat to the conservation of our forests. Too often, forest land is seen as expendable and lucrative when allocating for large development projects, running contrary to environmental obligations. The development agenda has not as yet integrated sustainability and conservation into its ethos. Adverse environmental impacts are seen as unavoidable in the pursuit of economic growth.

The Chattogram-Cox's Bazar rail link, a major government project, threatens forests and wildlife habitats despite its benefits to communication and transportation infrastructure. Spanning 101km, the railway passes through Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, Fasiakhali Wildlife Sanctuary, and Medhkachapia National Park, home to endangered species like Asian elephants. Despite plans of underpasses and overpasses for the elephants' movement, experts and officials believe this is inadequate. It has been reported that the project cut over 720,000 trees and razed parts of 26 hills. The construction severely impacted wildlife, exacerbating human-wildlife conflicts. Repeated protests from forest authorities, local and national activists have been ignored. All this destruction for a train which Bangladesh Railways DG Sardar Shahadat Ali said "is not a regular train," and many have alleged is being disrupted by lobbying by bus owners.



INFOGRAPHIC: **SHAER REAZ**

While the government committed to increasing forest land to 20 percent of total landmass, every year forest cover decreases and land is lost to government projects. In 2019, the environment ministry said almost 160,000 acres of forest land had been handed over to various government agencies or used for development projects. At least 22 projects taken up by the government and deemed important for the nation are on forest land between Mirsharai of Chattogram and Teknaf of Cox's Bazar. Most of the Mirsharai mangrove forest has been leased out to Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (BEZA). These coastal mangrove forests are important protective barriers to salinity and other dangers, including natural disasters like cyclones which batter our coastal districts every year.

To stem the tide of deforestation, we need adequate administrative and legal platforms to prevent it. But as of now, we have neither.

The public forests are governed by the Forest Act, 1927, a colonial era legislation which, typical of its age, considers forests largely as a source of revenue for the government. The objectives of the law are not necessarily primarily preoccupied with conservation, but rather with protection of capital forest resources and penalties for damages and theft of said resources. In fact, it could go as far as to be said that the 1927 law lacks a conservation mandate. It does not define conservation, nor are there provisions for the specific conservation needs based on the type of forest, nor does it equip the state to deal with unique conservation challenges.

While the law was promulgated to regulate access to the forest areas, we have seen unprecedented numbers of encroachments on forest areas with the government having no answer. Forest areas are often not clearly demarcated, with land disputes obstructing government actions to conserve forests. Negligence and a lack of capacity also play a major role here. BELA Chief Executive Syeda Rizwana Hasan says, "Conservation being a management approach that requires affirmative actions also is not something the Act of 1927 has been able to promote. In dealing with the responsibilities of the forest officials, the Act fails to require them to develop management plans in consideration of the uniqueness of a forest ecosystem."

In 2023, two new forest laws were set to be passed in order to change the trajectory of forest loss. The Forest Bill, 2023 was set to replace the Forest Act, 1927, seemingly granting additional powers to conserve the forest, although sceptics have said it does not change enough to meet the need of the day. The Forest Conservation Bill, 2023 would go even further beyond forest lands. Saber Hossain Chowdhury, the current environment minister, highlighted that "globally, forests are no longer regarded as a source of government revenue," and encouraged that the focus has to change from revenue to conservation. Unfortunately, neither legislation has been made into law.

The Forest Department, which is the primary government agency overseeing the maintenance and protection of forests and wildlife in Bangladesh, lacks transparency and capacity. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) in 2020 found that a "lack of 'effective' oversight and monitoring of activities at all levels and lack of accountability contributes to the institutionalisation of forest sector-centric corruption". They also found that the Forest Department was passive in the face of environmentally devastating projects like coal-fired power plants and illegal occupation, which exacerbated the damage being done. Too often, the department lacks the standing to face up to land administration and other government agencies.

Desertification does not appear to be an immediate threat, but on World Environment Day, it is worth remembering that it is not an impossibility in Bangladesh. Especially in the northwest, in the Barind Tract, desertification is an emerging issue of concern. We often like to sell our vulnerability in the face of the climate crisis, but at the same time, not enough action is taking place in the country to protect our own environment. With the rapid rate of deforestation, at a time when we need to be consolidating our natural forests, we are instead losing them in the blink of an eye. We must immediately recognise the crucial role of our forests in acting as protective barriers against climate doom. And we then must thank our protectors and support them, building them up rather than cutting them down.

When law enables environmental damage

Mohammad Golam Sarwar
is a PhD researcher on climate law and alternative development at SOAS, University of London. He is also an assistant professor (on study leave) at the Department of Law in the University of Dhaka.

MOHAMMAD GOLAM SARWAR

Remarkably, Bangladesh has more than 200 environmental protection laws. Yet, our environment and natural resources continue to see unprecedented pollution, encroachment, and degradation. Being one of the countries that are most vulnerable to climate change, the way and at the scale that the country's natural resources are being exploited is immensely worrying.

Despite laws designed to protect the environment growing in number, their implementation continues to see a striking failure. The core problematic aspect of these laws is that they are designed to protect and benefit humans, not the environment within which humans live. By disaggregating humans from nature and enabling them to exploit natural resources to fulfil their needs, environmental laws have ended up legitimising and rationalising the destruction of natural resources and the degradation of the environment.

To provide context, let's take the example of the Environment Conservation Act, 1995, considered as one of the key laws in Bangladesh. A close reading of some of this law's provisions reveals its pivotal role in legitimising environmental destruction and producing and sustaining harmful practices that contribute to the creation and perpetuation of unjust environmental conditions.

The law reflects an "injury-therapy" model by allowing the degradation of the environment (injury) on the one hand, and restricting the detrimental activities to the environment (healing therapy) on the other hand. The law prohibits the cutting or razing of any type of hills and hillocks by any individual or institution. But it provides an exception allowing the Department of Environment (DoE) to issue a clearance certificate in favour of cutting or razing hills for the sake of "national interest." Similarly, the filling of reservoirs (river, canal, wetlands, etc) is prohibited, subject to an exception on the grounds of "national interest."

It is worth mentioning that the law does not provide any definition or explanation of the term "national interest." Naturally, this term, being overly broad and vague, leaves room for biased and arbitrary interpretation and provides space for manipulation. Now the question is, can the destruction of natural resources through razing mountains or filling reservoirs ever be justified in the national interest?

It is pertinent to note that the Supreme Court of Bangladesh recognised all rivers in the country as legal persons and living entities. Since the reservoir (river) is a legal entity, its loss or encroachment in the name of "national interest" is a clear violation of the apex court's ruling. While contradicting the framing of the rights of rivers and wetlands as separate living entities, the provisions also indicate how nature is treated as an object that can be tamed or exploited for satiating human needs. In this way, environmental damage is the intended outcome of a dysfunctional governance system where nature and humans do not co-exist, or only co-exist for the latter's benefits.

In addition, the provisions regarding environmental pollution and degradation are too broad, vague, and loosely defined, providing ample scope for manipulation. Further, the provision regarding the prohibition of polythene shopping bags lacks clarity and precision. Although the production, import, marketing, and sale of polythene is prohibited, its export has been allowed, which is a violation of the "no harm principle" of the overarching international environmental legal scheme. The principle requires state parties to prevent, reduce, and control the risk of environmental damage to other states. The question here is: if polyethylene is harmful for the environment in Bangladesh, will it be beneficial for other countries? Or how is it possible to export polythene bags whose production is banned? As a result, the reality is that even after all these years post so-called banning, polythene bags are sold in the market and widely used in our daily lives. Such eccentric provisions of environmental laws are not only inconsistent with international law, but also raise questions about their credibility and proper implementation.

It may be argued that the abuse of "vague and loosely defined provisions" can be checked or overcome if there remains a proper monitoring body. Here, the problem is more acute in Bangladesh. The DoE is the core authority that is entrusted to control and oversee environmental pollution and undertake environmental protection measures. In outlining the DoE's role and functions, the law empowers the body with unfettered authority without inserting any corresponding duties or obligations. To put it simply, if the DoE fails or neglects to prevent environmental degradation and pollution, there is no provision to hold the agency accountable.

VISUAL: **ANWAR SOHEL**

Apart from vague legal provisions and unaccountable institutions, the law fails to provide an effective forum to vindicate environmental harms and avail remedies against environmental crimes. Rather the concerned law provides a limited jurisdiction to the Environment Court to adjudicate environmental disputes. The Environment Court law creates a bar for general people to file complaints directly. The DoE has been made the authorised body to file cases on behalf of the aggrieved individuals. Due to such limited jurisdiction, legal bar, and lengthy procedural complexity, access to environmental justice is severely restricted which is evident from the low filing of cases to the environment courts. In the last 21 years since the creation of the Environment Court in 2003 till December 31, 2023, a total of only 587 cases have been filed to the environment courts which is an average of less than 28 cases per year.

This low frequency of environmental cases coupled with the rampant violation of the laws also indicates how the laws not only provide a restricted approach to environmental justice but also create an enabling atmosphere for environmental offenders to commit wrongs, remain unaccountable and thereby establish a culture of impunity.

It is worth mentioning that in order to address the widespread failure of the implementation of environmental law, UNEP offered an Environmental Rule of Law framework that aims to reduce the gap between environmental laws on the books and in practice. The core elements of the environmental rule of law include, among others, fair, clear and implementable environmental laws, access to environmental justice, public participation and community-based approach in environmental law-making, accountability and integrity of institutions and decision-makers, and accessible, fair, impartial, timely and responsive adjudication of environmental cases.

It goes without saying that Bangladesh's environmental law framework is inconsistent with the core elements of the environmental rule of law which requires transformative reforms through addressing the vague, inconsistent, and rather scattered legal provisions that hinder effective environmental governance. Environmental rule of law is necessary to formulate clear and just environmental laws, to build strong environmental institutions, and to improve transparency and accountability, thereby increasing trust in the institutions and fostering a culture of compliance.

The failure to enforce environmental laws not only hinders environmental objectives but also creates obstacles to ensure inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development. The unabated pollution, degradation, and damage to natural resources as well as the environment, if not prevented, will also intensify our climate crisis and multiply the burden of climate adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage. In addition, it will be difficult for us to avail of necessary grants and compensations from the international climate funds or to negotiate at the international fora unless we can ensure strong environmental governance and the rule of law at the domestic level.

DRIVING GROWTH in clean cooking solutions

Practical Action and SNV Bangladesh in collaboration with The Daily Star organised a roundtable titled "Catalysing Growth: Strategies for Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Higher-Tier Clean Cooking" on February 4, 2024. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION
Catalysing Growth: Strategies for Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Higher-Tier Clean Cooking
Date: February 04, 2024

OPENING REMARKS

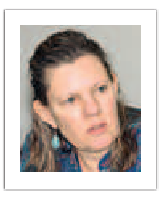
Shawkat A. Begum, *PhD, Bangladesh Country Director, Practical Action*

There is no denying the paramount importance of clean cooking for health and environmental preservation. Our focus remains on safeguarding the health of mothers and children, given the severe health and environmental ramifications of traditional cooking methods. With staggering statistics highlighting the deadly impact of indoor pollution, our collective efforts aim to transition to 100% clean cooking, aligning with government objectives as the government's national clean cooking action plan is soon to be finalised.

Our project, titled 'Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for Higher Tier Clean Cooking' (SEE-Clean Cooking), prioritises policy advocacy, awareness campaigns, and inclusive development strategies, emphasising gender equality and social inclusion. We aspire to reshape societal norms, encouraging greater male involvement in cooking. With diverse representation and a commitment to active participation, we seek collaborative solutions to ensure the success of this endeavour and provide a blueprint for future clean cooking initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote entrepreneurship, from large firms to MSMEs, to drive the adoption of advanced cooking methods.
- Challenges such as awareness gaps, affordability, and systemic barriers should be addressed to develop the adaptivity of e-cookers.
- Comprehensive community engagement is vital to reshape societal norms, encouraging greater male involvement in cooking.
- Affordability and consumer ease while using the product, along with continuous supply, ensure the sustainability of the approach.
- The government should streamline the importation process for e-cooking device materials.
- A well-designed pilot project in a particular area can be helpful in the conversion from traditional to the ultimate clean cooking system commercially.
- The effective implementation of labelling and standardisation initiatives rely significantly on the concerted efforts of stakeholders, empowering local administrators in the process.
- A precise policy is needed to define the authority that will determine the standards for Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh's energy generation must prioritise renewable energy sources over fossil fuel sources; otherwise, it will fail to fulfil the purpose of clean e-cooking.
- Offer tailored financial schemes that suit the specific needs and preferences of marginal customers.

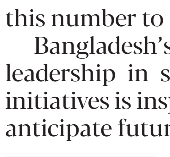


Ismène R.A.C. *Stalpers, Country Director, SNV*

Clean cooking is not just a technical shift but also represents a critical step towards a sustainable and healthier future for communities.

One important strategic aspect of the SEE Clean Cooking project is targeting and working with the commercial clean cooking sector, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), with a focus on access to finance through results-based financing (RBF) and Innovation Grants. The journey has already begun through conducting multiple workshops in three districts and engaging with stakeholders, including SREDA and local government bodies, developing partnerships under results-based financing. We have already onboarded over 19 SMEs that have access to RBF and aim to increase this number to 60

Bangladesh's commendable leadership in supporting e-cooking initiatives is inspiring, and we eagerly anticipate future collaborations.



Edwin Koekkoek, *Team Leader, Green Inclusive Development and Social Protection, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh*

Under the EU-Bangladesh cooperation, the EU has significantly increased its commitment and financial investment in climate change mitigation, with a specific focus on the energy and power sector.

Despite significant progress globally towards sustainable energy for all, a shocking reality persists: four billion people lack clean and modern cooking fuels and technologies. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Bangladesh, where the vast majority of households still rely on biomass-based cooking methods. Clean cooking technologies offer a way out, promising improvements in public health, conservation of natural resources, and mitigation of climate change.

The project aims to introduce modern cooking appliances in rural areas through innovative financing and collaboration with local stakeholders. The project rightly considers entrepreneurs a powerful force for economic development, supporting clean cooking. Growing an enabling ecosystem requires providing finance, human capital education and skills, a competitive business environment, and a transparent regulatory framework. Lastly, it is important to be inclusive, involving both the government and the private sector in collaboration.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Samir Muhammad Korban, *Project Manager, Practical Action*

The SEE Clean Cooking project is coordinated by our partners the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), who advocate for a private sector-led strategy. Our focus lies on promoting clean and affordable cooking solutions through a private-sector approach, advancing higher-tier cooking solutions in Bangladesh, like other regions across Asia and Africa.

Our main concept revolves around harnessing the entrepreneurial spirit, whether through established private sector entities or local micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), as a catalyst for economic progress in support of higher-tier cooking. Our efforts predominantly concentrate on the supply side, with a target of reaching 140,000 individuals in Faridpur, Gazipur, and Jhenaidah.

The program consists of three distinct components: pipeline development, access to finance for innovation and scale, and the cultivation of a dynamic and proactive enabling environment.

Afrida Ahmed Orthee, *Project Officer, SNV & Nusrat Zahan Fatema, Project Officer, SNV*

Result-Based Financing (RBF) is an umbrella term for a variety of financial mechanisms tied to the achievement of pre-agreed and independently verifiable outcomes. Within the principality of the clean cooking sector, RBF serves the primary purpose of driving product adoption and rapidly expanding the market reach of innovative technologies. This is achieved by empowering distributors and stakeholders to procure these appliances in bulk, mitigate associated risks, and enhance unit economics.

Since January, we have diligently pursued RBF partnerships as part of the project. We aim to establish a total of 60 partnerships with both national-level manufacturers and local MSMEs by the end of the project.

Md Mubassir Rahman, *Project Manager and Senior Business Consultant, LightCastle Partners*

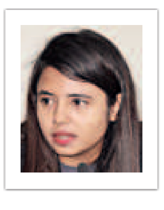
In Bangladesh, systemic challenges, especially limited household electricity capacity and high manufacturing costs, are affecting product affordability and quality. Although locally manufactured and branded products dominate the market, with after-sales services being crucial for consumers' trust, however, product quality regulations and efficiency labelling are still missing at the national level for local manufacturers. Local production affordability must be ensured if we want to set up e-cookers as the next generation solution for our clean cooking.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Moderated by Uttam Kumar Saha, *Strategic Lead, Urban & Energy, Practical Action*

Shuvasish Bhowmick, *Country Director, ATEC*

Even though e-cookers are present in the market, only one percent of people use them as their primary device. One of the main reasons behind this is the perception that the initial investment and running costs are high. Although people may perceive it as more expensive than LPG, in reality, it can save up to 45 percent costs compared to LPG. Retailers often lack knowledge about the product, and there is a lack of promotion of such features.



Rawnak Faria, *Esho Jati Gori, Faridpur*

Operating in the predominantly rural area of Faridpur presents a unique challenge, as families are often hesitant to adopt new cooking methods. However, our extensive women workforce is poised to play a crucial role in overcoming this challenge.

Md. Samiul Islam, *Head of Supply Chain Management of Home Appliance, Walton Hi-Tech Industries PLC.*

For products such as rice cookers and electric induction cookers, there lacks a comprehensive standardisation framework. Despite this, we have taken proactive steps to establish voluntary standards, including addressing electric safety protocols and advocating for certifications. We strongly urge the government to mandate these standards to ensure uniformity across the industry, enabling us and other companies to deliver products of consistent quality to consumers.

Md. Mazbah Uddin, *Manager, SCM, Kiam Metal Industries Limited*

We've initiated several educational programs. During a session with major retailers from Dhaka, we provided insights on how to effectively communicate the benefits of e-cookers to customers.

Additionally, we've taken steps to enhance customer understanding by including Bengali translations on our warranty cards, recognizing the linguistic diversity in our market. Furthermore, we've deployed maintenance personnel to assist customers facing operational challenges with e-cookers, particularly with rice and induction cookers, which are often areas of difficulty.

Utpal Bhattacharjee, *Lighting (Energy) Market Assessment Expert, CLASP*

Central to our discussion is the need for concerted efforts to accelerate the dissemination and adoption of e-cooking systems. Standardisation is a pressing issue, with two standards submitted to BSTI awaiting approval.

Without after-sale warranties or guarantees, consumer trust is compromised. Addressing these issues requires a focused policy direction.

Segment-focused strategies are essential, catering to rural, lower, middle, and higher-income groups.

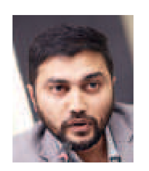
Onkar Nath, *Programme Manager, EnDev, GIZ*

Standardisation and labelling are pivotal for promoting e-cooking appliances effectively in the market. Consumers often lack awareness regarding the quality of the products they purchase, underscoring the urgency for standardised guidelines.

Over the past few years, we've collaborated with BSTI on developing these standards. Yet, there seems to be a disconnect between BSTI, the market, private sectors, and the overall development sector.

Khandakar Rashid Uz Zaman, *Retailer, Faridpur*

The design of e-cooking appliances should prioritise energy efficiency to minimise electricity consumption. In rural areas, affordability is a critical issue, and efforts should be made to ensure that e-cooking is more economical than existing systems. Crafting pricing strategies to make these appliances accessible in villages will encourage widespread adoption.



Mostafa Kamal, *Chief Business Officer, Walton Home and Kitchen Appliances*

To successfully execute this project, consider these five key points. Firstly, ensure your products are readily available in the market. Secondly, focus on creating a distinct market presence. Thirdly, establish effective awareness campaigns to enhance product visibility. Fourthly, maintain a competitive edge by offering high-quality products at a reasonable price. Lastly, prioritise post-sale services, aiming to assist within 72 hours.

SPEECHES

Siddique Zobair, *Ex-Additional Secretary and Member, Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources*

There is a persisting confusion regarding which authority will decide on the minimum standard for cooking stoves. Besides BSTI, there already exists an internationally accepted tier-based standard for cooking stoves. Moreover, the issue at hand is determining which tier will be designated as the minimum standard for Bangladesh.

The creation of demand, as well as ensuring the supply of standard products at an affordable price in an acceptable manner, is very crucial. From the government side, there are several scopes to work with stakeholders such as NBR to minimize the financial burden of importing materials for e-cooking devices.

If the country produces all its electricity from coal, then it cannot be considered a source of clean e-cooking. Being environmentally friendly, a solar thermal cooker can be an appropriate option for accommodating e-cooking methods. However, a significant challenge lies in its high price, bulky size, as well as the requirement for additional solar panel equipment. Nonetheless, as the product enters the market development phase and undergoes commercial production, we anticipate a substantial price reduction.

Dr Bianca van der Kroon, *Programme Manager SEE-Clean Cooking, Department of International Development, Netherlands Enterprise Agency*

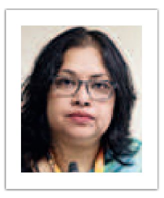
The need for access to clean cooking technologies is a global one. Relying on traditional, biomass-based cooking methods presents many challenges, including indoor air pollution, health risks, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, etc. With Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for Clean Cooking - SEE Clean Cooking, RVO has launched a private-sector approach to promote clean, affordable cooking solutions. Under this, the Higher Tier Cooking Component (HTCC) is a 5-year programme that aims to further strengthen the supply side of the clean cooking sector. It does this by helping small and medium-sized enterprises improve their business operations, get access to finance for scale and innovation and by helping build an enabling environment in support of clean cooking. HTCC aims to reach 600,000 people in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Uganda.

RVO is very pleased to see the formal launch of the HTCC programme in Bangladesh. We are confident that the Bangladesh team will continue to work closely with the private sector, the government and other relevant organisations to support a sustainable market for e-cooking appliances.

Nirod Chandra Mondal, *Joint Secretary, Renewable Energy Wing, Power Division, Ministry of Power Energy and Mineral Resources*

We are currently working towards the ambitious goal outlined by our esteemed Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, during COP26: achieving 40 percent of our energy from renewable sources by 2041. This commitment not only holds promise for sustainable energy but also presents a significant opportunity to transition to clean cooking systems. With approximately 80 percent of our population residing in rural areas, harnessing solar energy for cooking purposes emerges can be a compelling solution.

A well-designed pilot project could serve as a blueprint for a scalable business model. By evaluating the outcomes of transitioning all cooking stoves to e-cooking and subsequently to clean cooking in a specific area, we can gain insights into the mechanisms involved in moving from traditional to ultimately clean cooking systems.



Tazeen Hossain, *Head of Programme Delivery and Operations, Practical Action*

On behalf of SEE-Clean Cooking Bangladesh, I would like to thank everyone for driving an insightful discussion and making this roundtable event a success.

We believe that a collaborative approach from different stakeholders like the private sector, the government, local entrepreneurs, policy experts, etc., is critical to ensure the progress of clean cooking technologies in Bangladesh. Thus, the diverse representation here today is a notable step towards the right direction.

Tanjim Ferdous, *In-Charge, NGOs & Foreign Missions, Business Development Team, The Daily Star*

The Daily Star consistently covers environmental issues, recognising the pressing challenge of the climate crisis. Through our reports and opinion pieces, we strive to raise awareness among people about ongoing environmental issues. Our ultimate goal is to contribute to a greener planet for future generations.

Star
SPORT
DHAKA WEDNESDAY JUNE 5, 2024, JAISHTHA 22, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

Nagorik TV and Star Sports 1,2,3
T20 World Cup
India vs Ireland
Live from 8:30 pm
PNG vs Uganda
Live from 5:30 am (Thursday)

Sony Sports 2,3,5
French Open
Quarterfinals
Live from 3:00 pm

Sony Sports 1
FIFA friendly
Denmark vs Sweden
Live from 11:00 pm
France vs Luxembourg
Live from 1:00 am (Thursday)

Lankans' loss gives Tigers 'ray of hope'

SPORTS REPORTER

Back in 2007, Bangladesh's journey in T20 World Cups had started with a bang with the Tigers notching up a convincing win over the West Indies in their opening match of the tournament in South Africa.

But eight editions in, that win over West Indies remains Bangladesh's only victory over a higher-ranked team in the tournament, a fact that aches one of the chief architects of that victory: former captain Mohammad Ashraful.

"Comparing the way associate teams like the USA, Canada, Papua New Guinea have played, I feel that Bangladesh have regressed in T20s," Ashraful told The Daily Star.

"We still don't understand the rhythm of the format. Our only T20 tournament is the BPL [Bangladesh Premier League], which also is not up to standard. The associates mostly play T20s and are quickly improving."

Bangladesh are days away from starting their ninth edition of the T20 World Cup and their prospects aren't looking too good.

The Najmul Hossain Shanto-led side are heading into the tournament on the back of an embarrassing 2-1 series defeat against the USA last month and a 60-run defeat against India in a warm-up match.

The Tigers will begin their campaign on June 8 against Sri Lanka, who lost to South Africa on Monday.

Sri Lanka will be under pressure as another defeat will put their Super 8 chances under serious threat.

But to capitalise on Sri Lanka's vulnerability, he Tigers first have to play to their potential, feels Ashraful.

"The team is eally short of confidence. They have not been able to play to their potential at all. Bangladesh's lack of options has also become really apparent. We don't have enough options in T20s. We are continuing with the same options from 2021-22, even though they haven't clicked.

"Realistically, Bangladesh's chances of progressing to the next phase are very slim. The only ray of hope for them is that Sri Lanka have lost their opening game, after losing to Netherlands in a warm-up match, and are under pressure. They have a chance to capitalise on that."

Unlike most ICC events, where pitches are usually of a sporting nature, there have been a variety of pitches on display in the first few matches of the T20 World Cup.

Ashraful feels that teams cannot hope to play the same way in all pitches this time, and senses that a few upsets may be on the horizon.

"The pitches this time are not like the ones we usually see in ICC events. Teams can't succeed playing typical T20 cricket -- they will have to assess the pitch first and then play accordingly. It seems that ICC's plans of using T20s to spread cricket around the world is working. The associates are showing great improvement. I expect to see a few upsets in the World Cup," he concluded.

India skipper Rohit Sharma leads the pack in training as the Men in Blue start their T20 World Cup campaign against Ireland at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York today. India have a 100 percent win record against Ireland, having won all seven previous matches, including a win in the 2009 T20 World Cup. PHOTO: BCCI

India face potential banana skin fixture

AGENCIES

Sceptics call them 'old wine in new bottle' but a clutch of superstar Indian cricketers would leave no stone unturned to break away from their archaic template when they take on a plucky Ireland in their opening game of the T20 World Cup in New York on Wednesday.

The team knows that it is a touch undercooked with a lot of confusion still persisting about what could be the best combination on a drop-in virgin strip. As is clear from the games so far, scoring won't be a walk in the park like it was during the Indian Premier League the last couple of months.

But the bigger concern is the baggage of being favourites who don't really make it count in the end.

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have individually laid their hands on global silverware but an assortment of some other 'once in generation' cricketers, including Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja, have not and they would be eager to finally lift one.

The most poignant sight of last year's ODI World Cup was a forlorn Rohit, after the final, desperately trying to hide his welled-up eyes from the TV cameras as he quietly climbed the steps of the Narendra Modi Stadium dressing room.

There was also Kohli, who after scoring those 765 invaluable runs, could only get a fleeting blank gaze towards the podium where the trophy was kept.

The best players sometimes don't add up to become the best team and while India have put faith in their most experienced lot, it can't be simply wished away that this current batch has faltered at the final two hurdles way too many times.

At 37, this could safely be termed as Rohit's last World Cup in the white-ball format as one doesn't have to be Nostradamus to predict that he won't be around for the next T20 World Cup in India and the 50-over World Cup in South Africa in 2027.

A very gutsy Irish team with some quality T20 players like Paul Stirling, Josh Little, Harry Tector, Andy Balbirnie, awaits India in the lung-opener.

On a slow track and a sub-standard outfield at the Nassau County ground, how India plays against Irish left-arm spinner George Dockrell will be interesting.

Where India hold the advantage is their spinners who are way better compared to what the Irish team have though the pace attack, aside from Bumrah, looks a bit weak in absence of the redoubtable Mohammed Shami.

Often having too many options isn't the best option just like Indians have at the top. To fit in skipper Rohit and team's most elite batter in Kohli, they have to probably sacrifice Yashasvi Jaiswal.

Rishabh Pant's batting at No.3 in the practice game was like a breath of fresh air and Hardik Pandya's bowling form will indicate how India fares in this competition.

Like earlier days, Ireland aren't exactly a minnow in this format and very recently, they have beaten Pakistan in their own den in the run-up to the World Cup.

Little has more than little experience of playing IPL for Gujarat Titans and the troika of Balbirnie, Stirling and Tector can more than chance their arms.

The 'Green Shirts' will be the banana peel that Rohit and his men can ill-afford to slip on before they meet the more famous 'Green Jerseys' at the weekend.

- India have won all seven of their meetings in T20Is against Ireland, including an eight-wicket victory in the 2009 T20 World Cup – the only meeting between the two sides in the major event.
- India skipper Rohit Sharma is 26 runs away from reaching 4,000 runs in T20Is. He will become only the third player to reach the milestone after Virat Kohli (4037) and Babar Azam (4023).
- Andy Balbirnie has scored 156 runs – the most in India-Ireland contests – at a strike-rate of 138.05. Meanwhile, India's wrist-spin dup Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal have taken the most number of wickets – seven each – amongst players from both sides.

T20 World Cup Corner

ICC criticised for 'spicy' New York pitch
The ICC is receiving flak from former cricketers, analysts and fans for the playing conditions at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York, which hosted the low-scoring South Africa-Sri Lanka Group D match of the ICC T20 World Cup yesterday.

Sri Lanka unhappy with 'unfair' travel schedule
Sri Lanka players and management are unhappy with their 'unfair' travel schedule in the ICC T20 World Cup, where they are one of only two teams alongside the Netherlands who will be playing their four group-stage matches in four different venues.

Green ready to 'plug holes' for Australia
Australia all-rounder Cameron Green says he is ready to bat up and down the order at the ICC T20 World Cup after being utilised in several roles during the Indian Premier League.

Salt eyes 'full circle' title run in homecoming tournament
Phil Salt was in Barbados to watch England win the ICC Men's T20 World Cup back in 2010. He was living there. The hard-hitting opener returns to the country that helped make him, looking to cap off a full circle title tilt with England.

*Read full stories on The Daily Star website

Djokovic out of French Open with knee injury

AFP, *Paris*

Novak Djokovic withdrew from the French Open ahead of his quarter-final against Casper Ruud due to a knee injury suffered in the previous round, tournament organisers announced on Tuesday.

"Due to a torn medial meniscus in his right knee (discovered during an MRI scan performed today), Novak Djokovic... has been forced to withdraw from the Roland Garros tournament," organisers said in a statement.

World number one and 24-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic was due to play Ruud on Wednesday for a place in the last four. Djokovic defeated Ruud in last year's final at Roland Garros.

The 37-year-old Djokovic had cast doubt over his fitness following Monday's five-set win over Francisco Cerundolo, admitting he needed anti-inflammatory drugs to get through the match.

Djokovic blamed the "slippery" Philippe Chatrier court for the injury he sustained early in the second set of his 6-1, 5-7, 3-6, 7-5, 6-3 victory over Cerundolo.

"I don't know what will happen tomorrow or after tomorrow if I'll be able to step out on the court and play. You know, I hope so. Let's see what happens," Djokovic said after the match.

Mbappe arrival ignites Madrid fans and press

AFP, *Madrid*

Kylian Mbappe's long-awaited arrival at Real Madrid sparked joyous reactions in the Spanish press and amongst the club's fans on Tuesday, though the French superstar will know he must live up to his billing on the pitch.

The official announcement of the 15-times Champions League winners' latest star signing on Monday was a seismic event in Madrid. After seven years of rumour and anticipation, Mbappe had finally landed at the "club of (his) dream".

"What you dreamed of", proclaimed the front page of Marca, alongside a photo edit of Mbappe wearing a Madrid shirt, in response to the 25-year-old's social media post in which he referred to the move as "a dream come true".

MARCA
LO QUE SOÑASTE
as
POR FIN MBAPPÉ

"Mbappe at last", said sports daily AS, who went on to celebrate "another galactico" in Real's stable, following on from the much-heralded signings of Zinedine Zidane, David Beckham, Luis Figo and Cristiano Ronaldo earlier in the 21st century.

Popular radio station Cadena COPE called Mbappe "the cherry on the cake many years in the making thanks to the fantastic management" of Real president Florentino Perez.

Madrid legend Iker Casillas took to social media to welcome Mbappe to "the best club in the world", adding: "The path to 16 (Champions League trophies) begins with you."

Outside the club's official store in central Madrid, Zein Mroueh, a 52-year-old French fan, believes that Mbappe "has come at the right time", but that "he's going to have to hit the ground running because he's entering another stage of his life".

Despite the glowing reception he has so far received, Mbappe will be under no illusions that he must back up his reputation as one of the world's best players on the pitch in front of the Madrid faithful.

"He's a great recruit, an immense player. But here, he will be just another player in Real's great history," Luis Caceres, president of the Penas federation (Real's supporters' groups) told AFP.

"With what happened two years ago, when he decided to extend his contract with Paris Saint-Germain, Kylian needs to know that he'll have his work cut out for him. When will he be forgiven? When he shows us on the pitch that he's now at the club he loves," added Caceres.

Reigning champion Iga Swiatek spreads her arms in celebration after winning her French Open quarterfinal match against Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova on Court Philippe-Chatrier at the Roland Garros on Tuesday. The Polish star thrashed the Wimbledon champion 6-0, 6-2 to set up a last-four showdown with American third seed Coco Gauff. PHOTO: X

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Shimana passes away at 39, showbiz mourns tragic loss

Model and actress Rista Laboni Shimana breathed her last yesterday at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), succumbing to severe complications from a brain haemorrhage at the age of 39. The talented artiste, who rose to fame through the 2006 Lux-Channel i Superstar competition, left behind two children, eight-year-old Shreshtho, and three-year-old Sworgo.

ZAHID AKBAR

The heartbreaking scene at the Channel i building around noon saw Shimana's children innocently playing near a condolence book, unaware their mother's untimely demise had forever altered their lives. "Look, Mom has come. Let's go and see her, Sworgo," Shreshtho remarked as the ambulance carrying his mother's remains arrived. Little did they know, this would be the last time they ever saw her.

A little distance away, we could hear the heartbreaking cries of a devastated mother. She was still numb from the loss of her daughter. Unable to control her emotions, she hugged Salahuddin Lavlu and wept inconsolably. She couldn't grasp losing her daughter at such a young age. "I really can't believe she is gone just like that. Why did it have to be her?" she sobbed, tears rolling down her cheeks. Her trembling hands clutched her daughter's photo, unable to comprehend the tragedy.

Shimana's colleague, director Salahuddin Lavlu, lamented, "She messaged me a month ago, saying she wanted to return to work. I told her I wasn't working on anything at that moment but would let her know as soon as I started something new. Now, I will never be able to cast her, as she has left us too soon." Lavlu had directed Shimana in the acclaimed drama ***Sakin Sarisuri***, which brought her widespread recognition for her role as Kakoli.

Actor Chanchal Chowdhury expressed his condolences on his social media, stating, "Shimana... You've crossed from life into the realm of death...! May you find eternal peace in the infinite beyond. Our hearts ache with sorrow for you. Countless memories linger...!"

Director Chayanika Chowdhury shared a photo of the late actress' children, captioning, "I'm at a loss for words...My heartfelt prayers go out to the two children. May she find peace in the afterlife, and may the One above watch over her children. I pray that all motherless children around the world find comfort, care, and happiness."

The talented actress emerged in the entertainment industry through the 2006 Lux-Channel i Superstar contest. In addition to her television work, she made her silver screen debut in Tauquir Ahmed's film ***Daruchini Dwip***. In terms of her recent work, she appeared in Biplob Haider's ***Roshni*** last year, playing the role of a journalist, after a six-year break due to family commitments.

Shimana's battle began around two weeks ago as she suddenly fell ill on the night of May 21. Around 11:30pm, she was rushed to a private hospital in Dhanmondi, where it was discovered that she had suffered from a brain haemorrhage. The following day, she was transferred to another hospital in Dhanmondi for better treatment. Eventually, on doctors' advice, she was admitted to the National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospital in the capital's Agargaon, where she underwent brain surgery on May 25.

Despite undergoing surgery, her condition remained critical, leading to her transfer to the BSMMU, where she was put on life support last Wednesday (May 29). Tragically, she passed away around 6am yesterday.

The first *janaza* was held at 12:30pm at the Channel i building on the same day. She was laid to rest at her family graveyard in Nakla upazila, Sherpur, later in the evening.

As the nation mourns the devastating loss of the 39-year-old's talent and vibrant spirit, Shimana's colleagues and loved ones struggle to come to terms with her tragic and untimely passing, ensuring her legacy lives on.

Actor Chanchal Chowdhury expressed his condolences on his social media, stating, "Shimana... You've crossed from life into the realm of death...! May you find eternal peace in the infinite beyond. Our hearts ache with sorrow for you. Countless memories linger...!"

PHOTOS: **COLLECTED**

Arjun Rampal to walk on ramp in Dhaka this month

Bollywood heartthrob Arjun Rampal is set to visit Dhaka this month, after 14 years. The actor, known for his fantastic performance and charismatic personality, has impressed audiences worldwide and made a name for himself.

Arjun Rampal will be in Dhaka on June 7 to attend the upcoming fashion show titled ***BHN Experiences Presents Blue Drops by Zurhem***.

Zurhem announced the news on their social media with a personalised video from the actor, confirming that he will be walking the runway in Dhaka this month.

This event is being exclusively organised for Zurhem's loyal and frequent customers, and attendees must register to attend the fashion show.

Sabina Yasmin returns home after months of treatment abroad

Legendary singer Sabina Yasmin has returned to Bangladesh after undergoing treatment for three and a half months at Singapore General Hospital.

The singer arrived back in Dhaka on May 31 and is currently recuperating at her home.

Recently, a family source confirmed to the media that the singer's health is stable. However, she will need to return to Singapore later this month for regular medical check-ups.

Yasmin initially travelled to Singapore last February for a routine medical examination. During the check-up, doctors discovered a dental issue, necessitating surgery on February 7.

NEWS

Tigers' injury woes in WC continue

FROM PAGE 12

The pacer went through the grind in an indoor session on Monday, trying to get back his rhythm.

While Bangladesh Cricket Board's medical department were hopeful of Taskin's recovery when talking to The Daily Star earlier last month, there may be a risk involved in Taskin pushing himself too far. Fellow quick Shoriful Islam, meanwhile, is unlikely to play the Sri Lanka fixture after having injured his bowling hand during the warm-up fixture against India on June 1 and needed six stitches afterwards.

Bangladesh's batting has already been under fire in recent series, and with the most promising among the three departments in the Tigers' dugout still in doubt for World Cup games, the backup options would also be kept ready. Bar Hasan Mahmud, there are no other options for the recovering speedsters.

Given Bangladesh's first two World Cup matches are against Sri Lanka and South Africa, failure to win any of those two affairs can make or break their tournament, leading to certain elimination from the first round.

Meanwhile, criticism of wickets and grounds in the USA has been a big talking point among experts. Whereas Canada and the USA played out a high-scoring game in Dallas, the venue for Bangladesh's first game, Sri Lanka were thumped by South Africa in New York where the ground was inadequately prepared and the wicket made for a low-scoring affair. Cricket commentator Harsha Bhogle went as far as saying that cricket will not gain ground in the USA, with playing surfaces and outfields of that quality.

There are plenty of questions for the tournament organisers to answer in this regard. However, with wickets unlikely to alter in the next few days, Bangladesh are faced with multiple hurdles as they seek to regain lost confidence.

Benazir may not appear

FROM PAGE 12

IGP and his family had left the country.

On May 28, the ACC issued a notice to Benazir Ahmed and his family for interrogation over the allegations that he amassed illegal wealth through corruption. According to the notice, Benazir Ahmed was summoned on June 6, his wife Zeeshan Mirza and two daughters on June 9.

Sources said, considering how things stand, it is unlikely that Benazir Ahmed will appear before the ACC for questioning tomorrow.

Meanwhile, Benazir's lawyers did not provide any information about the whereabouts of the former IGP and his family and refrained from commenting on whether he will appear before the ACC.

Sources at immigration police confirmed to The Daily Star that Benazir Ahmed and her family members left for Singapore on a Singapore Airlines flight on the night of May 4.

A reliable source close to Benazir said that Benazir went to Singapore with some of his wife's medical documents. However, he did not confirm whether Benazir is currently in Singapore or any other country.

Moreover, it is uncertain how the corruption charges against Benazir will proceed as he is not in the country.

Speaking on the issue, ACC Chairman Mohammad Moinuddin Abdullah told The Daily Star, "We have requested him [Benazir] to submit a statement on the corruption allegations raised against him. He is expected to come and speak on his behalf. That is what we are hoping for."

"We don't really know where he is right now. We have not issued any travel ban against him or any of his family members," he added.

"The investigation team is probing allegations of corruption against Benazir Ahmed. If they think they need to summon him again to get his statement, they can do so. The investigation committee is completely independent."

The murder plan

FROM PAGE 1

In his statement, Tanvir further said the killing was planned as per the instructions of Aktaruzzaman, who had been in India for some time and then returned to Bangladesh.

The last meeting, which firmed up the murder plan, was held at a restaurant named "O2" near the Kolkata Airport, in the presence of Aktaruzzaman. He is now in the USA, court sources said.

Amanullah, Mostafizur Rahman, Jihad Howlader, Tanvir, and Siam, among others, were present at the meeting.

About how the lawmaker was lured, the sources said Tanvir had assured Azim that arrangements were made to pay back all the dues of his business.

On Monday, another arrestee, Celesty Rahman, confessed before the court.

Meanwhile, a Bangladesh police team, which went to Nepal on June 1 following information that another suspect, Siam Hossain, was arrested, returned home yesterday. Nepal police arrested Siam, acting up on Bangladesh's alert.

However, there are complications in bringing back Siam due to the absence of an extradition treaty between Bangladesh and Nepal.

Siam might be handed over to India instead, where a murder case was also filed against him for the lawmaker's killing, sources said.

Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (DB) of DMP, who led the police team in Nepal, yesterday said both countries (India and Bangladesh) have the same intention in this regard.

"We are exchanging information. Whether Nepal hands over the accused to India or to us, there will be no problem in the investigation. The Indian police team came to interrogate the three arrestees – Aktaruzzaman, Celesty, and Tanvir -- in Bangladesh, while we went to India to interrogate Jihad Howlader."

He further said that Siam was close to the mastermind Aktaruzzaman.

"If Kolkata police gets Siam in its custody, it will be very helpful in getting more evidence. We'll also get the chance to interrogate him ourselves."

Addressing reporters at the airport, Harun said Siam went to Nepal via Muzaffarabad after abducting and killing the lawmaker in Kolkata, adding that MP Azim's phone was activated in Muzaffarabad as Siam used it to make some calls.

He further said they have received important information and footage from Kathmandu Police about Siam, which will be useful in the investigation.

Benazir, Aziz have nothing to do

FROM PAGE 12

"Who had created former IGP Shamsul Huda and SP Kohinur?" he said.

Quader said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir might have forgotten that his party's acting chief is a convict on the run.

On the other hand, Hasina is well-known at home and abroad as an honest politician, and there is no scope for raising question about her honesty, he said.

The AL general secretary said Khaleda has been sentenced on corruption charges and she can receive treatment at home as her jail term has been suspended due to the generosity of the prime minister.

"This BNP is now talking about corruption and money laundering," Quader said.

He said BNP is now trying to portray their corrupt convicted leader Tarique Rahman as a good person.

Quader said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (SHUJAN) and BNP make comments in the same tone. "Are TIB and SHUJAN the B-team of BNP?"

The meeting was moderated by Dhaka City North AL General Secretary SM Mannan Kachi, with its President Sheikh Bazlur Rahman in the chair.

Flood situation worsens further

FROM PAGE 12

Floodwater enters the city through drains and canals as the rivers surrounding the city are overflowing, said Sajlu Lashkar, public relations officer of Sylhet City Corporation.

Amid this situation, Zakiganj and Kanaighat upazila parishads go to polls today.

"The flooded polling stations have been changed. We have taken all-out preparations to hold the elections," said Returning Officer Imrul Hasan, who is an additional district magistrate of Sylhet.

Meanwhile in Sunamganj, hundreds of people have been affected by the flood in the district. Many roads have been submerged, disrupting communications, said locals.

14-party allies vent anger

FROM PAGE 1

and corruption, for which the government is to ultimately blame, they said.

"Since Awami League alone is in power, why should the partners take responsibility for the government's misdeeds?" one partner asked.

Top leaders of several allies also expressed their frustration over the government's inaction and silence about market manipulation and corruption, especially in the banking sector, when the culprits are already identified.

The meeting was held at Amu's Eskaton residence in the capital. It was a follow-up meeting after AL chief Sheikh Hasina, also the prime minister, sat with them on May 23.

At the beginning of the meeting, Amu informed the AL's plan to go for united programmes to counter anti-state and anti-government propaganda, but the alliance partners rejected the idea, said meeting sources.

After the meeting, Amu told reporters that there were some confusions among some alliance partners, and that they will organise joint programmes after "resolving the disputes".

In response to Amu's proposal for joint programmes at the meeting, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu, Jatiya Party (Manju) Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju and Tarikat Federation Chairman Syed Nazibul Bashar Maizvandari said they do not even know how the AL view this partnership.

They added that they now wonder whether the alliance exists anymore or whether it is relevant now.

AL leaders are now raising questions about the partners' organisational strength and vote bank, but the alliance was formed out of a political necessity, and that AL termed the alliance its "ideological" partners, they said.

Inu alleged that candidates from the 14-party were not allowed to win in the January 7 national election as part of a pre-planned strategy.

AL shared only seven seats with its three partners in the election, down from 16 in the 2018 polls.

Maizvandari demanded an explanation as to why the partners were not offered their desired seats and what problem would the AL have had if some of the partners won some seats.

He said they are aware how the election was conducted and how many of the AL candidates actually won the election, according to meeting sources.

Some 14-party leaders told Amu that the AL is now seeking to go for joint programmes since the government is facing some difficulties on multiple fronts, but they will be "thrown aside" again once the crisis is over.

Manju, a seven-time lawmaker from Pirojpur-2, said he was defeated by a so-called AL independent candidate, whose family had questionable roles during the 1971 war, through use of police force.

"Awami League always talks about the spirit of the Liberation War, but in many cases its activities don't match its claims," he said.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader is expected to sit with the alliance partners on June 12 in efforts to bridge the gap.

Pressure

FROM PAGE 12

Biden added that he had a "major disagreement" with Netanyahu over the post-conflict future of Gaza, and said Israel had engaged in "inappropriate" conduct during the offensive.

But for now, the Gaza offensive raged on unabated yesterday, with the Israeli military reporting more air and artillery strikes and ground combat against Hamas, and Palestinians bemoaning more civilian deaths.

Overnight bombardment hit targets in Gaza City and the southern Rafah area, said AFP reporters and witnesses.

Four bodies were retrieved from a bombed house in the Bureij camp in central Gaza, and three more from the rubble of a destroyed building in Gaza City, Gaza's civil defence agency said.

Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip has killed at least 36,550 Palestinians and wounded 82,959 since October 7, the Palestinian enclave's health ministry said yesterday. A total of 71 Palestinians have been killed and 182 wounded in the past 24 hours, the ministry said in a statement.

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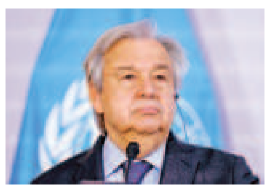
Exports slide 16% to $4.07b in May
B1

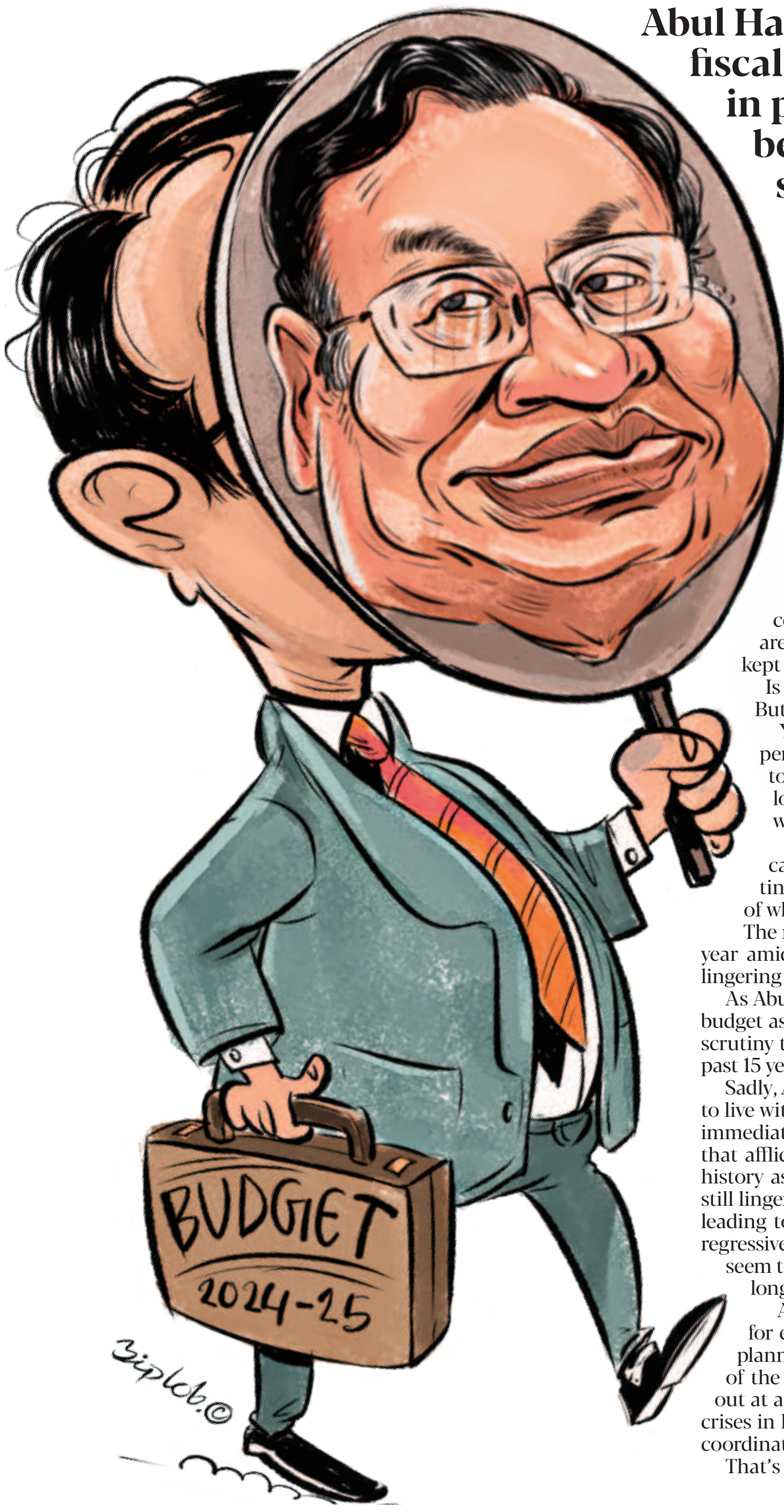
Govt alone felled over 7 lakh trees last year
P3


World on 'highway to climate hell', says UN chief
P7

Babar and Co take on charged-up USA
P11

A wounded economy, another perilous year

Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali unveils fiscal goals in his maiden budget in parliament today. Will he be able to fix the precarious state of the economy?



ARUN DEVNATH

It's not the best of times. It's not the season of light. The future will tell whether it's the period of Dickensian despair on the economic front. But this is not the moment for business as usual, for sure.

The cycle of economic exhilaration that portrayed Bangladesh as a stellar performer in Asia for a decade is no more on the steady ground that it once was. A triad of crises is now seeping into every corner of the economy. Inflation is an index of chronic consumer pain. The exchange rate shock is hurting almost everyone. Foreign exchange reserves are still haemorrhaging -- half a billion dollars per month.

A sea of red ink appears on the horizon as almost all indicators depict a gloomy picture. GDP growth has come down from its exuberant peak. Stock prices continue to drift downward. Most banks, save for a dozen, are lurching in and out of fund shortages. The zombie banks kept alive for too long are dragging the sector down.

Is the economy becoming a chronic patient? Perhaps not. But it's grievously bruised and needs to be healed and fast.

Years of stability lulled us into believing everything was perfect. People in almost every sphere became habituated to an equilibrium of low inflation, low interest rates and low exchange rate volatility. Under this apparent calmness was a layer of stress.

Then the global crisis came more as a trigger than a cause, exposing Bangladesh's vulnerabilities. Now the tinted perception of the economy is wearing off, acceptance of which we are resisting.

The new fiscal year starting in July could be another perilous year amid a confluence of global economic headwinds and the lingering effects of the government's past misguided steps.

As Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali unveils fiscal goals in his maiden budget as the finance minister today, he will come under sharper scrutiny than his predecessors who managed the economy in the past 15 years.

Sadly, Ali has inherited a wounded economy, but he doesn't have to live with a controversial legacy left by AHM Mustafa Kamal, his immediate predecessor, whose 6/9 percent interest rate formula that afflicted the banking sector for three years will go down in history as the most perverse practice. Its toxic fallout, some say, still lingers as it created unnecessary aggregate demand for credit leading to inflationary pressure. Inflation, equivalent to a highly regressive tax on already stagnating wages and salaries, doesn't seem to be coming down to a tolerance level so soon. It will be a long slog for the government to tame consumer prices.

Ali, 81, was well known for foreign service, but not so much for economic management. Still, the heavy lifting of budget planning fell on his frail shoulders right after he took the helm of the country's finance ministry in January. And it's playing out at a time when Bangladesh faces one of the worst economic crises in history. Now, he is diving into a territory that requires a coordinated policy approach to bring the economy back on track.

That's an enormous task.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Govt to rely more on local banks than foreign funds

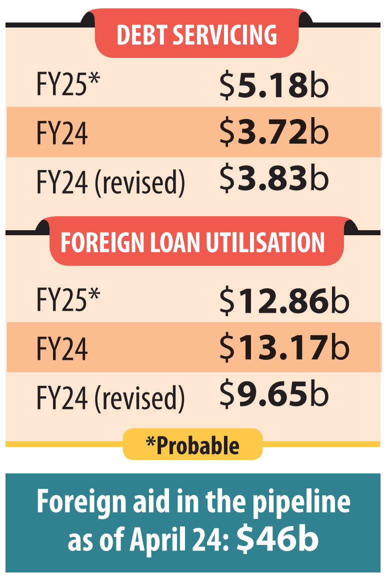
REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* **ASIFUR RAHMAN**

The government will rely more on domestic bank borrowing than foreign financing in the next fiscal year, intensifying pressure on the economy.

In the revised budget for the current fiscal year of 2023-24, the net foreign financing was cut by 25 percent due to the increasing debt servicing cost and low utilisation of foreign funds.

Net foreign financing is calculated after excluding the expenditure on debt servicing.

The net foreign financing is likely to be reduced by 12 percent in 2024-25. In the current fiscal year, Tk 1,02,490 crore was allocated as net foreign financing, which was later reduced to Tk 76,293 crore.



DEBT SERVICING	
FY25*	$5.18b
FY24	$3.72b
FY24 (revised)	$3.83b

FOREIGN LOAN UTILISATION	
FY25*	$12.86b
FY24	$13.17b
FY24 (revised)	$9.65b

*Probable

Foreign aid in the pipeline as of April 24: $46b

The amount will be Tk 90,700 crore in FY25.

In the revised budget, the allocation for debt servicing has increased by 2.7 percent to $3.82 billion, including principal amount and interest payments. The expenditure climbed 13.8 percent due to the depreciation of the taka and stood at Tk 42,200 crore.

When the budget was placed last year, an exchange rate of Tk 99.46 per dollar was used. An exchange rate of Tk 110 per dollar has been taken into consideration in the case of the revised budget of FY24 and the proposed budget for FY25.

On May 8, the central bank, however, fixed Tk 117 as the mid-rate as it looks to allow the market to set the exchange rate.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Modi invites PM to his inauguration

Hasina congratulates him on polls victory

STAR REPORT

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday invited his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina to attend the swearing-in ceremony of his government on June 8.

Hasina accepted the invitation, Noorelahi Mina, PM's deputy press secretary, told the media yesterday, reports UNB.

In a telephone conversation yesterday evening, Hasina congratulated Modi on the resounding victory of National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the Bharatiya Janata Party, in the 18th Lok Sabha elections.

"This victory of NDA

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Modi likely to take oath as PM on June 8

Elected as leader of BJP-led NDA with crucial support from Janata Dal(U), Telugu Desam Party

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, *New Delhi*

Narendra Modi moved a step closer to becoming India's prime minister for a third successive time as he was unanimously elected the leader of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance yesterday.

The only other Indian to have been elected prime minister three times in a row was the country's first PM and Congress stalwart Jawaharlal Nehru.

Modi will take oath on June 8.

Leaders of the NDA passed a proposal to this effect in a meeting at Modi's official residence in New Delhi's Lok Kalyan Marg .

The decision came a day after the NDA won 293 seats in the Lok Sabha election, giving them a majority in the 543-member legislature. The alliance is likely to stake claim to form government for the third consecutive time.

Bihar Chief Minister and Janata Dal (U) supremo

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

'New law may dent BTRC's autonomy'

Experts say as draft act gives ministry power to remove its commissioners

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The government will have the power to set the terms of removal and resignation of the commissioners of the telecom regulator, according to a draft law.

Currently, when a commissioner of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission faces allegations of conflict of interest, corruption or abuse of power, a committee of Supreme Court judges investigate the matter and the government takes action as per its recommendations.

According to recent changes made to the draft telecommunications act, the ministry will handle such matters.

According to telecom and ICT specialist TIM Nurul Kabir, the BTRC would lose whatever autonomy it has if the ministry has such power.

"The BTRC should be autonomous," he said.

At a discussion on the draft law, BTRC Chairman Mohiuddin Ahmed yesterday said, "I want to perform my duty without fear or intimidation. I am an engineer with years of experience. I am 64. If someone supervises me and tells me what should or should not be done, my brain does not function."

The discussion at the ICT Division was organised by the Telecom and Technology Reporters Network

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

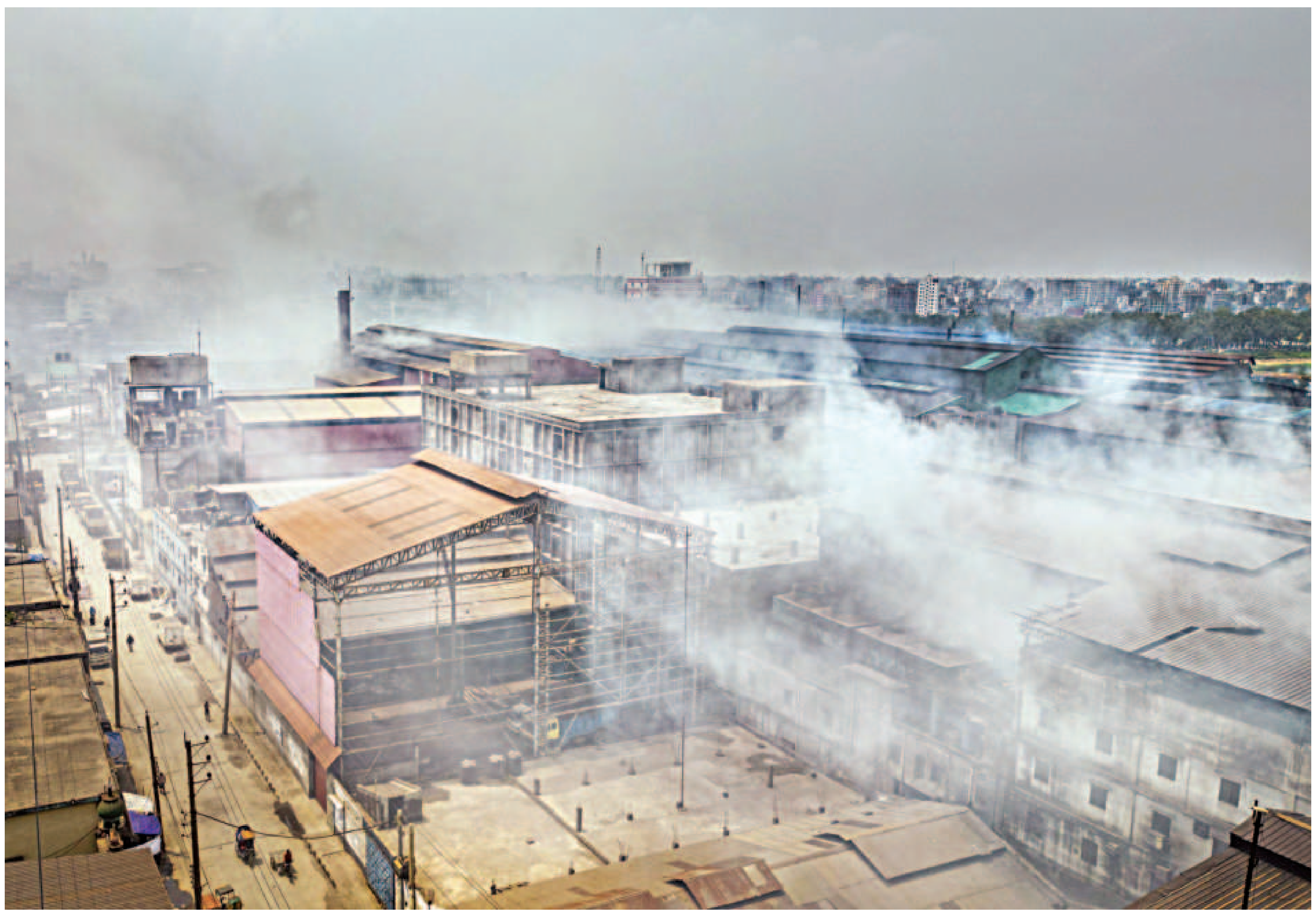


PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Smoke emitted from factories at the Faridabad Kadamtoli industrial area makes its way to the nearby homes, putting residents at risk of myriad health issues. Due to the factories, the area has been prone to extreme air and water pollution. The photo was taken yesterday.

BCL leader murders activist in broad daylight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Brahmanbaria*

A Chhatra League leader shot and killed an activist of the pro-Awami League student body in broad daylight in Brahmanbaria yesterday and walked away in plain sight after the murder.

Ayesh Rahman Izaz, 22, a second year student of Botany (honours) at Brahmanbaria Government College, was shot by district Chhatra League Vice President Hasan Al Farabi Joy in Brahmanbaria town's College Para Hostel area.

Quoting witnesses, Mohammad Aslam Hossain, officer-in-charge of Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station, said supporters of upazila chairman candidate Shahadat Hossain Shuvon, also the general secretary of district Chhatra League, took out a victory procession in front of the Christian Mission Primary

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Questions may arise over rule of law

US state dept says about case against Prof Yunus

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US has expressed worries that the perceived misuse of labour and anti-corruption laws in relation to Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus can raise questions about the rule of law in Bangladesh and dissuade foreign direct investment.

"So, we continue to closely monitor developments in the case against Dr Yunus. We have expressed our concern that these cases may represent a misuse of Bangladesh's labour laws to harass and intimidate Dr Yunus," said State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller at a regular press briefing in Washington DC on Tuesday.

He said the US would continue to encourage the Bangladesh government to ensure a fair and transparent legal process for Dr Yunus.

Miller made the comments in response to a question from a journalist regarding Dr Yunus'

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

Displaced Palestinians flee from the east of al-Bureij in the central Gaza Strip yesterday, due to the Israeli bombardment of the city.

PHOTO: **AFP**

GRAFT ALLEGATIONS

Benazir seeks 15 days' time to appear before ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former IGP Benazir Ahmed may not appear before the Anti-Corruption Commission for questioning today as he has sought 15 days' time to appear before the commission.

His lawyer on behalf of him sought the time, said Md Jahurul Haque, ACC commissioner (investigation), in reply to a query from a journalist at the ACC headquarters yesterday.

"I don't know exactly. But I heard he [Benazir] sought time," said the commissioner.

"The investigation team will decide about it [summons]. It is their matter. They will know better."

On May 28, the anti-graft body issued a notice to Benazir and his family for interrogation over the allegations that he amassed illegal wealth through corruption. According to the notice, Benazir was summoned to appear before the ACC today, his wife Zeeshan Mirza and two daughters on June 9.

Although the ACC sent the summons to his Gulshan home last week, no one from Benazir's family received the letter. As of yesterday, the letter remained at the guardroom of their Gulshan home amid speculations that the ex-IGP and his family had left the country.

However, it is still unknown whether Benazir's wife and two daughters will appear before the anti-graft body on June 9.

A wounded economy, another perilous year

FROM PAGE 1

Two years in a row, fiscal policy failed to heal festering wounds. But the new budget presents an opportunity for the new minister to reveal a vision to turn things around. Ali faces a difficult trade-off between maintaining economic growth and strengthening public finances.

One of his fiscal goals is a narrower budgetary deficit equal to 4.6 percent of the gross domestic product, a clear departure from the golden rule of the 5 percent gap that Bangladesh has followed for ages with some exceptions. Some economists say the new deficit plan is still too high. The issue is not debt sustainability but macroeconomic stability because more than half of the deficit financing will come from domestic borrowing. That could either come in conflict with monetary policy targets to reduce domestic credit growth or severely crowd out private credit by driving interest rates too high. The economists suggest it should be contained to 3 percent of GDP at least for fiscal 2024-25, another uncertain year, to reduce the burden.

"The main elements of the budget strategy should be to reduce fiscal deficit significantly to lower aggregate demand. This demand reduction should be achieved in a way that it does not compromise the future growth prospects," said Sadiq Ahmed, vice-chairman of the Policy Research Institute.

For this to happen, the strategy involves raising tax revenues through effective reforms, increasing the profitability of state enterprises through corporate governance, reducing unnecessary subsidies, and increasing spending on education, health and social protection, according to Ahmed.

Bangladesh's tax-to-GDP ratio is a long-standing fiscal weakness. At 7.3 percent of GDP, this ratio is one of the lowest in the world. Revenues continue to be underwhelming due to tax exemptions, weak administration and challenges in implementing tax reforms.

The budget day is a cacophony of big numbers that drowns out the need to cushion the poor against price shocks. The finance minister is expected to do more than just keep the poor in his thoughts. Urban poverty is deepening. In Bangladesh, more than 18 percent of the population lives under the poverty line and another 20 percent, as research organisation SANEM suggests, are very vulnerable and run the risk of falling into poverty due to any shock.

"The budget should look at the pressure heaped upon the marginalised groups, the fixed-income groups, and the low-income people, and how they can be helped through budgetary allocations, fiscal policies, and fiscal incentives," said Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, a think-tank.

One easy way to free up funds for social protection is by cutting subsidies as the International Monetary Fund suggests. By loosening the exchange rate further, Bangladesh, for example, can eliminate subsidies on exports and inward remittances. However, some agriculture input subsidies on fertiliser, seeds and irrigation are necessary. Overall, it is possible to reduce subsidy spending from a high of 1.9 percent of GDP in FY2023 to 0.8 percent of GDP in FY2025, according to an estimate by Sadiq Ahmed of PRI. These savings can be redeployed to healthcare, education and social protection.

In the new fiscal year, the government will bear a heavier burden of interest payments. So, the allocation for interest payments of domestic and foreign loans will likely jump more than 20 percent to an all-time high. The government has already intensified local borrowing to plug the fiscal deficit, pushing the yield on treasury bonds and bills to a peak. While it opened an avenue for investors to park money in government securities, it has some consequences. Public debt accumulated through treasuries is largely a way to transfer funds from taxpayers to wealthy bondholders, as famed French economist Thomas Piketty argues.

In the run-up to the budget, there were some refreshing changes, albeit pushed by the IMF. In early May, Bangladesh made three major decisions to cushion the economy against critical risks such as stubborn inflation and forex erosion. In a rare move, the central bank let the local currency slide by the most in a day against the mighty dollar. Bangladesh Bank also raised the key policy rate for the second time this year and made lending rates market-based, abandoning a treasury bill-linked formula for banks.

These steps testify to the authorities' belated realisation. Realisation, nonetheless.

This year's budget is coming at a very distinctive time in the history of Bangladesh's economic development. While the budget is simply an estimate of government revenues and expenditures for a fiscal year, it's also an occasion for soul-searching -- a day of reckoning.

It's time to gaze inward.

BCL leader murders activist

FROM PAGE 1

School polling centre.

Izaz was shot around 6:00pm when the procession reached the College Para Hostel area.

As Izaz fell to the ground, some participants of the procession rescued him and whisked him to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital. Doctors at the hospital referred him to Dhaka for better treatment but he died around 7:00pm on the way to the capital.

This newspaper has seen a video showing Joy hiding his gun and fleeing the scene after the shooting.

Hearing about the shooting, a large number of Chhatra League leaders and activists gathered in front of the Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital. They took out a protest procession.

Mohammad Shakhawat Hossain, superintendent of Brahmanbaria police, said that there was a dispute between two factions of district Chhatra League.

The OC said Izaz's relatives took the body to Dhaka Medical College for an autopsy.

PHOTO: **VIDEO GRAB**

BCL leader Joy runs away with a gun after shooting Izaz (not in frame).

'New law may dent BTRC's autonomy'

FROM PAGE 1

and Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh.

Zunaid Ahmed Palak, state minister for telecom, said changes would be made to the draft in light of the concerns.

As a one-stop service provider, the BTRC needs independence, he said.

"If the law puts pressure on them, they cannot act autonomously," he said, adding that the BTRC and the ministry should work together.

As per the draft, social media sites like Facebook or X will need licences to operate in Bangladesh.

The current law's Tk 300 crore fine for unlicensed telecommunication activities will stay in the new one.

Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory officer of Robi, said, "We believe excessive regulation through licensing will hinder growth in the sector."

China accuses US of interfering after Tiananmen comments

AFP, *Beijing*

China yesterday lashed out at the United States after Washington's top diplomat Antony Blinken vowed never to forget the crackdown in Tiananmen Square 35 years ago.

"The move of the US seriously interferes with China's internal affairs," foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said.

"China is strongly dissatisfied and firmly opposes it," she added.

She called on the United States to "stop provoking ideological confrontation, and stop interfering in China's internal affairs under the pretext of human rights."

Chinese troops and tanks forcibly dispersed peaceful protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989, quelling huge, weeks-long demonstrations demanding greater political freedoms.

The exact toll is unknown but hundreds died, with some estimates putting the figure at more than 1,000 people. China's leaders have since sought to erase any public mention of the crackdown.

Modi invites PM to his inauguration

FROM PAGE 1

was made possible due to your strong leadership for the third consecutive term," the PM's deputy press secretary quoted the premier as saying.

"As the leader of the largest democracy in the world, you carry the hopes and aspirations of the people of India," she said.

Hasina hoped India and its people will move forward through this victory.

Modi prepares for a record third term as Indian prime minister as nations congratulated him on the election victory.

Hasina also mentioned the very cordial and friendly relationship between Bangladesh and India.

Meanwhile, Modi has thanked Hasina for her warm wishes following his election victory.

"India and Bangladesh share historic relations, which have seen unprecedented growth in the last decade," Modi said in a message shared through X, formerly known as Twitter.

Modi said he looks forward to working together to further strengthen the people-centric partnership between Bangladesh and India.

Hasina was among the first foreign leaders to congratulate him, reflecting the warmth and personal rapport between the two leaders, the message said.

Govt to rely more on local banks

FROM PAGE 1

How much money Bangladesh would have to pay will ultimately depend on the exchange rate at the time of payment.

In the proposed budget to be placed today, the debt servicing cost is likely to be $5.18 billion or Tk 57,000 crore, a 35 percent increase compared to the revised budget.

The debt servicing cost is increasing, and foreign funds are not being utilised fully. As a result, the net foreign financing has reduced.

The government had set aside $13.17 billion as foreign financing in the budget for this year, but it was later revised to $9.65 billion. Of the amount, $2.92 billion was earmarked as budgetary support in the original budget, and it was revised to $1.35 billion.

The new budget is likely to allocate $12.86 billion as foreign financing and $3 billion of it could be kept as budget support.

A top finance ministry official said the government had, in most years, failed to utilise the allocated foreign funds. The low use is another reason behind the decreasing foreign financing, according to the officials.

As of April, at least $46 billion in unused foreign financing was in the pipeline.

During the National Economic Council meeting last month, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked all ministries and divisions to quickly finish foreign-funded projects.

While foreign fund utilisation is decreasing, the amount of bank borrowing is increasing significantly.

The highest borrowing will be from banks, Tk 1,37,500 crore. In the revised budget, the bank borrowing increased by 17.78 percent to Tk 1,55,935 crore.

Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, said if the government increases bank borrowing, it leaves fewer chances for the private sector to get loans.

"This affects inflation and puts pressure on foreign currency reserves."

Modi likely to take oath as PM on June 8

FROM PAGE 1

Nitish Kumar and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) President N Chandrababu Naidu, whose support is crucial to the government and its stability, attended the NDA meeting. Top leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its other allies were also present.

Both Kumar and Naidu handed over formal letters to Modi, declaring their support for him as PM.

Kumar's party won 12 seats and the Naidu-led TDP, the second largest party in the NDA, bagged 16. The support of both the parties is vital to prop up the Modi dispensation.

Earlier yesterday, NDA leaders met at Modi's residence to review the election result and discuss the government formation, after which a delegation of senior figures from the BJP and its NDA partners was supposed to meet President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan to stake claim to power.

With Modi's BJP failing to secure a majority on its own in the parliamentary election and looking up to NDA allies for support, the shape of national politics and governance at the Centre will be impacted. The electoral verdict has taken India back to the tricky terrains of coalition politics after a decade.

Ever since he became the prime minister for the first time in 2014, Modi has enjoyed the cushion of a comfortable BJP majority in the Lok Sabha and a much-weakened opposition.

With that cushion now gone, he will need considerable support from its allies like TDP, Janata Dal, and Eknath Shinde's faction of Shiv Sena.

However, the first challenge for BJP now would be to keep the NDA intact with a numerically resurgent opposition INDIA bloc snapping at its heels and not giving up the idea of cobbling together a majority in the Lok Sabha.

Both Naidu and Kumar are old hands in playing coalition politics and have switched sides a number of times. The allies will look to drive hard bargains and extract their pounds of flesh as the government formation exercise is set into motion. This raises questions about their reliability.

The allies are expected to push BJP for a common minimum programme in the coming days. It is quite possible that BJP is forced to put its ideological core issues, like a nationwide uniform civil code, on the back-burner.

Sources said a variety of "demands", including special status for their states and a pick of ministerial berths, are on the table in talks between Modi, Kumar and Naidu. There are chances Modi will feel the often-conflicting pulls of coalition politics.

On the other hand, Nitish Kumar is likely to insist on conducting a countrywide caste census, an issue Congress and INDIA parties have also been flagging to give reservation on the basis of numerical strength of the backward populace. This is particularly important for Kumar, who faces a fresh assembly election in his home state.

Meanwhile, passing laws in parliament will require Modi to go for a consensual approach across the political spectrum -- something he is not used to.

Naidu, who contested the Lok Sabha polls and the assembly polls in Andhra Pradesh in alliance with BJP, and actor-turned-politician Pawan Kalyan of JanaSena party, had been kingmakers on many occasions in the past.

In 1996, when the Lok Sabha election produced a hung parliament, it was Naidu, as the convenor of the United Front (a coalition of parties not aligned with either Congress or BJP), who propped up the HD Deve Gowda government with outside support from Congress. A few months later, he also played a key role in forming the government at the Centre with Inder Kumar Gujral at the helm.

In 1999, Naidu contested the Lok Sabha polls in alliance with BJP and secured 29 seats. He backed the then Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, which was short of the majority mark. However, TDP did not join the government.

On the other hand, Nitish Kumar was, for a short period, the railways minister, surface transport minister and agriculture minister in the Vajpayee government from 1998 to 1999. He got the portfolio again in the Vajpayee government of 2000-2004.

Critics have accused Modi of having authoritarian streaks in the past. But when he assumes office in the coming days as head of the NDA coalition, can he live down that image and reinvent himself as a consensual leader who takes onboard his allies?

Ukraine downs 22 of Russia's 27 drones launched overnight

REUTERS, *Kyiv*

The Ukrainian air force said it shot down 22 of the 27 Shahed-type drones launched over five Ukrainian regions in Russia's overnight attack yesterday.

The attack damaged an industrial facility and injured one person in the region of Poltava, its governor, Filip Pronin, said on the Telegram messaging app.

The Ukrainian military destroyed six drones over the southern region of Mykolaiv, its governor said. Debris from one of them destroyed a private home, and damaged about 10 more, but no casualties were reported, he added.

Four drones were shot down over the southern region of Kherson and four more over the central Dnipropetrovsk region, the regions' governors said.

The attack also targeted the northern region of Sumy, with no details of damage reported by regional authorities.

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GOVT JOBS

30pc quota for children of freedom fighters restored

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday declared illegal the government decision that in 2018 cancelled the 30 percent quota for the freedom fighters' children in the civil service of ninth to 13th grades (first and second classes of government jobs).

The 30 percent quota for the freedom fighters' children has been restored following the HC verdict, Deputy Attorney General Sk Shaifuzzaman told The Daily Star.

He said the government may move an appeal before the Supreme Court challenging the HC verdict.

The bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu delivered the judgement following a petition filed by Ohidul Islam Tushar and six others, who are children of freedom fighters, challenging a circular issued by the Ministry of Public Administration on October 4, 2018 that cancelled the quota system.

Details of the HC verdict will be known when its full text is released.

Two held for killing child after rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Gazipur

Police yesterday arrested two teenagers for raping and killing a three-year-old in Gazipur's Konabari upazila.

The arrestees, aged 16 and 14, are from Kurigram's Rajarhat upazila, said KM Ashraf Uddin, officer-in-charge of Konabari Police Station.

According to the victim's family, the child went missing on Tuesday.

Her body was found in a sack near a house in the upazila's Madhyapara area around 11:00am yesterday, the OC said.

The family filed a case with the police station.

The arrestees confessed to the crime during primary interrogation, the OC said.

Govt alone felled over 7 lakh trees last year

Says RDRC study

গাছ
বাঁচান
মানুষ
বাঁচান

Sat Masjid Road, September last year.

FILE PHOTO

MD ABBAS

At a time when heatwaves and rise in temperatures have become a headache for the country, different government agencies felled over seven lakh trees across the country last year in the name of development work, according to a new study.

The study, titled "Logging off Plants in Bangladesh," presented statistics on tree felling from March 2023 to March 2024, conducted by the River and Delta Research Centre (RDRC), a research organisation.

The study report, unveiled yesterday, said a total of 7,46,465 trees were chopped down during this period.

In the report, the Forest Department was identified as the government agency that was behind the felling of most trees.

Additionally, 24 other government organisations were also named in the report for felling trees.

Apart from that, private organisations and influential people have also cut trees during this period.

According to the study report, the Chattogram district experienced the highest tree cutting, with 506,222 trees being felled, while the Rangpur district saw the least amount of tree felling.

A total of 1,081 trees were logged last year in Dhaka, meaning 83 trees per month and about 3 trees per day, said the report.

On average, approximately 88,190 trees were logged per month, amounting to around 2,902 trees per day over the last year, it added.

Meanwhile, the felling of 400,152 more trees is ongoing under different projects. The Teesta Irrigation Project in Nilphamari alone is the single largest contributor to tree felling, with 400,000 trees being cut down for its implementation, the report also said.

RDRC Chairman Mohammad Azaz, who led the research, said, "Though some projects are ongoing, this report took into account the newly reported tree-cutting figures."

However, experts said the actual number of felled trees would be three times the reported figures.

They added that there is no estimation of how many shrubs, small trees, and biodiversity have been lost with these trees.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, executive director of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), said these figures show the government's insensitivity towards protecting the environment and its slogan-based, so-called environmental protection initiatives.

"The government has purposefully prioritised development over the environment, which is completely unacceptable. The government does not make laws to prevent the felling of trees because many government projects involve extensive cutting down of trees," she said.

The government does not have the licence to cut trees in the name of development, she added.

"We must carry out development work while preserving trees and planting more to combat the effects of climate change," she said, advocating for strong laws to prevent the felling of trees.

She opined that it should be made compulsory to save trees while implementing development projects.

Amir Hosain Chowdhury, chief conservator of forests at Forest Department, said the department has marked 116,000 trees for cutting so far and has felled 86,000 trees under the social forest scheme.

"If we cut any trees, we plant more trees in their place. We have already signed a MoU with the Water Development Board to plant 71,000 trees once they allocate the land," he added.

STUDY AT A GLANCE

Chattogram district experienced the highest tree cutting, with 506,222 trees being felled, while Rangpur district saw the least amount of tree felling.

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'It might take country 215yrs to end child marriage'

Speakers stress education, awareness

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Marrying off children at an early age is a waste of the country's most valuable asset, said Simeen Hussain, state minister for Women and Children Affairs, at a programme yesterday.

"If we invest in children, particularly girls, the returns will benefit the family, society, and the country," she said while inaugurating a joint Global Programme to End Child Marriage at a Dhaka hotel.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in Bangladesh, in collaboration with UNFPA and Unicef, launched the third phase of the programme.

"Eradicating child marriage is a keystone of our commitment to safeguarding the rights of children in Bangladesh," said the state minister.

"We commend the collaborative efforts of UNFPA and Unicef and affirm our commitment to working closely and effectively to implement the National Plan of Action to End Child Marriage and roll out the Child Marriage Restraint Act."

Keya Khan, director general of the Department of Women Affairs, said the early marriage rate rose to a new level during the Covid-19 period; however, the government is not sitting idle.

"We have been working on identifying the reasons behind it and working on impactful solutions to reduce the rate," she added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Include women's unpaid care work in GDP calculation

Speakers tell MJF seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is high time to give economic recognition to women's unpaid care and domestic work, said speakers at an event yesterday.

Along with policymakers, women themselves must come forward to implement this, they said.

They made the remarks at the national women's conference titled "Role of Women's Rights-Based Organisations in Bringing Gender Equality," organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation at the capital's Gulshan.

Speaking as chief guest, Sagufta Yasmin, lawmaker and chairperson of parliamentary standing committee on Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, emphasised the need to include unpaid care work in GDP calculation.

"The path of women's progress may never be easy; women themselves have to make their own safe roads," she said.

MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam chaired the conference. She highlighted the collective responsibility to protect women's rights.

"Underprivileged women, local organisations, government, and citizens must come forward to protect women's rights," she said in her welcome speech.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Govt must take action against Benazir

Chunnu tells parliament, Tarana demands names of money launderers to be published

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Chief Whip Mujibul Haque Chunnu yesterday in parliament demanded that the government take serious action against former IGP Benazir Ahmed.

Taking part in an unscheduled discussion, Chunnu, a Jatiyo Party lawmaker, said many like Benazir will get "inspired" if the government does not take action against him.

Chunnu said when leaders of the opposition went abroad for treatment, they were detained for hours at the airport.

"So, it's not possible that someone like Benazir will go abroad without the knowledge of the government. There are so many forces and so many agencies; what information do they gather?" questioned Chunnu.

"The home minister said he did not know whether Benazir had gone abroad or not. Why would he not know? Benazir went through immigration. If the government is not informed by the immigration authorities that Benazir has crossed the immigration, then all the immigration officials should be fired," he also said.

Pointing to Prothom Alo's editorial published yesterday on Benazir's widespread corruption and irregularities, he said committing such levels of corruption is only possible in Bangladesh.

Chunnu said Benazir has been promoted during the tenure of this government. "During the tenure of this government, he amassed so much through corruption," he added.

TARANA DEMANDS LIST OF MONEY LAUNDERERS

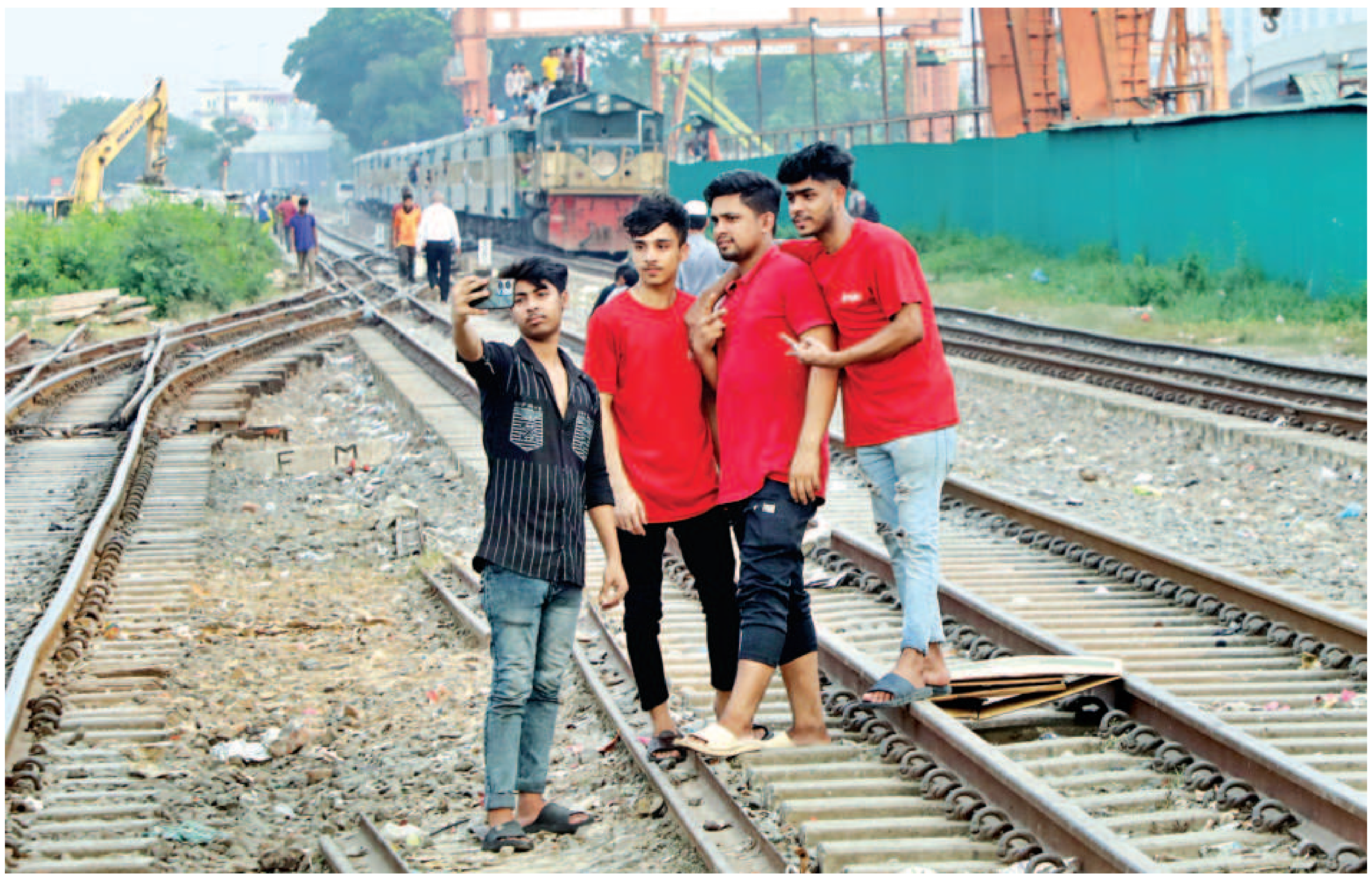
Awami League MP Tarana Halim, speaking on a point of order, said there are syndicates everywhere -- for vehicles, roads, rice depots, and cloth distribution. Who are these syndicates? We want to know and their names should be published.

"We want to know whose name is in the Panama Papers, the Paradise Papers... We want to know."

She also said names of those who have homes in Canada's Begum Para and have smuggled money should be disclosed in parliament.

She also said the parliamentarians, who are allegedly involved in such a syndicate, should adhere to self-criticism.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Four teens pose for a selfie standing on a railway track, without having any bother about a train approaching through another track just beside them. Many others are also seen walking carelessly along the tracks. Such actions can lead to tragic accidents. The photo was taken near the Airport Railway Station recently.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Include women's unpaid care

FROM PAGE 3

MJF has been implementing the "Women's Voice and Leadership-Bangladesh" project to enhance the capacity and activities of local and regional women's rights organisations, support the empowerment of women and girls, protect their rights, and achieve gender equality.

Rita Houkayem, second secretary of development (gender equality) at High Commission of Canada to Bangladesh, said Bangladeshi women are born with the indomitable ability to win all kinds of wars.

"However, social discrimination and negative perceptions of women make their way difficult. Women must take the rights movement as a lifelong commitment," she added.

Mahila Parishad President Dr Fawzia Moslem said, "There has been a change in the areas of women's needs. Targets should be set according to that."

A day-long plenary session was conducted by activist Jashodhara Dasgupta. MJF senior coordinator Mohuya Leya Falia presented the project activities at the conference.

Fate of 17,000

FROM PAGE 5

Malaysia for failing to obtain air tickets despite possessing all valid documentation, expressed their helplessness by saying they had mortgaged land, sold livestock, and borrowed money from banks and relatives to pay the recruiting agencies.

"I had aspirations of securing a decent job in Malaysia to guarantee my family's financial security," said Anisul Islam of Manikganj.

"I paid Tk 5.30 lakh to the recruiting agencies and brokers, and now if the government provides only Tk 79,900 as the government fee, I will be destroyed," he said.

Shariful Hasan, associate director of BRAC's Migration and Youth Initiatives Programme, said if the ongoing discussion about sending them to Malaysia is successful, there will be a positive outcome.

"If it is not done and they are given only the government fee, they will surely be penniless due to the pressure of loans and other burdens," he added.

In March, Malaysia announced May 31 as the deadline to bring in foreign workers.

The country resumed hiring Bangladeshi workers in 2022 after a four-year suspension over allegations of irregularities in recruitment process.

Between August 2022 and April 2024, nearly 4.50 lakh Bangladeshis migrated to Malaysia.

Last year, Malaysia was Bangladesh's second-largest overseas job market after Saudi Arabia.

It might take

FROM PAGE 3

Kristine Blokhus, UNFPA country representative to Bangladesh, said, "Currently, the rate of reduction of child marriage in Bangladesh is only 2.1 percent per year, which means it will take Bangladesh over two centuries -- 215 years -- to eliminate child marriage."

"Keeping girls in school is a game changer," she added.

Stanley Gwavuya, OIC representative of Unicef in Bangladesh, and Nazma Mobarek, secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, also spoke.

REMAL AFTERMATH

Bhola dam at risk of further damage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barishal*

The Tajumuddin embankment in Bhola collapsed in some places after sustaining damage during the cyclone Remal.

Even though the contractor firm tasked with the renovation began repairing the collapsed parts, visiting the site recently, this correspondent, noticed that the firm has been carrying out repairs on a two-kilometre stretch of the dam using soil from beside it.

Due to that, ditches are being formed. Locals feared the embankment will remain susceptible to further damage as the repair is unlikely to sustain.

Abdur Razzak, the contractor, said, "The repair work is being done on an emergency basis."

Jahirul Islam, deputy assistant engineer of BWDB, said, "This dam is a part of the 34-km under-construction embankment project from Tajumuddin to Mirza Kalu areas. Since a part of it collapsed, the firm is using the soil from beside the embankment to repair the breach on an emergency basis."

"Later, the embankment will be properly renovated and strengthened as per the tender," he added.

Masum Rabbani, the project manager, echoed him.

Govt must take action

FROM PAGE 3

Before Tarana ended her speech, Chief Whip Noor-e-Alam Chowdhury Liton took the floor and wanted to know what the discussion was about.

Pointing to the Deputy Speaker, Liton said, "If you give someone half an hour on a point of order, then none of the rules and regulations of the parliament are being followed. Many MPs are sitting here; their time is valuable. But you have started a general discussion in name of point of order."

Seventh death anniversary of Justice Latifur Rahman

CITY DESK

Today is the seventh death anniversary of Latifur Rahman, former chief justice and chief adviser to a caretaker government, said a press release.

On the occasion, a doa and milad mahfil will be held at his residence in Jashore.

He was born in 1936 in Jashore. He studied English literature and law at Dhaka University.

He began his legal career at the High Court in 1960 and was appointed as an additional judge at the HC Division of the Supreme Court in 1979.

On January 15, 1991, he became a judge of the SC.

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ব্যবহৃত গাড়ী বিক্রয় দরপত্র

লাফার্জহোলসিম বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড এর নিম্নে বর্ণিত গাড়ী (বাল্ক সিমেন্ট ট্রাক) সমূহ বিক্রয়ের জন্য শিডিউলে বর্ণিত শর্তাধীনে আগ্রহী ক্রেতাগণের নিকট হতে দরপত্র আহ্বান করছে। আগ্রহী ক্রেতাগণ ০৬ জুন থেকে ২৭ জুন, ২০২৪ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে গাড়ী (বাল্ক সিমেন্ট ট্রাক) সমূহ নির্দিষ্ট স্থানে পরিদর্শণ এবং ৩০ জুন, ২০২৪ তারিখ পর্যন্ত নিম্নবর্ণিত স্থান থেকে শিডিউল সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন (শুক্র, শনিবার ও সরকারি ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত)।

ক্র: নং:	বিবরন	সিসি, মডেল	রেজিস্ট্রেশনের সন	সংখ্যা	পরিদর্শণ এর স্থান
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খুলনা-৯২০৩

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির সংশোধনী

গত ০৩ জুন ২০২৪ তারিখে The Daily Star ও দৈনিক জনকণ্ঠ পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির লিখিত/মৌখিক পরীক্ষার জন্য উপস্থিত হওয়ার তারিখ ও সময়:

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GD- 945

World Health Organization
Bangladesh

VACANCY NOTICE

World Health Organization (WHO) invites applications from the interested and eligible candidates for the following position under following contractual modality:

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INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH
Purchase & Procurement Department
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TENDER FOR SECURITY SERVICE PROPOSAL

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) invites sealed offers from prospective security service providers for deployment of security services on its campus in Bashundhara Residential Area, Dhaka.

The details of the service and other terms and conditions are mentioned in the tender schedule. Interested bidders are requested to collect tender schedule from the Purchase & Procurement Department on payment of Tk. 2,000/- (non-refundable) in the form of cash to the Finance & Accounts Department of Independent University, Bangladesh between the office hours (from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm, Sunday through Thursday) **till June 23, 2024.**

Interested bidders are requested to submit the bids to the Purchase & Procurement Department by **June 30, 2024, before 2:00 pm following a pre-bid meeting to be held on June 25, 2024, at 2:00 pm**. The bids will be opened on **June 30, 2024 at 2:30** pm in the presence of the bidders who wish to remain present.

The university authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
Local Government Engineering Department (LGED)
Office of the Executive Engineer
LGED, Bhola District, Bhola

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

(Re-Bidding Notice)

Memo No. 46.02.09.00.000.037.24.1846 **Date: 05-06-2024**

The *Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh [represented by LGED] has received* financing from KfW and GCF toward the cost of the *"Climate Resilient Infrastructure Mainstreaming Project (CRIMP)"*and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for "Construction of 7 Nos. New Cyclone Shelters and associated access roads at various locations of Bhola District".

The Executive Engineer, LGED, Bhola District, Bhola now invites sealed Bids (Re-Bid) from eligible Bidders for "Construction of 7 Nos. New Cyclone Shelters and Associated Access Roads at Various Locations of Bhola District" as follows:

Package No.	Item of work	Quantity	Time for completion
CRIM/BHO/CS-NEW/W-01 Procurement Number: 507603 BMZ no. 202062255	Construction of 7 Nos. New Cyclone Shelters and Associated Access Roads at Various Locations of Bhola District	**Upazila:** Char Fasson-6 Manpura-1 ***Total- 7 Nos.*** 5 km	21 months

Bidding will be conducted by means of the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) procedure with qualification as specified in the "KfW Guidelines for the Procurement of Consulting Services, Works, Plant, Goods and Non-Consulting Services in Financial Cooperation with Partner Countries" ("KfW Guidelines, 2021"). Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Executive Engineer, LGED Bhola District, Bhola, email: xen.bhola@lged.gov.bd and may inspect the bidding document during office hours 09.00 to 16.00 hours (local time) at the address given below. A read-only copy of the bidding document will also be available for viewing by prospective bidders on the website of the Employer **www.lged.bhola.gov.bd**

A complete set of bidding documents in English may be purchased by eligible bidders through either one of the following two options:

Option-1: On submission of a written application letter on bidder's official letterhead which should be delivered to the Employer's address shown below together with the original Bank Draft or Pay Order in favor of "Executive Engineer, LGED Bhola District" for payment of the non-refundable fee in the amount of Bangladesh Taka 10,000 or US Dollars 100, and the bidding documents may be collected by the bidder from the Employer's address below.

1. Executive Engineer, LGED, District Bhola
2. Project Director's Office, CRIM Project, Level-7, LGED Bhaban, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.

Option-2: On submission of a written application through email, which should be sent from the bidder's official email address to the Employer's-email address shown below, together with an attached copy of documentary evidence demonstrating direct deposit/electronic wire-transfer payment to the Employer's bank account specified below of a non-refundable fee as follows:

For delivery of the bidding documents **within Bangladesh**: Bangladesh Taka 15,000 Or US Dollars 150. (Bid Document fee plus delivery cost).

For delivery **outside Bangladesh**: Bangladesh Taka 30,000 or US Dollars 300. (Bid Document fee plus delivery cost).

Within 3 working days of receipt of the required amount in the Employer's bank account, the Employer will dispatch the bidding documents through courier service and send a copy of the courier service order receipt through reply email to the bidder's email address, which the bidder may use to track the delivery. The Employer shall not be responsible in case of late or incorrect delivery by the courier service company.

Pre-Bid meeting will be held on **30/06/2024** at 11.00 hrs (Bangladesh Standard Time) online at LGED Bhola District, Bhola, Bangladesh (The Host). The Link will be provided on 23/06/2024 to the Purchaser of STD through their e-mail.

Bid Document last selling date on or before 16.00 hours (GMT+6) on **21/07/2024**. Bids must be delivered to the address indicated in the clause ITB 22.1 of the bidding document on or before 13.00 hours (GMT+6) on **22/07/2024.**

Bids will be submitted by the Bidders in the office of the Employer's address below.

1. Deputy Commissioner, Bhola
2. Superintendent of Police, Bhola
3. Executive Engineer, LGED, District Bhola

Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. All envelopes marked **"QUALIFICATION"** will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below on 16.00 hours {GMT +6} on **22/07/2024**. All envelopes marked **"BID"** shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Employer until the second public Bid opening.

All Bids must be accompanied by a "Bid Security" of BDT 15 million (fifteen million) or alternatively USD 135,000 (USD one hundred and thirty five thousand) or equivalent in any freely convertible currency in favour Executive Engineer, LGED, Bhola and Bid security must be attached by the bidders with the 'Qualification Document'.

Bank Account for electronic wire transfer:
Account Name: X.E.N. LGED BHOLA
Account Number: 1056001494284
Bank Name: National Bank Limited
Branch Name: Bhola Branch
SWIFT Code: NBLBBDDH
Routing Number: 150090102
The address(es) referred to above is (are):

05.06.2024

Mohammad Ibrahim Khalil
Executive Engineer
LGED Bhola District, Bhola
Email: xen.bhola@lged.gov.bd

GD- 952
]

Fate of 17,000 still uncertain

KL determined not to extend deadline despite Dhaka's requests

MD ABBAS

While Bangladesh wants to send the remaining aspirant migrant workers to Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur has said it will not extend the deadline for the entry of foreign workers.

Despite receiving clearance, around 17,000 aspiring migrants who failed to fly to Malaysia within the deadline are uncertain whether they will be able to go there.

"We stand by the deadline because we have 15 source countries, and we want to ensure uniformity in the application of this deadline," said Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Haznah Md Hashim.

She said this applies to all 15 source countries and is not specific to Bangladesh.

"The state minister requested us to reconsider the deadline, and I will convey the message to Kuala Lumpur," she informed.

Regarding allegations from Bangladesh Association for International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) that the Malaysian government issued e-visas on June 2 even after the deadline, Hashim said, "We cannot entertain any allegations without proof. So far, the entire Malaysian government, including those who issue visas, has adhered strictly to the deadline."

In response to a question about workers not getting jobs in Malaysia, she said, "This is something our government is looking into. I will not make any comments regarding it."

Shofiqur Rahman Choudhury, state minister for expatriates' welfare and overseas employment, said they requested Malaysia to reconsider the deadline and are actively working on it.

"The investigation committee will determine why the workers could not go to Malaysia. For those who have BMET cards or e-visas, arrangements will be made to ensure they receive compensation," he said.

Most workers, who could not travel to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Three killed in Khulna road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Three people were killed in a collision between a motorcycle and an engine-driven rickshaw-van in Paikgachha upazila of Khulna yesterday morning.

One of the deceased was identified as Ismail, 60, the van driver.

The identities of two other deceased who were the motorcycle riders are yet to be known.

Obaidur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Paikgachha Police Station, said the accident happened around 10:00am near a bridge.

Police seized both the vehicles. The bodies were sent to Khulna Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

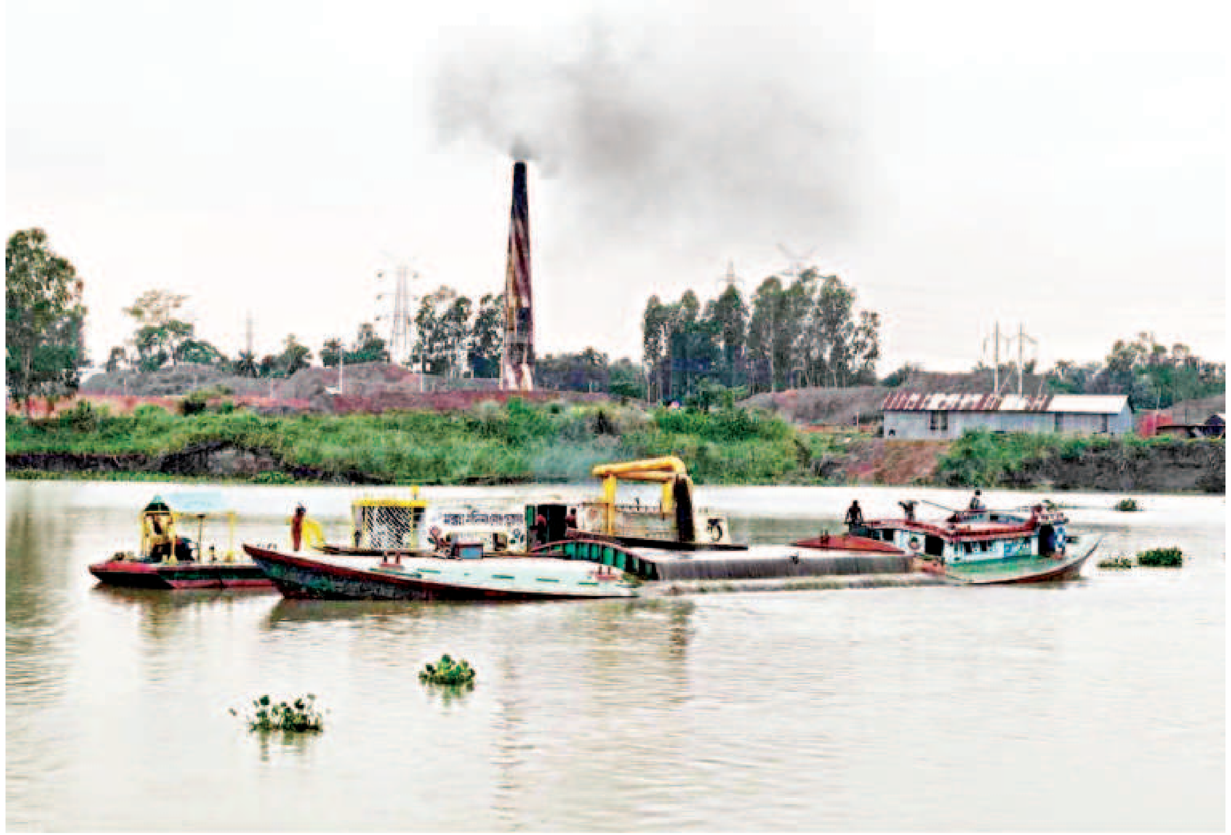
Drive to clear parking lots after Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation, in collaboration with Rajuk, will conduct a drive against illegal shops occupying parking spaces in buildings after Eid-ul-Azha, said DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam yesterday.

He made this announcement while inaugurating a tree plantation programme on the Gulshan-Badda Link Road to mark World Environment Day.

"As many buildings have their parking lots occupied by shops, cars are forced to park on the roads. The drive against this will start after Eid," he added.



Dredgers being used to extract sand from the Bangshi river in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila. This illegal activity has also exacerbated the erosion threat, *inset*.

PHOTO: STAR

Illegal sand extraction plagues Bangshi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

An influential syndicate has been illegally lifting sand from the Bangshi river in the Rahimpur area of Tangail's Mirzapur upazila using dredgers over the past few weeks.

The indiscriminate sand lifting is turning the river turbulent as monsoon looms, posing a threat to exacerbate its already severe erosion on the riverbanks.

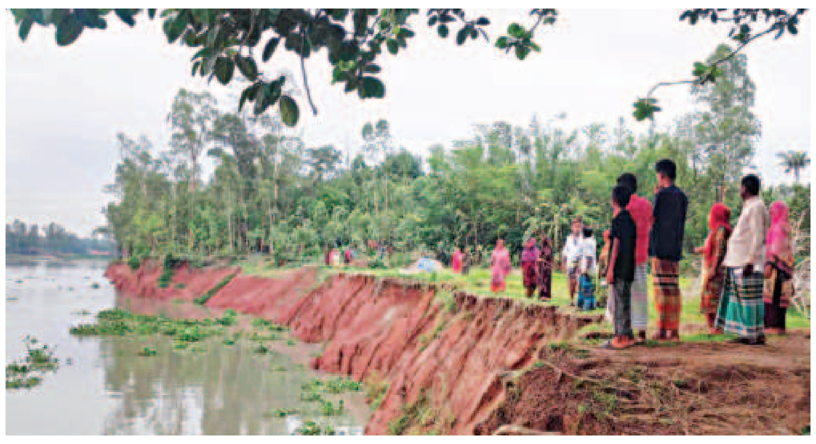
As such, villagers are living in fear of losing their croplands and homesteads, which are only a few kilometres from the dredging site, to the river.

The illegal sand lifting has continued despite protests from the villagers and no action has been taken by the local authorities to stop the menace, they said.

Over the years, the Bangshi has been devouring hundreds of houses, other structures, and vast areas of croplands every year during the monsoon.

Locals alleged that the sand lifting has been continuing over the last one and a half months, day and night, in the Rahimpur area, supervised by one Shafiq from Gorai union.

The extracted sand is then filled in bulkheads and transported to be sold elsewhere, they added.



"Whenever the villagers protested, goons of the sand lifters threatened and assaulted the people. The syndicate also lodged false cases against many villagers. So, the residents are now afraid while the local authorities are largely silent," said Ramjan Ali of Rahimpur village.

Mosharaf Hossain, another resident of Rahimpur, alleged that the culprits are a part of a strong political clout, with the support of the local public representatives belonging to the ruling party.

This correspondent tried to contact Shafiq, who supervises the sand lifting activities, but he was neither found in the area nor he could be reached over the phone.

Contacted, Masudur Rahman, assistant commissioner (land) in Mirzapur upazila, said they are aware of the matter. "We conducted a couple of drives against illegal sand lifting. Fresh drives will be launched soon," he added.

Sheikh Nurul Alam, upazila nirbahi officer in Mirzapur, said he joined the office recently and will take steps after investigating the matter.

"Stern action will be taken against anyone found involved in illegal sand lifting, no matter how powerful they are," he added.

Death anniv of Mahbubul Alam today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 10th death anniversary of Mahbubul Alam, former editor of The Independent.

He died on this day in 2014 at the age of 78.

Mahbubul, also a former caretaker government adviser, started his journalism career in the mid-1950s and was associated with the profession till his death.

He also worked as minister (press) at the Bangladesh mission in Washington DC and London and as Bangladeshi ambassador to Bhutan.

He was also managing director and chief editor of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS).

In 2006, he became an adviser to the caretaker government.

Mahbubul Alam led the Newspaper Owners Association of Bangladesh (Noab) as its president for quite some time.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 6

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-45	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-50	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
ইনফরমেশন টেকনোলজি ডিভিশন
আইটি প্রকিউরমেন্ট এন্ড মেইনটেন্যান্স
প্রধান কার্যালয়, মতিঝিল, ঢাকা

Desktop Computer, Offline UPS, Printer and Document Scanner
সরবরাহের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি
উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি [ফ্রেমওয়ার্ক পদ্ধতি]

SL No.	Tender No. & date	Name of tender	Tender opening date & time
1.	2024/36, 05/06/2024	Procurement of Desktop Computer, Offline UPS, Printer and Document Scanner for different location/Sub-Branch of Sonali Bank PLC	25/06/2024 03:30pm

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসির Website www.sonalibank.com.bd এর Tender Board দেখুন।

যোগাযোগঃ ইনফরমেশন টেকনোলজি ডিভিশন (আইটি প্রকিউরমেন্ট এন্ড মেইনটেন্যান্স), সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা। ফোনঃ ০২-২২৩৩৮৪১৬৭, নামঃ এম. মুশফিকুর রহমান, পদবীঃ এসিস্ট্যান্ট ইঞ্জিনিয়ার (আইটি), মোবাইলঃ ০১৭৩৭-২২৩৩০২।

ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার

GD-949

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
টিঅ্যান্ডআইএম পুলিশ
পুলিশ টেলিকম ভবন, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা
telecom.police.gov.bd.

উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM)

২০২৪-২৫ অর্থ বছরে নিম্নবর্ণিত কাজে ফ্রেমওয়ার্ক চুক্তির ভিত্তিতে ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের জন্য পৃথক পৃথক সীলমোহরকৃত খামে যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন সংশ্লিষ্ট দরদাতাদের নিকট হতে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন, ২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ ও সংশোধনীসহ এর নীতিমালা অনুসরণ করে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১.	মন্ত্রণালয়	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়/জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ।
২.	সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
৩.	ক্রয় কর্তৃপক্ষ	অতিরিক্ত আইজিপি (টিঅ্যান্ডআইএম), বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, টিঅ্যান্ডআইএম পুলিশ, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।
৪.	দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)
৫.	দরপত্রের অর্থের উৎস	GOB
৬.	সিডিউল বিক্রির সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৫/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়)।
৭.	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	২৬/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ সকাল ১১.০০ ঘটিকা।
৮.	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২৬/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ সকাল ১১.৩০ ঘটিকা।
৯.	দরপত্র দলিল সংগ্রহের ঠিকানা	টিঅ্যান্ডআইএম পুলিশ, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।
১০.	দরপত্র জমা দেওয়ার ঠিকানা	টিঅ্যান্ডআইএম পুলিশ, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।
১১.	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	সম্মেলন কক্ষ (২য় তলা), টিঅ্যান্ডআইএম পুলিশ, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।
১২.	দরপত্রের স্মারক নং	৪৪.০১.০০০০.০৫৭.১৯.০১৭.২৪.২৯৪৮/২৯৪৯/২৯৩৬/বেতার তারিখ: ০৫/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ এবং ২৮৯২ তারিখ: ০৪/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ।

দরপত্র আইটেমের বর্ণনা

ক্রমিক	বিবরণ	দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য	টেন্ডার সিকিউরিটি (টাকা)	কার্য সম্পাদনের মেয়াদ
১.	ব্যবহার্য দ্রব্যাদি (কোড-৩২৫৬১০৩)	১৫০০/-(এক হাজার পাঁচশত টাকা)	৩০০০০০/- (তিন লক্ষ টাকা)	২০২৪-২৫ অর্থ বছর
২.	অন্যান্য মনিহারী (কোড-৩২৫৫১০৫)		৫০০০০/- (পঞ্চাশ হাজার টাকা)	
৩.	স্বাস্থ্য বিধান সামগ্রি (কোড-৩২৫২১০৮)		৪০০০০/- (চল্লিশ হাজার টাকা)	
৪.	পোষাক, উইন্টার টিউনিক, সামার টিউনিক, ব্লু ব্লেজার, ফরমাল সাদা (ইনার) ফুলশার্ট সেলাই ও নেইমপ্লেট, রিবন তৈরি (কোড-৩২৫৬১০৬)	১২০০/-(এক হাজার দুইশত টাকা)	২২৫০০০/- (দুই লক্ষ পচিশ হাজার টাকা)	
৫.	যানবাহনের জন্য কাঁচামাল ও খুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ ক্রয় (কোড- ৩২৫৬১০৫)	৫০০/-(পাঁচশত টাকা) (প্রতিটি লট)।	লট-০১=২০০০০/-, লট-০২=১৫০০০/- লট-০৩=১৫০০০/-, লট-০৪=১০০০০ লট-০৫=৮০০০/-	
৬.	মোটরযান (মেরামত) (কোড ৩২৫৮১০১)	৫০০/-(পাঁচশত টাকা) (প্রতিটি লট)।	লট-০১=৮০০০/-, লট-০২=৮০০০/- লট-০৩=৫০০০/-, লট-০৪=৪০০০/-	
৭.	এসি মাইক্রোবাস, এসি প্রাইভেটকার ও মিনিবাস ভাড়ায় সংগ্রহ (কোড-৩১২১১০৬)	৫০০/-(পাঁচশত টাকা)।	৩০০০০/- (ত্রিশ হাজার টাকা)।	

১৩.	দরপত্র আহবানকারীর পদবী ও ঠিকানা: অতিরিক্ত আইজিপি (টিঅ্যান্ডআইএম), বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।	
১৪.	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা :	(ক) ট্রেড লাইসেন্সধারী (হালনাগাদ), (খ) ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সার্টিফিকেট (হালনাগাদ) ও ০১ বছরের স্টেটমেন্ট (হালনাগাদ), (গ) ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট (হালনাগাদ), (ঘ) আয়কর সনদ (হালনাগাদ), (ঙ) ঠিকাদারের নাগরিকত্বের সনদপত্র, (চ) মালিকানা সনদপত্র, (ছ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা সনদপত্র, (জ) আধুনিক যন্ত্রপাতি সম্বলিত মোটরযান ওয়ার্কসপের অধিকারী (মোটরযান (মেরামত) এর ক্ষেত্রে প্রযোজ্য)। অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী টেন্ডার ডুকুমেন্ট মোতাবেক।
১৫.	কর্তৃপক্ষ কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	

(ড. চৌধুরী মোঃ যাবের সাদেক)
বিপি-৭৯০৬১২১৭০২
এসপি (এঅ্যান্ডএফ)
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Excited but nervous as well:

APURBA ON 'GOLAM MAMUN'

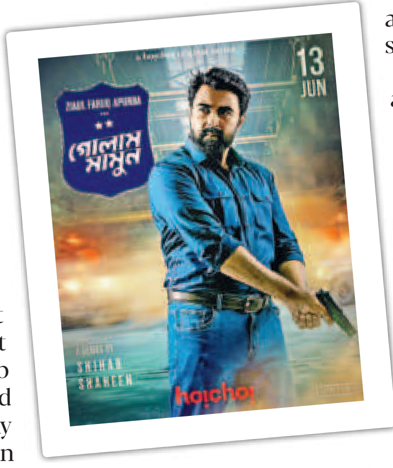
SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Popular actor Ziaul Faruq Apurba is returning to Hoichoi with a significant bang by starring in Shihab Shaheen's directorial ***Golam Mamun*** on June 13.

The project, which is the spin-off of the much-acclaimed series ***Buker Moddhye Agun,*** directed by Taneem Rahman Angshu, will see the actor playing the titular role.

Earlier in ***Buker Moddhye Agun***, Apurba portrayed the role of a fierce police officer and earned many accolades for his role.

Prior to the upcoming release of the series, Apurba spoke to The Daily Star about his expectations and experience of working in the spin-off.



"Although I am hopeful about the series, I am also undeniably nervous. I feel like the results for my exams are going to be out on June 13, which is the release date of the series," said the actor.

Apurba mentioned that the team had put much effort into this production. "Shihab Shaheen and I collaborated many times, and most of my remarkable projects have been directed by him. He is a great director, and working on this project was a really great experience as well," he shared.

The actor assured that this action thriller would feature a more diverse plot than the typical ones in the genre. "I must thank the director for this. The character Golam Mamun has definitely been a challenging role, for which I had to take a lot of preparation," he added.

In this project, actress Sabila Nur took on the helm of a daring police officer named Rahi, opposite Apurba. The actor appreciated her work, stating, "As a co-actor, Sabila is very comfortable to work with, and she portrayed the role very well."

Apurba mentioned being happy with people appreciating him in ***Buker Moddhye Agun*** and he hopes that they will love him in the upcoming season too.

Reportedly, Apurba has recently suffered serious injuries to his hand and back while filming an action scene outdoor for the series. The incident exacerbated his existing back pain and the combination of muscle and back pain rendered him nearly unconscious.

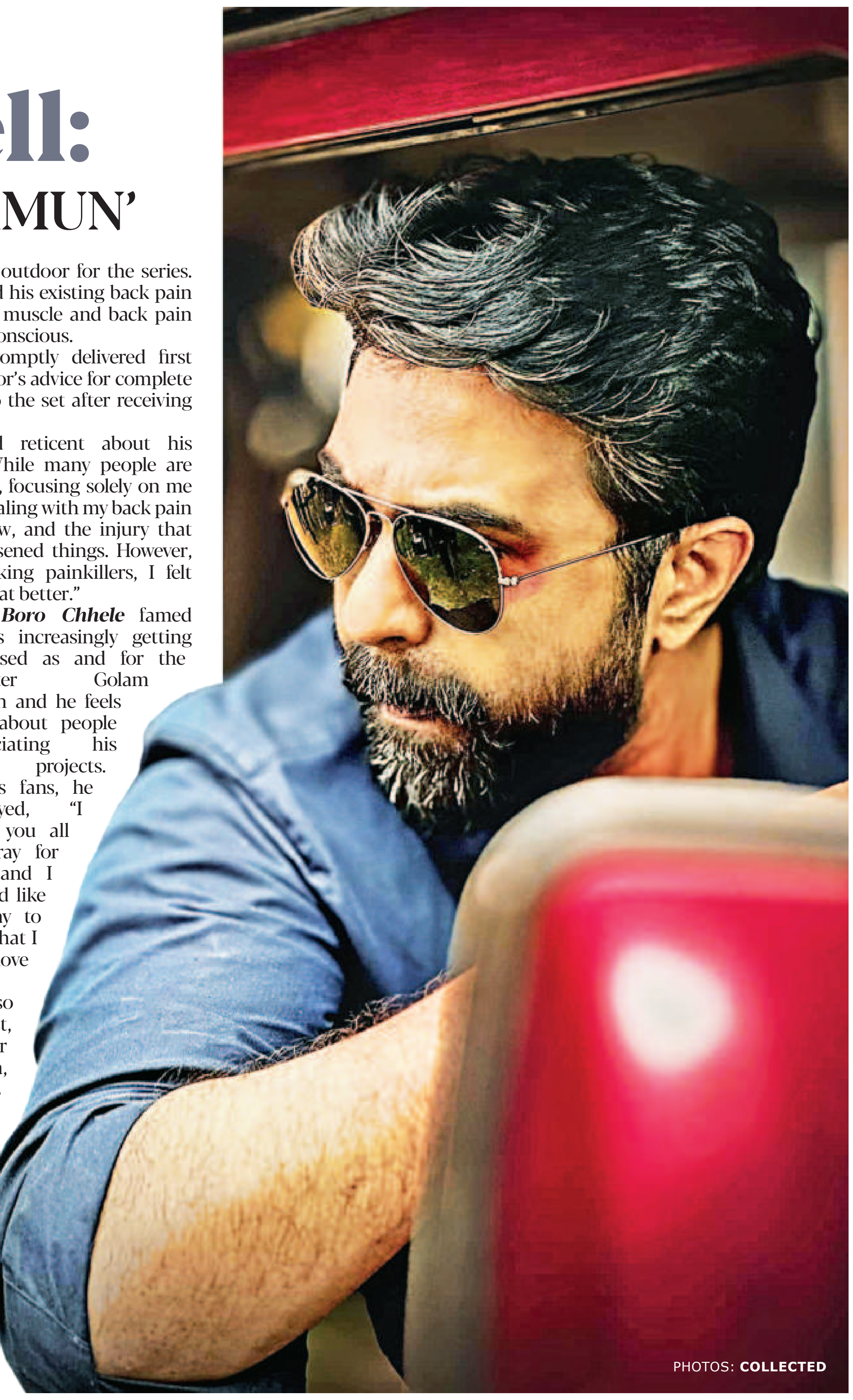
A physiotherapist promptly delivered first aid, and despite the doctor's advice for complete rest, Apurba returned to the set after receiving temporary treatment.

The actor remained reticent about his decision, remarking, "While many people are involved in a production, focusing solely on me isn't feasible. I've been dealing with my back pain for quite some time now, and the injury that day worsened things. However, after taking painkillers, I felt somewhat better."

The ***Boro Chhele*** famed actor is increasingly getting recognised as and for the character Golam Mamun and he feels great about people appreciating his recent projects. To his fans, he conveyed, "I want you all to pray for me, and I would like to say to everyone that I am grateful for all your love and support."

Golam Mamun also features an ensemble cast, including Fakhrul Basher Masum, Sharlin Farzana, Sharif Siraj, Syed Nazmus Sakib, Nafiz, Rashed Mamun, Sushoma Sarker, and Deepak Kumar Goswami.

In regard to his silver screen venture, Apurba is poised to make his Tollywood debut with the film ***Chalchitro***, directed by Pratim D Gupta. The thriller film is set to be released soon.



PHOTOS: **COLLECTED**

Kangana Ranaut wins in Mandi in Lok Sabha Election 2024

Prominent Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut's leap into politics has proved to be a remarkable success. The acclaimed ***Queen*** actress clinched a Lok Sabha seat from the Mandi constituency in Himachal Pradesh, winning by a substantial margin of 74,755 votes.

This victory saw her defeat Congress candidate Vikramaditya Singh, who had previously contested in two assembly elections but was vying for a parliamentary seat for the first time.

On the professional front, Ranaut is set to star in ***Emergency***, a biopic on former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, which delves into a pivotal period in Indian history.

'Peaky Blinders' returns as film with Cillian Murphy

Netflix has officially announced a ***Peaky Blinders*** film with Oscar winner Cillian Murphy reprising his iconic role as the fearsome gangster, Thomas Shelby.

Directed by Tom Harper, who helmed episodes of the series' first season in 2013, the film promises to be a thrilling continuation of the beloved saga, reported Deadline.

Additionally, Murphy will also serve as a producer on the project.

"It seems like Tommy Shelby wasn't finished with me...It is very gratifying to be re-collaborating with Steven Knight and Tom Harper on the film version of ***Peaky Blinders***. This is one for the fans," shared Murphy.

NEWS

Amanullah

FROM PAGE 12

After the killing at a flat in New Town, Kolkata, Amanullah returned home on May 15, according to sources at the court and the Detective Branch (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

After recording his statement, the court sent him to jail.

Amanullah, who goes by the alias Shimul Bhuiyan, was in charge of controlling the activities of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) in Khulna, Jhenidah, and Jashore.

Azim was also involved with the PBCP, and as Amanullah and Azim had a dispute over PBCP factions, the former readily agreed to kill the lawmaker.

As per Amanullah's statement, the accused tried to kill Azim on two occasions in January and March this year, but failed.

On April 25, Aktaruzzaman rented the New Town flat where Amanullah and Celesty met the other accused five days later to make a plan. Aktaruzzaman returned to Bangladesh on May 10.

As per the direction of Aktaruzzaman and Amanullah, the other accused took Azim to the flat, saying that they would discuss and settle the business matters.

Amanullah with the help of the other accused then killed the lawmaker there.

The accused dismembered the body and flushed part of it down the toilet. Some remains were put in a trunk which was discarded in the Krisna Mati area of Kolkata.

Accused Faisal, Mustafiz, and Jihad Howlader were directly involved in the killing, Amanullah said in the statement, adding that accused Jihad and Siam, arrested in Nepal, were involved in getting rid of the remains.

Jihad Howlader, who is in custody of West Bengal CID, was placed on a fresh two-day remand after the end of a 12-day one.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said until the DNA verification was done, law enforcers would not be able to tell for sure that they found Azim's remains.

"We have come to know from the arrestees that he was killed. Investigations and interrogations are underway in the two countries. Both countries will reach a decision," he added.

Ansar Al Islam raised

FROM PAGE 12

report submitted to the court, the arrestees admitted their involvement in Ansar Al Islam and the coordinators of Deen Islam Foundation. The outfit remains active on different online platforms, including social media, with the aim to recruit new operatives.

The arrestees said four to five other Ansar Al Islam operatives were also involved in fund raising, reads the report.

Deen Islam Foundation opened its Facebook page on April 19, 2022, and it has already attracted some 9,700 followers. These is a link of its website on the Facebook page, but The Daily Star could not access the website on Tuesday. There are two mobile phone numbers listed on the page, but both of those phones were found switched off.

A high official of the CTTC unit said that the foundation is not a registered platform.

"During interrogation, the arrestees could not provide information about the destination of the money. The statements regarding the transfer of the money were inconsistent," the official told this newspaper requesting anonymity.

In March this year, The SecDev Foundation, a Canadian NGO, in its monthly digital harms report said that AQIS in a digital booklet called upon the Bangladeshi Muslims to fund "the ongoing Palestine war".

"The booklet provided a detailed calculation of how Hamas had to spend Tk 100 crore to launch 12,000 rockets during October-December. They called it a real shame that the war is being funded and supported by Shite Iran and asked Muslims to send donations to the global jihad frontiers," reads the report.

"The group likely has already increased its fundraising inside the country," the report added.

The SecDev Foundation works globally to help at-risk people and organisations use digital technologies more safely and effectively.

Ahamedul Islam, deputy commissioner of the DMP at the CTTC unit, said there is no evidence indicating that Ansar Al Islam has sent funds for the Palestinian people.

"Collecting funds in the name of Jakat, building mosques, and aid for Qurbani is a common practice of the militant outfit. Some funds also came from abroad," he told The Daily Star.

In September 2022, the CTTC had found that Ansar Al Islam received about Tk 1.5 crore from people in the UK and Australia for carrying out its activities.

Ahamedul said the banned militant outfit is trying to make a comeback, and it has adopted the crowdfunding tactic to dodge the law enforcers.

"We have already stepped up vigilance and taking lawful action," he added.

Not much surprise

FROM PAGE 12

Najmul Hossain-led side have had a taste of playing at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York, where their batting against India in a warm-up match left a lot to be desired.

There is also the advantage for the Tigers, having already seen all of their group stage rivals play in the tournament so far. South Africa defeated Sri Lanka heavily, while Nepal and Netherlands played out a tight contest in Grand Prairie International Stadium in Dallas, the venue for Bangladesh's opening World Cup game against Sri Lanka on June 8.

In terms of conditions, there will be little surprise for Bangladesh heading into their upcoming matches in the USA. Sri Lanka have shown chinks in their armour, especially with the bat against the Proteas. But in trying to chase down a small total, South Africa batters did not look comfortable either. If the wickets do turn out to be on the slower side in New York, it might aid Bangladesh bowlers even though the batting unit has looked awkward on all surfaces so far.

Moreover, the game between Netherlands and Nepal showed that they will not be easy fixtures for the Tigers, but those matches will be in the West Indies. Bangladesh vice-captain Taskin Ahmed was expecting Dallas wickets to be a little different.

"The wicket of New York was a little low-scoring. I think the wicket in Dallas will be different. We need to play according to the conditions and situation. Whether it's a low-scoring or high-scoring match, if we can play according to our style, I think we can do well on that day," Taskin told reporters at the Mustang Cricket Academy on Tuesday.

With not much time left to prepare, Bangladesh will now be hoping to be in the right frame of mind as they gear up for their World Cup opener, which could potentially make or break their campaign.

People

FROM PAGE 12

go abroad with the help of brokers get into trouble.

Despite getting clearance from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), a total of 16,970 migrant workers could not reach Malaysia before May 31, when the deadline for workers to enter the Southeast Asian country ended.

Responding to another query from ruling Awami League MP Alauddin Ahmed Chowdhury, the premier yesterday said if a project is not completed on time, the project cost increases, which ultimately puts an adverse impact on the socio-economic development of the country.

"As a result, almost all projects are modified once or more after approval without increasing the duration or cost. This hinders the implementation of the Annual Development Plan," she said.

Hasina said many projects are not completed on schedule due to various errors and deviations, she said.

"As a result, the progress of the project is hamperedand the beneficiaries are deprived of receiving the benefits on time."

Replying to a query from AL MP Mahfizur Rahman, Hasina said experts have stated that traffic snarl-ups in Dhaka city and their resulting impactsare leading to annual financial losses of about $3.8 billion.

"This money will be saved if the metro rail lines are opened under the Time-bound Action Plan 2030, and an opportunity will arise to invest the full amount in the economy," she added.

The premier said a study has found that once the entire section of MRT Line-6 (Uttara to Kamalapur) of Dhaka metro rail is made operational, about Tk 8.38 crore will be saved in terms of daily travel time cost and around Tk 1.18 crore in terms of vehicle operations cost.

Responding to another question from AL MP Faridun Nahar Laily, the leader of the House said it is unfortunate that a clique of communal forces and war criminals and the BNP-Jamaat were continuously spreading rumours through social media.

"Many of them are staying in different developed countries. They are mainly spreading false and distorted news against Bangladesh and its government through social media outlets like Facebook, X [formerly Twitter], and YouTube."

She said legal, technical, and diplomatic steps have been taken at home and abroad to stop the spread of misinformation and rumours.

Trend of low voter

FROM PAGE 12

in upazila polls since 2009, said EC sources.

The turnout was 36 percent in the first phase of upazila elections held on May 8, 38 percent in the second phase on May 21, and 36 percent in the third phase held on May 29.

The figure was 70.57 percent in the 2009 upazila polls, which dropped to 61.23 percent in 2014. On average, it stood around 40 percent in the 2019 upazila polls conducted in five phases.

In the January 7 national election, the turnout was 42 percent.

The BNP and many other political parties have stayed off the upazila polls, like they did in the January 7 national election saying that the EC is "not capable of holding the elections in a free and fair manner".

The battle of ballots took place among independents, mostly from the ruling Awami League, as other political parties did not field any candidates.

In Chattogram, a voter was injured when activists of two vice-chairman candidates clashed at East Pingala Government Primary School polling centre in Patiya upazila.

A mobile court fined four people Tk one lakh over attempting to influence voters at Baharchhara Ratnapur High School Polling Centre in Banshkhali upazila.

In Patuakhali, a mobile court sentenced a man to six months' imprisonment for trying to cast fake votes at Gangipara Government Primary School polling centre in Rangabali upazila.

A chairman candidate sought a re-election to Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila, alleging "massive irregularities" committed by supporters of his rival.

In Dinajpur's Phulbari upazila, a thin presence of voters was seen at different polling stations throughout the day.

In flood-hit Zakiganj and Kanaighat upazilas of Sylhet, many voters came to polling stations on boats.

"The road to the polling station has been submerged. So, I have come to cast my vote on a boat," said Saju Uddin, a voter of Konagram Government Primary School polling centre in Kanaighat upazila.

Elections to 22 upazilas, which were suspended due to Cyclone Remal, will be held on June 9.

[Our correspondents from respective districts contributed to this report.]

Identify those responsible, take action

FROM PAGE 12

was tortured by police before her death.

It is a gross violation of human rights, and the activities of Bangladesh police is being questioned at home and abroad because of the irresponsible action of a few.

Those who are involved should face legal action, it added.

Afroza Begum, 40, died on Sunday morning hours after she was picked up by Abhaynagar police from her home in the Nawapara area, according to her children.

Her son Sabbir Mollah, a 9th grader, told reporters that police threatened to frame his mother in a narcotics case unless she paid them Tk 2 lakh.

A team of police led by Assistant Sub-Inspector Silon Ali went to their home near midnight on Saturday and a woman constable frisked his mother.

"Then the ASI started hitting her. At one stage, she fell to the ground. He then tied my mother's hair to a ceiling fan and tortured her," Sabbir said.

As Afroza's condition deteriorated, she was taken to Jashore General Hospital where doctors declared her dead around 11:30am on Sunday.

ASI Silon earlier told The Daily Star that the allegations of torture were baseless.

Akikul Islam, officer-in-charge of Abhaynagar Police Station, said police detained Afroza with 30 yaba pills. She later fell ill and died on the way to a hospital.

On Monday, police formed a three-member committee, led by an additional superintendent of police in Jashore to investigate the matter.

How Modi's party lost its majority

AFP, *New Delhi*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will remain in office but with a substantially reduced mandate, confounding expectations of a resounding victory forecast by analysts and exit polls. AFP takes a look at the reasons why Modi and his party failed to achieve a third successive landslide win:

DIVISIVE CAMPAIGN

Critics and rights groups accused Modi of ramping up rhetoric against Muslims to unprecedented levels during his campaign in a bid to mobilise the Hindu majority.

At his rallies, he referred to Muslims as "infiltrators", and claimed the main opposition Congress party would redistribute the nation's wealth to Muslims if it won.

But the strategy failed to galvanise Hindu voters behind the BJP, while also solidifying minority communities' support for the opposition.

BIGGEST STATE FLIPS

For the first time in 15 years, Modi's party failed to win the most seats in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state and a bellwether for national elections.

Uttar Pradesh is the heartland of India's majority faith, with widespread support for Modi's Hindu-nationalist agenda.

But an alliance of opposition parties who had competed against each other in past polls saw BJP candidates face stronger rivals, who ultimately won more than half of the state's seats.

INDIA ELECTION 2024

Ridiculed for half a decade, Rahul slows Modi juggernaut

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *New Delhi*

As the Indian parliamentary election results neared completion on Tuesday, supporters at the Congress party's national headquarters at 24 Akbar Road in the heart of Delhi broke into celebrations.

The happiest man was Rahul Gandhi as Congress, powered by his campaign, won 99 seats on its own recording its best performance in national elections since 2004.

Often derided as "pappu" and dismissed as a serial 're-inventor' constantly looking for an identity, Rahul perhaps thought he had had the last laugh in this Lok Sabha election. Congress' tally of seats is not only a quantum jump from the worst show of 52 seats five years ago but more importantly prevented BJP from getting a majority on its own. This is the first time that BJP under Modi failed to get to the magic figure of 272 in the 543-Lok Sabha.

Rahul carried out a 'padyatra' from Kanyakumari to Kashmir in 2022-23 and a "Nyay Yatra' this year from Manipur to Mumbai in the run up to the parliamentary elections setting the narrative for Congress and staying the course and refusing to be distracted by setbacks.

Riding a tempo with migrant workers, tractor in the company of farmers, hugging a child, bowing to comfort a woman who lost her husband or attacking BJP, particularly Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in press conferences, short videos and social media platforms--Rahul was the centre-piece almost all over.

The 53-year-old scion of the Gandhi family describes himself as the best chess player among Indian politicians. His latest gambit of making social justice as the central theme of his party's campaign seems to have paid off in the political chess with his party making a surprising comeback in the Hindi belt, making significant gains in Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Even the harshest of detractors of Rahul would concede that his 2024 campaign was by far his best as he focused on bread and butter issues and the party's welfare guarantees which struck a chord with a section of the voters.

A key feature of Rahul's election campaign was that he depended heavily on social media as opposed to conventional interactions and interviews with the mainstream media. His repeated claim at rallies that BJP would change the Constitution if it is voted back to power as he carried a copy of the Constitution succeeded in whipping up a fear perception.

He contested from Kerala's Wayanad and Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareli constituency his mother Sonia Gandhi gave up. In Rae Bareli, he bettered Sonia's margin of victory in 2019.

The half a decade has been challenging for Rahul's political career. He lost the Lok Sabha poll in Amethi to BJP's Smriti Irani by over 55,000 votes in 2019. His strategy of pitching the 2019 polls campaign of Congress on the alleged scam in Rafale fighter jets purchase issue and bringing Modi in the line of fire boomeranged badly. But he did not budge and continued to attack the Prime Minister—this time on the Adani issue.

'Free me from govt'

Says Fadnavis after BJP's poor show in Maharashtra

TNN, *New Delhi*

Senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis yesterday offered to step down as Maharashtra deputy chief minister taking moral responsibility for the party's poor showing in Lok Sabha elections in the state.

The BJP, which had 23 members in the last Lok Sabha, could manage to in only 9 this time around.

Fadnavis urged the party's top leadership to free him from the state government so that he could work for the party.

"I am requesting the BJP high command to relieve me from the responsibility of the government," Fadnavis said. The Maharashtra deputy chief minister claimed that the BJP-led NDA got more votes in Mumbai but there was consolidation of votes against the party which resulted in loss of seats.

Manipur rejects BJP after year-long ethnic clashes

REUTERS, *Guwahati*

India's main opposition Congress party bagged both parliamentary seats in strife-torn Manipur in the general election as the north-eastern state voted out Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party and its ally after year-long ethnic clashes.

Since May last year the remote state bordering Myanmar has been roiled by fighting between the majority Meitei and tribal Kuki-Zo people that killed at least 220 people and displaced 60,000 to relief camps.

The state of 3.2 million people continues to be divided into two enclaves - a valley controlled by Meiteis and Kuki-dominated hills.

In the lead-up to the election, victims on both sides of the sectarian divide expressed their displeasure with Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party for not being able to bring peace to the state.

"This is the voice of those people...," said Congress's A Bimol Akoijam, who beat his BJP rival in the Meiteis-dominated inner Manipur seat by close to 110,000 votes.

Questions may arise over rule

FROM PAGE 2

comment on Sunday that he was at the worst point of his cursed life.

The journalist asked if the US would consider more actions to show solidarity with the democracy-loving people of Bangladesh or the sanctions already imposed against former army chief Aziz Ahmed and police chief Benazir Ahmed were enough to hold the Bangladesh government accountable.

Miller in response said he does not have any actions to preview.

The journalist also sought Miller's comments on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent statement that a white man offered her that she can stay in power without any pressure if she allows a foreign country to establish an airbase (in the Bay of Bengal).

On May 23, Hasina also mentioned that a conspiracy was afoot to carve out a Christian country taking parts of Chattogram of Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Miller responded, "So I'm not exactly sure who those comments refer to, but if it is in fact the United States, I'll just say that they're not accurate."

Israel launches new incursion

FROM PAGE 12

move with majority vote on Tuesday evening, dismissing a call for a referendum on the issue by the largest opposition party.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters on Tuesday, "We are waiting for a response from Hamas" through the Qatari mediators, referring to a ceasefire proposal that US President Joe Biden revealed on Friday.

Qatar said on Tuesday that the proposal was now much closer to the positions of both sides.

Hamas has said it views the contents of the plan positively and has criticised Washington for what it described as attempts to blame the Palestinian group for hampering it.

But a spokesman for Hamas, which has ruled Gaza since 2007, reiterated on Tuesday it could not agree to any deal unless Israel makes a "clear" commitment to a permanent truce and complete withdrawal from Gaza. Israel says it cannot do that until Hamas is wiped out.

The United Nations Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA) issued a new plea for a ceasefire yesterday on X.

"The war in #Gaza has upended millions of Palestinian lives & caused catastrophic damage to the natural environment that they depend upon for water, clean air, food & livelihoods. Restoring environmental services will take decades - & cannot even start until a #ceasefire," it said.

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ক্রমিক নম্বর	পদের নাম, বেতন স্কেল ও গ্রেড (জাতীয় বেতনস্কেল, ২০১৫ অনুযায়ী)	পদের সংখ্যা	যোগ্যতা	যে সকল জেলার প্রার্থীগণ আবেদন করতে পারবেন।
১	উপ-সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (মেশিন ডিজাইন এন্ড ডেভেলপমেন্ট সেকশন) (স্থায়ী) ১৬০০০-৩৮৬৪০/- (গ্রেড-১০)	০১ (এক)টি	কোন স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে ডিপ্লোমা।	সকল জেলার প্রার্থীগণ আবেদন করতে পারবেন।
২	বৈজ্ঞানিক সহকারী (স্থায়ী) ১১০০০-২৬৫৯০/- (গ্রেড-১৩)	০৪ (চার)টি	কমপক্ষে ২য় বিভাগে বিএসসি পাস/বয়ন প্রকৌশলীতে ডিপ্লোমা/ প্রকৌশলীতে ডিপ্লোমা/ দুই বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ বয়ন কোর্সে সার্টিফিকেটধারী।	
৩	জুনিয়র মাঠ সহকারী (স্থায়ী) ১০২০০-২৪৬৮০/- (গ্রেড-১৪)	১২ (বারো)টি	কৃষি ডিপ্লোমা/কৃষি সনদ/এইচএসসি (কৃষি)। কৃষি ডিপ্লোমাধারীকে অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হবে।	ঢাকা, গাজীপুর, মানিকগঞ্জ, নারায়ণগঞ্জ, কিশোরগঞ্জ, টাঙ্গাইল, ময়মনসিংহ, জামালপুর, চট্টগ্রাম, বান্দরবন, কক্সবাজার, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া, কুমিল্লা, খাগড়াছড়ি, ফেনী, নোয়াখালী, রাঙ্গামাটি, রাজশাহী, জয়পুরহাট, পাবনা, নওগাঁ, নাটোর, চাঁপাইনবাবগঞ্জ, বগুড়া, দিনাজপুর, কুড়িগ্রাম, ঠাকুরগাঁও, খুলনা, যশোর, ঝিনাইদহ, বাগেরহাট, চুয়াডাঙ্গা, মেহেরপুর, বরিশাল, ভোলা, পিরোজপুর, পটুয়াখালী, সিলেট, মৌলভীবাজার, সুনামগঞ্জ এবং হবিগঞ্জ। তবে এতিম ও শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধীগণের ক্ষেত্রে সকল জেলার প্রার্থী আবেদন করতে পারবেন।
৪	উচ্চমান সহকারী (স্থায়ী) ১০২০০-২৪৬৮০/- (গ্রেড-১৪)	০৩ (তিন)টি	গ্রাজুয়েট।	
৫	উচ্চমান সহকারী-কাম-ক্যাশিয়ার (স্থায়ী) ১০২০০-২৪৬৮০/- (গ্রেড-১৪)	০১ (এক)টি	গ্রাজুয়েট।	
৬	স্টোর কিপার (স্থায়ী) ১০২০০-২৪৬৮০/- (গ্রেড-১৪)	০১ (এক)টি	স্নাতক বা সমমানের ডিগ্রী।	
৭	সাঁট-মুদ্রাক্ষরিক কাম কম্পিউটার অপারেটর (স্থায়ী) ১০২০০-২৪৬৮০/- (গ্রেড-১৪)	০৩ (তিন)টি	সাঁটলিপিতে ইংরেজী ও বাংলায় যথাক্রমে ৬০ ও ৪০ শব্দের গতিসম্পন্ন এবং মুদ্রাক্ষরিক ইংরেজী ও বাংলায় যথাক্রমে ৩০ ও ২৫ শব্দের গতিসহ এইচএসসি পাস।	
৮	গুদাম রক্ষক (স্থায়ী) ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (গ্রেড-১৬)	০১ (এক)টি	গ্রাজুয়েট।	
৯	জুনিয়র ফিল্ড এ্যাসিসটেন্ট (স্থায়ী) ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (গ্রেড-১৬)	০১ (এক)টি	কৃষি ডিপ্লোমা/কৃষি সনদ/এইচএসসি (কৃষি)। কৃষি ডিপ্লোমাধারীকে অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হবে।	
১০	জুনিয়র ফিল্ড এ্যাসিসটেন্ট (অস্থায়ী) ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (গ্রেড-১৬)	০২ (দুই)টি	কৃষি ডিপ্লোমা/কৃষি সনদ/এইচএসসি (কৃষি)। কৃষি ডিপ্লোমাধারীকে অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হবে।	
১১	অফিস সহকারী-কাম-কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক (স্থায়ী) ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (গ্রেড-১৬)	০৯ (নয়)টি	এইচএসসি পাস। বাংলা ও ইংরেজীতে প্রতি মিনিটে ২০ ও ৩০ টাইপের গতি আবশ্যক।	
১২	অফিস সহকারী-কাম-কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক (অস্থায়ী) ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (গ্রেড-১৬)	০১ (এক)টি	এইচএসসি পাস। বাংলা ও ইংরেজীতে প্রতি মিনিটে ২০ ও ৩০ টাইপের গতি আবশ্যক।	
১৩	অফিস সহায়ক (স্থায়ী) ৮২৫০-২০০১০/- (গ্রেড-২০)	১১ (এগারো)টি	বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতাসহ ৫ম শ্রেণী পাস।	গাজীপুর, মুন্সিগঞ্জ, নারায়ণগঞ্জ, রাজবাড়ী, কিশোরগঞ্জ, ময়মনসিংহ, নেত্রকোনা, চট্টগ্রাম, বান্দরবন, কক্সবাজার, চাঁদপুর, খাগড়াছড়ি, ফেনী, লক্ষীপুর, রাঙ্গামাটি, রাজশাহী, জয়পুরহাট, পাবনা, সিরাজগঞ্জ, নওগাঁ, চাঁপাইনবাবগঞ্জ, বগুড়া, রংপুর, নীলফামারী, খুলনা, যশোর, ঝিনাইদহ, নড়াইল, বাগেরহাট, চুয়াডাঙ্গা, কুষ্টিয়া, সিলেট, মৌলভীবাজার, সুনামগঞ্জ এবং হবিগঞ্জ। তবে এতিম ও শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধীগণের ক্ষেত্রে সকল জেলার প্রার্থী আবেদন করতে পারবেন।

নিয়োগের শর্তাবলিঃ

১. আবেদনকারীর নাম, পিতার নাম, মাতার নাম ও জন্ম তারিখ (এসএসসি সনদ, বা এনআইডি অনুযায়ী) অনলাইন আবেদন ফরমে এবং পরবর্তীতে হুবহু সেভাবে লিখতে হবে।
২. সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি/স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে চাকরিরত প্রার্থীদের যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতি গ্রহণপূর্বক নির্দিষ্ট সময়সীমার মধ্যে আবেদন করতে হবে এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় অবশ্যই উক্ত অনুমতিপত্র প্রদর্শন করতে হবে।
৩. জেলা কোটাসহ সরকার কর্তৃক প্রচলিত অন্যান্য সকল প্রকার কোটা বিধি অনুযায়ী অনুসরণ করা হবে।
৪. মুদ্রিত/হস্তলিখিত কোন প্রকার আবেদন বা কাগজপত্র ডাকযোগে বা অন্য কোন উপায়ে প্রেরণ করা হলে তা গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
৫. বয়সসীমা (০৮ জুলাই, ২০২৪ তারিখ অনুযায়ী)
ক) আবেদনকারীগণের বয়সসীমা ১৮ থেকে ৩০ বছরের মধ্যে হতে হবে।
খ) মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের পুত্র-কন্যা/শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী আবেদনকারীগণের জন্য বয়সসীমা ১৮ থেকে ৩২ বছর।
গ) বয়স প্রমাণের ক্ষেত্রে এফিডেভিড গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়।
৬. মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় সকল সনদপত্রের মূল কপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে এবং পূরণকৃত Application Form সহ সত্যায়িত একসেট ফটোকপি দাখিল করতে হবে। এছাড়া জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দার প্রমাণক হিসেবে ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ/পৌরসভা/সিটি কর্পোরেশন কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদ, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের ফটোকপি এবং আবেদনকারী মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র-কন্যা/নাতি-নাতনী হলে তার মুক্তিযোদ্ধা সংক্রান্ত সনদপত্র/গেজেট এবং আবেদনকারী যে মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/ শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার নাতি-নাতনী এই মর্মে সংশ্লিষ্ট ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/সিটি কর্পোরেশন/পৌরসভার মেয়র/প্যানেল মেয়র/ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি দাখিল করতে হবে। দাখিলকৃত মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সনদের সত্যতা মুক্তিযুদ্ধ বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়ের নির্দেশনা মোতাবেক যাচাই করা হবে।
৭. আবেদনকারীগণের মোবাইল ফোনে Teletalk Bangladesh Limited হতে (শুধুমাত্র যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে) SMS এর মাধ্যমে যথাসময়ে প্রয়োজনীয় নির্দেশনা প্রদান করা হবে।

৮. অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ সংক্রান্ত নিয়মাবলি ও শর্তাবলিঃ
ক) পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক ব্যক্তি http://bjri.teletalk.com.bd এই ওয়েবসাইটে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করতে পারবেন। আবেদনের সময়সীমা নিম্নরূপঃ-

- Online-এ আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও পরীক্ষার ফি জমাদান শুরুর তারিখ ও সময়: ০৯-০৬-২০২৪, সকাল ১০:০০ টা।
- Online-এ আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়: ০৮-০৭-২০২৪, বিকাল ০৪:০০ টা।
- উক্ত সময়সীমার মধ্যে User ID প্রাপ্ত প্রার্থীগণ Online-এ আবেদনপত্র Submit-এর সময় থেকে পরবর্তী ৭২ (বাহাত্তর) ঘন্টার মধ্যে SMS এর মাধ্যমে পরীক্ষার ফি জমা দিতে পারবেন।

খ) Online-এ আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থী তার স্বাক্ষর (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০×প্রস্থ ৮০) pixel ও রঙ্গিন ছবি (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০×প্রস্থ ৩০০) pixel স্ক্যান করে নির্ধারিত স্থানে Upload করবেন।
গ) Online-এ আবেদনপত্রে পূরণকৃত তথ্যই যেহেতু পরবর্তী সকল কার্যক্রমে ব্যবহৃত হইবে, সেহেতু Online-এ আবেদনপত্র Submit-করার পূর্বেই পূরণকৃত সকল তথ্যের সঠিকতা সম্পর্কে প্রার্থী নিজে শতভাগ নিশ্চিত হবেন।
ঘ) প্রার্থী Online-এ পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্রের একটি রঙ্গিন প্রিন্টকপি পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যে কোন প্রয়োজনে সহায়ক হিসেবে সংরক্ষণ করবেন।
ঙ) **SMS প্রেরণের নিয়মাবলি ও পরীক্ষার ফি প্রদান:** Online-এ আবেদনপত্র (Application Form) যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে নির্দেশনা মত ছবি এবং স্বাক্ষর Upload করে আবেদনপত্র Submit-করা সম্পন্ন হলে কম্পিউটারে ছবিসহ Application Preview দেখা যাবে। নির্ভুলভাবে আবেদনপত্র Submit-করা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থী একটি User ID, ছবি এবং স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত একটি Applicant's Copy পাবেন। উক্ত Applicant's Copy প্রার্থী Download পূর্বক রঙ্গিন প্রিন্ট করে সংরক্ষণ করবেন। Applicant's কপিতে একটি User ID নম্বর দেওয়া থাকবে এবং User ID নম্বর ব্যবহার করে প্রার্থী নিম্নোক্ত পদ্ধতিতে যে কোন Teletalk pre-paid mobile নম্বরের মাধ্যমে ০২ (দুই)টি SMS করে পরীক্ষার ফি বাবদ ১নং ক্রমিকে উল্লিখিত পদের জন্য ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা এবং টেলিটকের কমিশন চার্জ বাবদ ৫৮/-(আটান্ন) টাকাসহ অফেরতযোগ্য মোট ৫৫৮/- (পাঁচশত আটান্ন) টাকা, ক্রমিক নং-২-১২ এ উল্লিখিত পদের জন্য ২০০/- (দুইশত) টাকা এবং টেলিটকের কমিশন চার্জ বাবদ ২৩/- (তেইশ) টাকাসহ অফেরতযোগ্য মোট ২২৩/-(দুইশত তেইশ) টাকা এবং ক্রমিক নং-১৩ এ উল্লিখিত পদের জন্য ১০০/- (একশত) টাকা এবং টেলিটকের কমিশন চার্জ বাবদ ১২/- (বারো) টাকাসহ অফেরতযোগ্য মোট ১১২/- (একশত বারো) টাকা অনধিক ৭২ (বাহাত্তর) ঘন্টার মধ্যে জমা দিবেন। এখানে বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ্য যে, "Online-এ আবেদনপত্রের সকল অংশ পূরণ করে Submit করা হলেও পরীক্ষার ফি জমা না দেওয়া পর্যন্ত Online আবেদনপত্র কোন অবস্থাতেই গৃহীত হবে না"।

প্রথম SMS: **BJRI**<space>**User ID** লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে। *Example: BJRI ABCDEF*
Reply: Applicant's Name, Tk-................ will be charged as application fee. Your PIN is 12345678. To pay fee Type BJRI<space>Yes<space>PIN and send to 16222.
দ্বিতীয় SMS: **BJRI**<space>**Yes**<space>**PIN** লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে। *Example: BJRI YES 12345678*
Reply: Congratulations Applicant's Name, payment completed successfully for BJRI Application for post xxxxxxxxx. User ID is (ABCDEF) and Password (xxxxxxxx)

চ) প্রবেশপত্র প্রাপ্তির বিষয়টি http://bjri.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইটে এবং প্রার্থীর মোবাইল ফোনে SMS-এর মাধ্যমে (শুধুমাত্র যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে) যথাসময়ে জানানো হবে। Online-এ আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থীর প্রদত্ত মোবাইল ফোনে পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় যোগাযোগ সম্পন্ন করা হবে বিধায় উক্ত নম্বরটি সার্বক্ষণিক সচল রাখা, SMS পড়া এবং প্রাপ্ত নির্দেশনা তাৎক্ষণিকভাবে অনুসরণ করা বাঞ্ছনীয়।
ছ) SMS-এ প্রেরিত User ID এবং Password ব্যবহার করে পরবর্তীতে রোল নম্বর, পদের নাম, ছবি, পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থানের/কেন্দ্রের নাম ইত্যাদি তথ্য সম্বলিত প্রবেশপত্র প্রার্থী Download পূর্বক রঙ্গিন Print করে নিবেন। প্রার্থী প্রবেশপত্রটি লিখিত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সময় এবং উত্তীর্ণ হলে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় অবশ্যই প্রদর্শন করবেন;
জ) শুধুমাত্র টেলিটক প্রি-পেইড মোবাইল ফোন থেকে প্রার্থীগণ নিম্নবর্ণিত SMS পদ্ধতি অনুসরণ করে নিজ নিজ User ID এবং Password পুনরুদ্ধার করতে পারবেন।
User ID জানা থাকলে: **BJRI**<space>**Help**<space>**User**<space>**User ID** & Send to 16222
Example: BJRI Help User ABCDEF & Send to 16222
PIN Number জানা থাকলে: **BJRI**<space>**Help**<space>**PIN**<space>**PIN No** & Send to 16222
Example: BJRI Help PIN 12345678 & Send to 16222
৯. কর্তৃপক্ষ নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের সকল ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করবেন।
১০. বাস্তবতার নিরিখে পদের সংখ্যা হ্রাস/বৃদ্ধি হতে পারে।

০২/০৬/২০২৪
(ড. এস, এম, মাহবুব আলী)
পরিচালক (প্রশাসন ও অর্থ)
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The Daily Star
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An election unlike any in recent past

Indian election results have lessons for Bangladesh, too

Over the last decade, few surprises perhaps came as heartwarming to observers of India's democratic journey as the ones from its latest Lok Sabha election. The Indian election authorities rightly deserve kudos for successfully conducting the world's—and history's—largest democratic exercise that, over six weeks, saw 64.2 crore people vote, including a record 31.2 crore women. That in itself is a watershed moment that needs to be celebrated. The staggered election has also thrown up some big surprises, especially the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) failure to secure an outright majority for the first time since sweeping to power in 2014, as well as the rise of a strong parliamentary opposition.

The relative peace and enthusiasm that marked the election serve as a lesson for countries like Bangladesh where violence and poor voter turnout have become synonymous with the electoral exercise. It stands as a testament to people's power, and the fact that a fair election *is* possible despite sharp ideological divides among the contesting parties. The election results, from that perspective, can be seen as a popular rejection of attempts to sully India's secular legacy. We have seen how the Hindutva and anti-immigrant rhetoric was used, especially by BJP, to rally voters behind its re-election campaign. While PM Modi is set to return to power for a rare third consecutive term, one hopes for the sake of ordinary Indians and the region at large that such divisive rhetoric will come to an end.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of all—one that we can particularly relate to—is the resurgence of the Congress-led opposition alliance, INDIA, which secured 232 seats against BJP-led NDA's 293. It is a defeat that feels more like a victory considering the last decade, as some observers said. We cannot deny the significance of a strong parliamentary opposition in democracy. A strong opposition ensures checks and balances, preventing any single party or leader from holding excessive power. By scrutinising government actions and policies, it holds the government accountable to the public. Without a robust opposition, democracy can become stagnant, unresponsive, and vulnerable to authoritarianism. The Indian experience thus offers a lesson for Bangladesh where the lack of such an opposition has been acutely felt for long. Equally instructive has been the rebalancing of powers among coalition partners—with BJP having to rely on smaller allies—which also provides stability in parliamentary affairs.

The drama over the Indian election may not be over yet, as speculations over the formation of the next coalition government continues. As a neighbour and friend, it is our hope that Indian voters' desire to see a pro-people, pluralistic polity will be honoured regardless of what the next government looks like. We also hope that the two countries can continue on a path of mutual respect and growth in the coming days. As for those involved in Bangladesh's politics and electoral exercise, they can certainly take a leaf or two out of the Indian book.

Another blame game afoot

Authorities must take responsibility for Malaysia migration debacle

Following the debacle that led to 16,970 aspiring migrant workers failing to reach Malaysia before the deadline of May 31 set for migrants' entry, a blame game seems to be afoot. One the one hand, the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) denied responsibility for the disaster, blaming the Malaysian government and Bangladesh's Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment for the mismanagement. On the other hand, the relevant state minister hinted that the Malaysian government was at fault for the issuance of e-visas beyond the deadline, but said it was pointless to blame anyone right now, while denying the existence of any syndicate among recruiting agencies.

We, however, cannot help but disagree. For it is absolutely essential to identify who is at fault for such a catastrophe, and hold them responsible. We have seen such problems arise repeatedly in the past, which suggests that this is not a one-off issue but a systemic one—in which the subject of syndication comes up every time. In fact, the reason given by the Malaysian authorities for repeatedly stopping or restricting access for our migrant workers has been the syndicate problem, along with the mismanagement and corruption that come with it. Even UN experts, in a report, expressed concerns for our migrants and mentioned the hefty sums they have to pay because of criminal networks operating in Malaysia and Bangladesh in which "certain high-level officials" of "both governments are involved." So why is the minister denying their existence?

Baira, meanwhile, refuted the expat ministry's figure and said no more than 5,000-6,000 workers failed to travel abroad. However, data from the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) suggests otherwise. Why is that? Clearly, someone—or perhaps no one in this case—is not doing their job properly. Otherwise, why should there be any confusion at this point about the number of migrants who couldn't go abroad?

It is time for the relevant authorities to be finally held to account. The whole process of how we send migrants abroad, not just in Malaysia but other destination countries as well, needs to be revisited and reformed given how badly it has performed time and again. And most importantly, steps must be taken to reimburse and rehabilitate workers who could not travel abroad, despite paying for it, because of these systemic issues and failures.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Normandy invasion begins

Led by US General Dwight D Eisenhower, an Allied armada of ships, planes, and landing craft and some 156,000 troops began the invasion of northern France from England on this day in 1944—the famous D-Day of World War II.

FY2024-25 BUDGET

Whitening black money, raising taxes won't fix our economic ails

A CLOSER LOOK

Tasneem Tayeb
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TASNEEM TAYEB

The possibility that the government may offer financial criminals a special facility to "whiten" their black money with just a flat 15 percent tax and full amnesty has raised concerns not just among the country's economists and civil society but also the common people. And rightfully so, for the honest breadwinners have to pay an income tax at 25 percent at the highest slab. Adding VAT and other indirect taxes that ordinary taxpayers are required to pay, this plan—which, unfortunately, is not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh—is ill-judged and unjust at the very least.

The Income Tax Act, 2023 allows legalising illegally amassed money by paying a mere 25 percent tax and a 10 percent fine on the tax amount. This time around, however, what's raising eyebrows is the nature of the special offer: no questions asked, just a 15 percent tax, and illegally earned money becomes legal.

Some may argue that bringing black money back into circulation would be good for our economy's health. But at what cost? It is a no-brainer that allowing such impunity to black money hoarders will encourage the practice further, and discourage honest taxpayers from paying their taxes compliantly. The maths is simple: it is a 50 percent saving on taxes if one simply turns their legitimately earned income into undisclosed money and then whiten it—no strings attached and no repercussion involved.

It has been suggested that such an unconditional scheme to legalise black money is required, as the last time such a facility was offered in FY2020-21, a record Tk 20,600 crore was legalised—enabling the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to collect Tk 2,064 crore in taxes—by about 12,000 individuals, including government employees, doctors, businesspersons, and bank sponsor directors, among others. But once this scheme was lifted, in the subsequent years, fewer people availed the offered options to legalise illegal money.

Does this mean that the facility anticipated to be offered again would reduce the tax collection pressure on the NBR and inject more money into the economy? Not necessarily. We must remember that due to the travel and communication restrictions during the Covid pandemic, which essentially limited the hundi channels, people had little option but to keep their dirty money home, hence many availed the golden opportunity. The context in 2020-21 was different from that in 2024-25, and expecting to generate the same response from dirty money owners based on a general clemency and a flat tax rate might be a folly.

MONEY WHITENER

VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

Interestingly, in this budget, the government is also planning to raise the highest tax slab back to 30 percent. While some may argue that such an increase is just and the right thing to do, we need to take a closer look at a few data points to understand how this would impact the salaried individuals.

As per the current slab, an individual with an annual income of Tk 3.5-4.5 lakh has to pay income tax at five percent. In the second slab, individuals with an income up to Tk 7.5 lakh need to pay income tax at 10 percent. An annual income up to Tk 11.5 lakh requires payment of 15 percent income tax. Those earning up to Tk 16.5 lakh have to pay 20 percent income tax. Anyone earning more than Tk 16.5 lakh per year has to pay 25 percent of their income as income tax.

At a time when food inflation stands at 10.22 percent (as of April 2024), income growth is falling behind inflation, the taka has depreciated against the US dollar by around 36 percent (since January 2022), utility bills are rising, health spending has surged by over 202 percent, this tax regime is a staggering burden.

Some may argue that in India the tax-free income is up to 300,000 rupees per year, and the highest tax slab is 30 percent for an annual income of 15 lakh rupees and above. If we compare our tax regime with India's, we should also factor in the inflation rates in both countries: in Bangladesh it is 9.74 percent (April 2024), while in India it is 4.83 percent.

While unbridled inflation is feared to have pushed around five lakh people into extreme poverty, the salaried individuals are also bearing its brunt. A recent media report quoted leading economist Dr Ahsan H Mansur as saying that out of every Tk 100 earned by a salaried individual, they can only take about Tk 35 home after considering all tax deductions, including VAT and other advance taxes. Hence, reimposing the 30 percent tax on the population with a minimum income of Tk 16 lakh per year would be a biting blow for them, the simple reason being inflation. In 2014, when the 30 percent tax was slapped on this slab, the inflation rate was 7.35 percent. When the same was reduced to 25 percent in 2020, the inflation rate was 5.65 percent.

Back in 2020, Leave Fare Assistance (LFA) and income from Workers Profit Participation Fund (WPPF) were tax-free as long as they were within Tk 50,000. Both are now taxable, reducing further the disposal income of salaried individuals who fall in the 25 percent bracket. There are about 89,290 taxpayers who fall in this tax category, according to BBS. How is it just to tax someone earning Tk 16.5 lakh and someone earning, say, Tk 1 crore in the same slab?

If one assumes that the government is considering raising the tax slab back to 30 percent to ensure social equity and fair taxation, it should consider two points. First, it should expand the range for each slab and reduce the tax burden on each of these slabs, expanding the tax-free limit to up to Tk 5 lakh, so that the middle-class taxpayers can meet their basic necessities with dignity.

Secondly, the government should further break the current highest tax slab into several brackets and impose a super tax—a tax in addition to a normal tax, upon an annual income above a certain amount—on the rich and wealthy. The concept of super tax is gaining popularity globally as a tool to ensure social justice and could get the NBR the much-needed extra tax that it needs to extract from the right people.

Instead of taking the easy way out and burdening the already struggling segment of the taxpaying population, it is vital that the government look for a way to efficiently utilise the tax money it collects every year. A study by the Policy Research Institute (PRI) of Bangladesh reveals that a whopping 43 percent of taxpayers' money is spent on salaries, pensions and other benefits for government officials.

At the same time, the government must focus on containing the rampant corruption that enables the shameless plundering of taxpayers' money through various projects.

It is understandable that the government needs money to pay off its debts and meet its expenses, but allowing wholesale legalising of dirty money and taxing people further are not the solutions to this problem.

For real growth, invest more into education and health

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ABU AFSARUL HAIDER

Over the past one and a half decades, the government has undertaken numerous infrastructural projects, developing and renovating roads, bridges, ports, airports, communication, energy and power, etc in the country. While infrastructure development provides the necessary physical foundation for economic growth and social progress, the most critical sectors requiring investment for a country's overall growth are education and health. Unfortunately, Bangladesh still struggles to adequately invest in these essential areas.

Recent revelations from the draft development budget for FY2024-25 paint a disheartening picture. Both the health and education sectors are set to receive allocations below the targets outlined in the eighth five-year plan. The health sector is allocated just 7.80 percent of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) budget, significantly less than the targeted 11.10 percent. Similarly, the education and technology sector is allocated only 13.70 percent, falling short of the proposed 16.50 percent. Basic economic principles highlight that a well-educated and healthy population is crucial for long-term economic growth and sustainable development. If so, why are these two critical sectors often neglected in this country?

Officials at the Planning Commission say the education and health ministries get lower allocations because they struggle to spend the allocated funds effectively. Additionally, cost overruns and delays in implementing projects are also to blame. Data from the commission reveals that over the past five years, development projects in the health and education sectors experienced cost overruns of 13 percent and 27.5 percent, respectively. Meanwhile, 55 percent of health ministry projects and 34 percent of education ministry projects had to have their deadlines extended. So, why should the public suffer due to management weaknesses?

Bangladesh's current population is around 17 crore, with 7.37 crore people employed in various sectors and 2.74 crore aged between 15-29 years. However, we have not fully capitalised on the demographic dividend of this large number of young people because we lack a skilled and healthy workforce. Unfortunately, our approach to development has neglected education, research, and health, focusing instead on constructing large-scale infrastructure. Infrastructural development, while essential, is not sustainable without enhancing human capacity. Sustainable development requires a healthy, skilled, tech-savvy workforce, which necessitates proper investment in health, education, and research.

We are already struggling on that front, with research indicating that our garment, real estate, telecommunication, information and technology sectors are facing severe shortage of skilled manpower. Consequently, foreign workers are being hired, leading to huge amounts of dollars leaving the country. Additionally, the lack of investment means that people's out-of-pocket expenses for healthcare and education will continue to remain high.

Currently, individuals bear a significant portion of medical expenses, with households covering up to 72 percent of all healthcare costs through out-of-pocket payments. This system imposes a heavy financial burden on impoverished families, often forcing them to either forgo treatment or incur debt. Additionally, to manage healthcare costs, families often cut back on essential daily expenses. According to the World Food Programme's 2023 Food Security Monitoring, 36 percent of Bangladesh's population suffers from food insecurity, with poverty and malnutrition continuing to co-exist. Nutrition is closely linked to labour productivity. The Asian Productivity Organisation's Productivity Data Book 2020 reports that Bangladesh's labour productivity is 10.4 percent, compared to the average of 16.3 percent in South Asia and 27.8 percent in APO countries.

Bangladesh spends 2.3 percent of its GDP on the public health sector, compared to Nepal's 5.6 percent, Sri Lanka's 3.8 percent, and India's 3.8 percent. Developed nations like the UK spend around 10 percent of their GDP on healthcare. In Bangladesh, 65 percent of the health budget goes towards salaries and allowances, with the remainder allocated for development. It is embarrassing that a country aspiring to become an upper-middle-income nation by 2031 and a developed country by 2041 still sees a significant number of its citizens, including politicians, businessmen, and ordinary people, seeking medical treatment abroad every year. This trend indicates a lack of confidence in our own healthcare system. While individuals may argue that seeking overseas medical care is a personal choice, it becomes more alarming when leaders and politicians do the same. Their decisions to seek treatment abroad highlight a serious issue, as they are the ones responsible for developing the healthcare system.

Education, often hailed as the great equaliser, also faces a similar fate. Government expenditure on education is a meagre 1.64 percent of the GDP. This is significantly lower than the averages for LDCs (above three percent), middle-income countries (above four percent), and high-income countries (above five percent). According to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report 2022, Bangladeshi families cover 71 percent of the total education costs. For fixed-income and poor families, this creates a disproportionate burden.

Insufficient funding in health and education can result in substandard healthcare and human resource development, while also increasing people's out-of-pocket expenses. These rising costs perpetuate cycles of poverty and vulnerability. Addressing these inequalities requires proper government financing in education and healthcare. If financial constraints are an issue, the government must find innovative ways to fill the gap. Additionally, it should work on increasing the capacity of the relevant ministries to effectively use the allocated funds.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
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01711623906

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Unlike the past two Lok Sabha elections, where Narendra Modi's BJP won enough seats to form the government alone, the party has fallen short of a clear majority this time and is dependent on the coalition NDA. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

India's election opens the door to the past

BLACK, WHITE & GREY

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ALI RIAZ

Defying predictions of pundits proffered for almost a year, opinion polls of the past months and exit polls over the past six weeks, the opposition alliance INDIA has done so well that the Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has fallen short of a clear majority, although the incumbent alliance NDA is holding on to more than 272 seats to form a government. The results and trend are evident that no single party has been able to secure a majority. As Modi's return to power for a third consecutive term breaks a record set six decades ago, it is also a return to a coalition era after a decade. In the previous two elections in 2014 and 2019, BJP had enough seats to form the government alone.

The conventional wisdom is that alliances are formed to be together to go to and stay in power. The NDA is no exception; the members of the alliance have remained together since 1998 and have been in power on several occasions since. In the past decade, despite BJP's enormous support among voters, its extraordinary mobilisation capacity, and the rise of Narendra Modi, NDA remained a key element in Indian politics. As the poll results started to come in, what has become a matter of speculation is whether some alliance members will ditch the NDA and join the opposition. In India, as elsewhere, that's not without precedence. Alliances, especially when a government's survival is dependent on it, tend to be more fragile. Horse-trading has been part and parcel of Indian politics; besides, as the BJP seems to have done poorly and voters have expressed a dismay regarding its politics, it is not out of the realm of possibility that some parties will try their fortune elsewhere. Two parties are being watched closely at the time of the writing of this commentary: Telugu Desam Party of Andhra Pradesh led by Chandrababu Naidu, and Janata Dal United of Bihar led by Nitish Kumar. While publicly the leaders have reaffirmed their allegiance to the NDA, politics is a game of unpredictability; tomorrow is another day.

If the opposition alliance INDIA can cobble together 272 seats, a coalition of disparate parties will end up in power. Press reports suggest that the alliance leaders are reaching out to parties who can only be described as "strange bedfellows." While it is speculation, or in some ways wishful thinking, such a scenario will be deja vu—a return to the 1990s. India witnessed a tumultuous time between May 1996 and October 1999 when coalition governments came and left in quick succession. The period is referred to as "the era of fragile coalition." In the context of a long history of stable Indian democracy, the instability during the 1990s was seen as deeply concerning. This period ended with the emergence of the BJP as a dominant party. It offered stability but over the past decade, such stability only contributed to serious democratic erosion and deep entrenchment of authoritarianism. It produced a leader who claimed that he had been chosen by God. It is in this context that if India returns to the 1990s' pluralistic political instability, that will be progress. Indeed, it sounds outlandish to suggest that going backwards is progress, but in the battle against authoritarianism, returning to a flawed democracy is a step forward. The election has created an opportunity.

If the opposition alliance INDIA can cobble together 272 seats, a coalition of disparate parties will end up in power. Press reports suggest that the alliance leaders are reaching out to parties who can only be described as 'strange bedfellows.' While it is speculation, or in some ways wishful thinking, such a scenario will be deja vu—a return to the 1990s.

Speculations aside, the unanticipated better results of the alliance INDIA has a message insofar as reversal of autocratisation around the world. In a democratic society, each political party has its own ideology, vision, strategy, and tactics; they compete, but when the democracy itself is at stake, they might have to compromise and build a wall of resistance. Waiting for a perfect solution to the democracy crisis and the emergence of a democratic force free of stains of past deeds will not only help authoritarianism to sustain, but will increasingly make citizens depoliticise. The Congress-led alliance INDIA is not an ideology-driven cohesive alliance. Some of the differences among these parties are significant; the past of some parties is chequered, to say the least. The partners of the alliance INDIA set their eyes on a goal: to stop autocratisation by offering an alternative to Modi's divisive policies.

While the alliance has not succeeded in winning the majority, it has emerged as a roadblock to the politics of divisiveness and hate. Faizabad's result is telling in this regard. The place, which became the symbol of BJP and ilk's rise due to the demolition of the mosque and the pompous inauguration of the Ram Mandir in January, has now delivered a defeat to the BJP. As for the alliance INDIA, bringing the parties together was a difficult task, holding each other together through the election was harder, but keeping the alliance intact in the coming days to fight for democracy will be the hardest.

The numbers of the final election results will be dissected in many ways. A more nuanced picture will emerge, and analysts and political scientists will try to explain the messages from Indian citizens. In the meantime, it is evident that a strong opposition in the parliament has emerged, and voters have expressed their desire to see a pluralistic polity in India, a past that defined the Indian polity and made it worthwhile to call the country "the largest democracy of the world."

Trump, now a felon, presents a huge political challenge

Ashfaque Swapan
is a writer and editor based in Atlanta, US.

ASHFAQUE SWAPAN

Say what you will about former US President Donald Trump, but give him his due.

Just when you thought there were no norms of political etiquette left to destroy, Trump comes up with a sledgehammer, creating history by achieving the dubious distinction of becoming the first US president ever to be convicted as a felon.

This follows a whole slew of firsts: the first president in US history who refused to concede defeat; the first president to incite a mob to attack the US Capitol (the last time the Capitol was attacked was by the British in 1814); and the first president to defend insurrectionists. During his presidency, Trump lied with such abandon that the US media, usually deferential to the office, were forced to explicitly say so—and keeping track of Trump's lies became a real journalistic exercise.

These dubious "firsts" are leavened generously with political misdemeanours of a bewildering variety and number. Just a random sampling: Trump forced his press aide to falsely claim that he had a larger crowd than Obama at the inauguration. He suggested bleach as a cure for Covid. To this day, he claims the 2020 presidential elections were rigged, despite the fact that all his campaign's lawsuits were thrown out of court by judges, including many appointed by him.

The extraordinary thing is not just how outrageous Trump's actions are. It is the fact that he keeps getting away with it. This has turned US politics on its head and has political analysts scratching their heads in despair.

Let's take a quick trip down the memory lane to see what happened to another disgraced US president, and you will get an idea of how the guardrails have completely come off.

On August 7, 1974, Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, and House Representative John Rhodes of Arizona—the top Congressional Republican leaders—gave erstwhile President Richard Nixon a warning: support within his party had plummeted, they told him, and Nixon was likely to be impeached. The next day, Nixon resigned. In a bit of gallows humour, erstwhile Republican Senator Bob Dole quipped that at least they had the burglar vote, referring to the break-in at Democratic headquarters in Washington, DC that snowballed into the scandal that felled Nixon.

Today, it is impossible to imagine any Republican lawmaker standing up to Trump, and for good reason. Some have tried before and have had to kiss their political careers goodbye. Contrast the Republican leaders of the Nixon era with today's Republican lawmakers, who are falling all over themselves to ingratiate themselves to the former president.

Yet, the fact remains that Trump has been found guilty on 34 felony counts by a jury of his peers. It is noteworthy that Trump's family members were conspicuous by their absence—only his son Eric showed up in court.

Whatever happened to former First Lady Melania? Melania, it must be said, is an oddity. Whether it's Republican first ladies like Pat Nixon, Barbara or Laura Bush, or Democratic first ladies like Rosalynn Carter, Hillary Clinton or Michelle Obama—US first ladies have a reputation for warmth and engagement. Much of it is stage-managed, to be sure, but all nonetheless command some degree of respect and affection. Melania is an exception. It isn't that she is widely loathed. The curious thing about her is that she is a bit of a cypher—one doesn't quite know what to make of her.

That said, one can't be too harsh. It can't be much fun playing the loyal wife in a case where your husband is accused of giving hush money to cover up a liaison with a porn star. Marital loyalty has its limits.

Meanwhile, the Republican Party is quite clearly stuck with Trump, felon or not. Trump's reaction has been his usual bluster: it's all rigged, everybody is out to get him. (Trump being Trump, he didn't miss this occasion to make a quick buck. His campaign reports that it raised over $58 million in 24 hours of the verdict. No surprise there: here is a guy who made money off his mugshot after he was booked in Georgia.)

Thanks to Trump, American politics is in uncharted territory. We have an unprecedented situation where the US Secret Service has to figure out how to provide the former president security if he does become a jailbird.

Meanwhile, the upcoming presidential election in November is still up in the air. Trump is like the proverbial tail wagging the dog—he holds a significant part of the Republican electorate in Svengali-like thrall. So now, it is he who decides what the Republican Party stands for, not vice versa.

The effect of Trump's conviction on his support is hard to gauge, given mixed response to recent polls. While he has lost some support, about half of the respondents say they are more likely to vote for him, Axios reports.

Could Donald Trump be the first felon elected to be US president? FILE PHOTO: **REUTERS**

It is a strange world indeed, where a felony conviction fails to undo a presidential candidacy, but these are indeed the strange political times we live in. In the recent past, US presidential elections have had nail-biting finishes, with just some tens of thousands of votes in a handful of swing states determining the winner. Add to that the deepening polarisation where most voters are staunchly partisan, and you have a political tinderbox where every little thing matters.

Trump's conviction may cast a shadow on his support, but then incumbent President Joe Biden isn't exciting the electorate all that much. Add to that Biden's stand on Israel's mass slaughter in Gaza, which has deeply antagonised two demographics Democrats desperately need to push Biden over the finish line: Black Americans and young people.

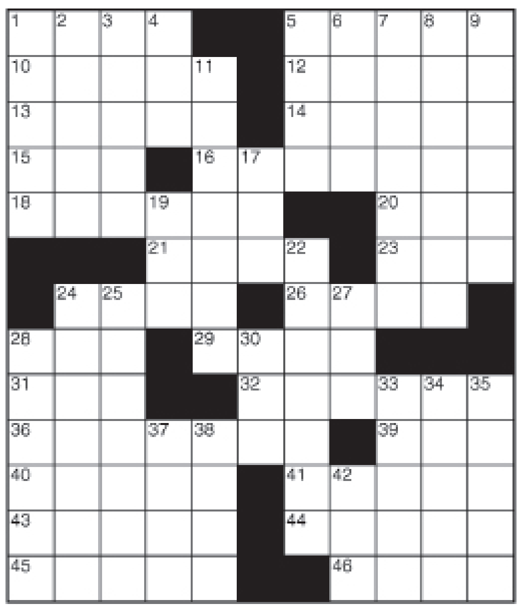
Former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson once observed, "A week is a long time in politics." November is months away. Obviously, a lot can change as the world waits to see if Trump is capable of another first: can he be the first felon elected to be US president?

We won't know the answer to that before November 5. In the meantime, fasten your seatbelts, because this is going to be one crazy political rollercoaster ride.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Writer Uris
5 Musical symbol
10 Secret lingo
12 Pink shade
13 Rice field
14 Battery end
15 Try out
16 Bird with flippers
18 Solving tool
20 Plopped down
21 Aide: Abbr.
23 Some
24 Posted
26 Lose freshness
28 Bob Cratchit's son
29 Before long
31 Imitating
32 Group of five
36 Fine
39 Holiday lead-in
40 Professor at Hogwarts
41 John of music
43 Quartet doubled
44 Day in Hollywood
45 Calls for
46 Walk in water

DOWN
1 Accept eagerly
2 Make blank
3 Poet Nash
4 Auction action
5 Checkout act
6 — Kong
7 Wakening
8 Glowing
9 More than enough
11 Keyboard pros
17 Golfer Ernie
19 Fire
22 Like the jack of diamonds
24 Library request
25 Spring forth
27 Travel stop
28 Selects via finger
30 Make a choice
33 Aquarium fish
34 Steer clear of
35 Tightly packed
37 Imitated
38 "Why don't we!"
42 Depressed



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MAY 23 ANSWERS

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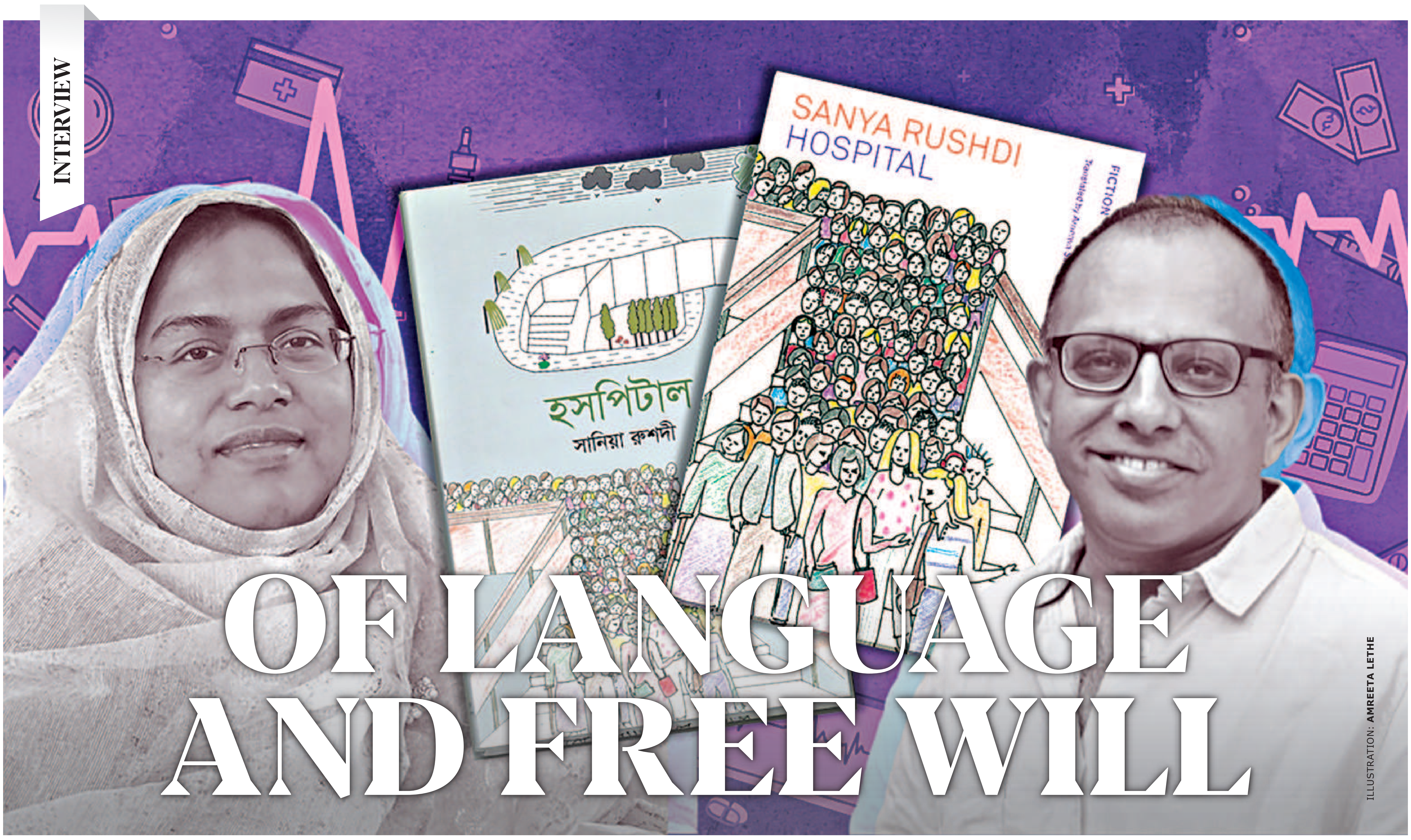
INTERVIEW



OF LANGUAGE AND FREE WILL

ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

Sanya Rushdi and Arunava Sinha discuss 'Hospital'

Once the novel was published in text, Rushdi's elder sister and writer, Luna Rushdi, sent a copy to renowned Indian translator, Arunava Sinha, who expressed an interest in translating the novel into English.

NABILAH KHAN

"We are truly prisoners of the mind", says Sanya Rushdi, the author-narrator of *Hospital* (Giramondo Publishing, 2023), originally published in Bangla (Bohiprokash, 2019) and translated into English by Arunava Sinha.

Shortlisted for the 2024 Stella Prize and longlisted for the 2024 Miles Franklin Literary Award, two of the highest literary honours in Australia, it conveys the emotions swirling around in the story's protagonist, who is diagnosed with schizophrenia after her third episode of psychosis. Based on events that occurred in Rushdi's life, the autofiction takes us deep into the recesses of the narrator's mind and portrays a simple, yet powerful picture of the illness.

A slim volume that packs a powerful punch, *Hospital* came about by chance. A few months after she left hospital in Melbourne, Bangladeshi-born, Australia-based Rushdi commenced journalling her thoughts. She shared them with a friend, a renowned poet, writer, and artist, Bratya Raisu, who recognised a novel in those notes.

Having only written for academic purposes before (as a student of biological sciences and psychology at Monash University, University of Sydney, and Deakin University), Rushdi was uncertain about her abilities to write a full length novel. So, Raisu suggested writing a few lines of a chapter at a time, which was then published in shahitya.com.

Once the novel was published in text, Rushdi's elder sister and writer, Luna Rushdi, sent a copy to renowned Indian translator, Arunava Sinha, who expressed an interest in translating the novel into English. With over 80 translations (English to Bangla and vice versa) of classic, modern and contemporary fiction, nonfiction, and poetry under his belt, he is no stranger to the literary landscape of the Indian subcontinent.

What was the thought behind the title 'Hospital'? Was it simply a place or the narrator's state of mind? Is there a deeper meaning behind the simple title?
Rushdi: I guess I ended up with a broader name such as "Hospital" because the book can be read at different levels. What this name means really depends on how the reader is reading it. At first, I named it "Hospital and a flock of smoking pigeons." In Bangla, the name was "Hospital o ek jhak dhumpayi kobutor" but the name was changed to "Hospital" later on.

The narrator has a strong awareness of 'the self' when she describes it being allowed to thrive in a community house while 'the self' is "subdued with medication at every opportunity" in the hospital. Why was it important for the narrator to feel this way?
Rushdi: I think, if we take them out of the hospital and community house context for a moment, we find that a person living in today's society, who is not very politically aware or is very innocent and naïve in a lot of ways, is generally treated in two different ways. The first way is to just tell them what to do and what not to do, and in so doing, infantilise him or her or take control of his or her life; and the second way is to just let them be and let them go about their own business, but have an undercurrent agreement that they are really not a member of the larger society, and so, eventually, they have to be eliminated. I think, in *Hospital*, I compared this second way to the slow death of a frog in a gradually heating water-pot. I feel that both of these ways exist due to a sense of care for these people, but also, a sense of not knowing what to do with them.

The narrator portrays a lot of compassion and empathy for her fellow psychiatric ward patients, whom she refers to as "inmates". What was it like to see yourself through the eyes of a character in a novel? Did you discover something about yourself you weren't aware of while penning your thoughts down?
Rushdi: There is a part in the novel about assertiveness, where the protagonist is in the courtyard with two other patients. There are pigeons on the floor that the narrator is a bit uncomfortable with. The dialogues that took place there about assertiveness between the narrator and another patient, where I, as a writer, was kind of shuffling positions between the narrator and the other patient, seeing the narrator or 'myself' through another person's eyes, led to the realisation of this tendency that I have to react rather than to assert myself. There are lots of other little discoveries like that throughout the book.

What made you choose *Hospital*? What was the first thing that drove you to want to translate this book?
Sinha: Sanya's sister, Luna Rushdi, whom I have known for several years, asked me if I'd like to read her sister's debut novel (in Bangla). I said of course, and they sent me a copy. The moment I read the first few pages, I felt this was the kind of novel that one would like to translate. So, I made my decision very early on and I'm very happy to say I wasn't disappointed. When a novel really speaks to me within the first few pages, and I talk to the author and they are okay with my going ahead and translating it, I start translating it right away without waiting to finish reading it till the end. So, reading *Hospital* in this case was simultaneous with translating it. It was a truly extraordinary experience from beginning to end.

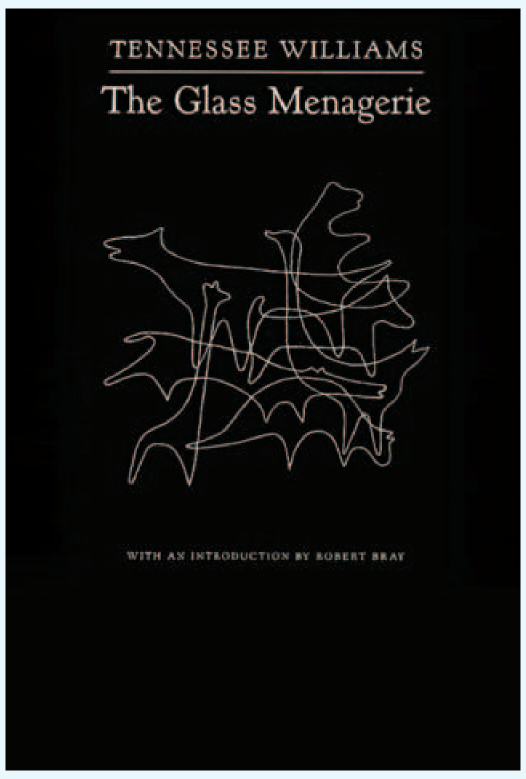
There is a part in the novel about assertiveness, where the protagonist is in the courtyard with two other patients. There are pigeons on the floor that the narrator is a bit uncomfortable with.

Do you start translating it in your head or do you prepare in advance? What does the process involve?
Sinha: The curse for the translator sometimes, especially when you're reading from the language in which you're translating, is that a part of your mind is always asking the question of whether this is a book you'd like to translate or not (assuming it hasn't been translated before). So, that part of the brain is always active, and you're right, even if I am not consciously translating in my head, I'm thinking of how it'll sound in English and so on. I'm not saying it happens with every book I work on, but *Hospital* was one of those books where I knew from the word go that this is a book that would work just as well in any other language.

In certain parts of the book, you left the original terms in Bangla where the characters are referring to family members as "Luna apa" or "Luna'r ma", the narrator's parents affectionately calling her "baba" and "ma", etc. Was that a conscious choice to keep the authenticity?
Sinha: Well, it's verisimilitude. It's important because at the back of your mind, you know that those conversations did not originate in English. When you start using terms like 'dear' or 'darling', you cannot insert a cultural context that does not exist. If you were talking about a family that was entirely integrated into the Anglophone world, and it didn't matter what the origins were, then it'd be fine. But, in this case, the family is not integrated in the sense that they have completely given up their ways of speaking in their own manner, including using endearments, and to gently point out the fact that, at the end of the day, this is a slightly different group of people, therefore those were useful markers.

These are excerpts from two interviews. Read the full conversations on DS Books and *The Daily Star*'s websites.

Nabilah Khan *was born and raised in Bangladesh and currently resides in Sydney, Australia. After more than a decade working in the global banking and financial services industry, she now works in the Australian public service.*



SHELF LIFE

The Glass Menagerie

Tennessee Williams, 1944

When we see glass, we think two things—how beautiful it is and how easily it can be broken. When we meet Laura in the play, we see the embodiment of this concept. Quietly struggling with mental illness, she spends her days tending to her little glass menagerie. She, her mother, and her brother live in a world of their own, wrapped in a cocoon of nostalgia and tucked away from reality. Yet, their world is what strikes the reader as real because of the way the play brings to life an all-too-familiar internal world rife with loneliness and human desperation. This play tugged at my heartstrings like none other! In the absence of a plot, there is the presence of an emotional tempest.

Syeda Fatema Rahman
Undergraduate student of English at North South University

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The opposition to Negro education in the South was at first bitter, and showed itself in ashes, insult, and blood; for the South believed an educated Negro to be a dangerous Negro. And the South was not wholly wrong; for education among all kinds of men always has had, and always will have, an element of danger and revolution, of dissatisfaction and discontent."

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

Star
SPORT
DHAKA THURSDAY JUNE 6, 2024, JAISHTHA 23, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
FIFA World Cup Qualifier
Bangladesh vs Australia
Live from 4:45 pm
NAGORIK TV AND STAR SPORTS 1,2,3
T20 World Cup
Australia vs Oman
Live from 6:30 pm
USA vs Pakistan
Live from 9:30 pm
Namibia vs Scotland
Live from 1:00 am (Friday)
SONY SPORTS 2,4,5
French Open
Live from 3:00 pm

Babar and Co take on charged-up USA

AGENCIES

Ahead of their T20 World Cup opener against co-hosts USA at the Grand Prairie Stadium in Dallas today, Pakistan captain Babar Azam did not hesitate to state their aim in the mega event.

"We are here to try to win the World Cup," said Babar, who recently became the second batter after Virat Kohli to go past the 4000-run mark in T20Is. Star Indian batter is leading the chart with 4037 runs, and Babar is a close second with 4023 runs.

But for Babar, who has been reinstated as the Pakistan skipper after their tumultuous brief spell under pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi following the 50-over World Cup in 2023, the focus was solely on playing as per the team requirement.

"I am not here thinking about personal records. What matters is that the team does well," Babar added.

Pakistan are dangerous opponents for the best of teams in major tournaments but they could face a rocky road in their quest for a first Twenty20 World Cup title since their sole triumph in 2009 after a radical overhaul in recent months.

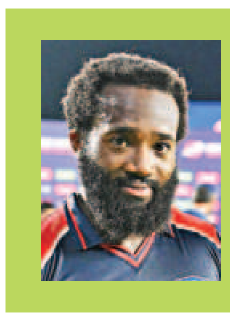
Pakistan are one of the three teams to have not played any warm-up fixtures ahead of the 20-team tournament, but Babar was not fixated on it.

Pakistan come fresh from playing a four-match T20I series against defending champions England, but two of those games in England were washed out while the other two were won by the hosts.

Meanwhile, ICC associates USA, despite being ranked 11 spots lower than sixth-placed Pakistan in T20I rankings, will be fancying their chances of springing a surprise in Dallas today.

Having come into the mega event on the back of a historic series win over Bangladesh, the USA opened the T20 World Cup in majestic fashion. Powered by a 40-ball 94 from Aaron Jones, the USA chased down a 195-run target with seven wickets and 14 balls to spare.

That effort definitely showed that USA not only have the firepower for a big chase -- something they might need against top T20 nations like Pakistan in the tournament.



- USA's Aaron Jones leads the T20 World Cup top-scorers chart, having scored a 40-ball 94 in their first game against Canada.
- Pakistan's Imad Wasim, the only left-arm spinner available in the squad, will be missing the USA game owing to a persistent side strain.

SHORT CORNER

Antonio Conte named new Napoli coach
Former Chelsea and Tottenham coach Antonio Conte was hired by Napoli on Wednesday as the deposed Serie A champions try to bounce back from their disastrous league title defence. Conte has signed a three-year deal which according to Italian media is worth eight million euros per season.

Shakib regains top spot from Hasaranga
Shakib Al Hasan is the beneficiary of an unusually disappointing outing for Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga against South Africa on Monday, with the Bangladesh all-rounder leapfrogging Hasaranga into the top spot in the latest ICC all-rounder rankings. Shakib had held the top sport for quite a few years before losing the throne to Hasaranga last week. However, despite Hasaranga taking two wickets against South Africa, the Lankan captain slipped to second position behind Shakib.

More than one in four Germans are not interested in Euro 2024
More than one in four Germans have no interest in the upcoming Euro 2024 hosted by their country, the biggest sports event in Germany in almost two decades, a poll conducted for public broadcaster ARD showed on Wednesday.

Read full stories on The Daily Star website

'Pakistan-India contest is like Super Bowl'

AGENCIES

Pakistan legend Shahid Afridi is excited that the American public will witness cricket's equivalent of the Super Bowl in New York on Sunday when archrivals Pakistan and India face off in a blockbuster T20 World Cup clash.

Comparing it to the famous Super Bowl, Afridi, the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 ambassador, said that America's cricket-loving crowd will witness the 'greatest cricketing rivalry'.

"For those Americans discovering the tournament, they should know that Pakistan's game against India is like our Super Bowl," Afridi wrote in his column for the ICC. "I used to absolutely love playing India and I really believe it is the biggest rivalry in sport.

"Against India, it is about handling the pressure of the occasion. There is so much talent in both teams, they just need to put it together on the day.

"People are going to love the support in the States. There is a great expat community over there which absolutely loves cricket.

"And the Americans absolutely love their sport, whether it is American football, basketball or baseball. I really believe that cricket will hit the mainstream over there in the next few years."

While he refused to pick any favourites from the India-Pakistan contest, he backed the Men in Green to overcome their recent indifferent form and bring their A-game out during the tournament.

Australia begin treble bid against self-assured Oman

AGENCIES

With the ICC Test Championship and the ODI World Cup already in the bag, Australia begin their T20 World Cup campaign against Oman at the Kensington Oval in Barbados today in their quest to become champions in all three formats.

The 2021-winners have brought an uber-experienced squad for their title charge and one will not be surprised if it's Mitchell Marsh's men dancing in ticker-tape after the final in Barbados, with history made as the first nation to hold all three of cricket's top global trophies.

Australia boast world-class players from top-to-tail and a champion outfit's conviction that no matter how bad things get, someone among them will carry the day.

Plenty of old hands remain, though, with 37-year-old opener David Warner to soak up his final farewell from international cricket and the usual pace trio of Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood reporting for duty.

Most of the players in the squad are over 30 and some will be managed carefully by staff, especially against a relatively feeble Oman who began their campaign with a Super Over defeat.

A few of Australia's key players whose teams progressed into the playoff of the IPL arrived late as they were allowed to return home for a few days.

Either Mitchell Starc or Pat Cummins is expected to be rested and the Aussies might look to go with the spin option of Ashton Agar instead. Marcus Stoinis and Cameroon Green will fight it out for place in the eleven because of their ability to bowl compounded with Marsh's fitness restrictions which will not allow him to contribute with the ball.

Despite the significant mismatch, Oman skipper Aqib Ilyas, buoyed by their opening game, assured that his side will not to be overwhelmed by stars in Australia's ranks and even pointed out a key weakness against spin he thought his opponent had.

"With the Australian team, they used to have a few players with good techniques in the past like Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne. But I don't think they have many now. They look to hit big. They only try to go for sixes," Ilyas told reporters.

"But every day is not the same day, and if we get the same wicket (as the one against Namibia) maybe it could be a problem for them.

"Just like the way you saw how difficult it was for the West Indies against PNG. They struggled to chase 130-odd despite them having some of the biggest hitters in the side.

Spin is indeed expected to play a part at the venue as spinners have an economy rate of 7.75 in contrast to the 8.12 runs an over pacers have conceded there.

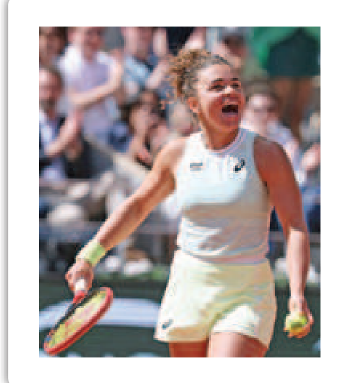
- This is set to be Australia's first-ever T20I encounter against Oman.
- Oman skipper Aqib Ilyas is set to play his 50th T20I.
- Australia leg-spinner Adam Zampa is eight wickets away from becoming the first from his country to pick up 100 T20I scalps.
- Opener David Warner, currently with 3099 runs, is 21 away from surpassing Aaron Finch to become Australia's top run-scorer in T20Is.

Paolini stuns Rybakina to reach French Open semis

REUTERS, *Paris*

Italian surprise package Jasmine Paolini staved off a fightback from fourth seed Elena Rybakina to seal a stunning 6-2, 4-6, 6-4 win on Wednesday and advance to the French Open semifinals for the first time.

The 12th-seeded Paolini set up a last-four showdown with either Belarusian world number two Aryna Sabalenka or Russian 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva, who meet in the quarter-finals later on Court Philippe Chatrier.



Playing in her first Grand Slam quarter-final, the 28-year-old Paolini got off to a confident start by winning the opening two games and forced her opponent to work hard to hold serve, before breaking again en route to taking the first set.

A sublime backhand winner gave Paolini another break in the third game of the next set but 2022 Wimbledon champion Rybakina responded with one of her own and slowly came to grips with the Italian's power and precision.

Russian-born Kazakh Rybakina exchanged breaks with Paolini again but the 24-year-old held firm to level the contest at one set apiece and recovered after surrendering her serve at the start of the decider.

Paolini secured a hold to love to make it 4-4, playing at the level she showed early in the match and she took advantage of Rybakina's errors to close out a famous victory.

Bangladesh aim to 'make things difficult' for Australia

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are eager to give visiting Australia a tough time when they square off in a Group I fixture of the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers in Dhaka today.

The match at the Bashundhara Kings Arena is set to kick off at 4:45pm.

Having confirmed a third-round berth in the World Cup Qualifiers with a maximum 12 points from four matches, Australia, who are ranked 160 places higher than Bangladesh, appear upbeat ahead of the encounter against the group's bottom dwellers.

The men in red and green, on the other hand, remain confident in their ability to use their home advantage this time against the Socceroos, who thrashed Bangladesh 7-0 at Aami Park in Melbourne in November last year and had handed 5-0 and 4-0 defeats at home and away matches, respectively, during the Russia World Cup Qualifiers in 2015.

"If you compare it to Melbourne [match], of course, we have the responsibility of improving what we did there. We had some good moments there, but definitely struggled for different reasons – one of those was that we conceded quite early, which we want to avoid tomorrow," Bangladesh head coach Javier Cabrera said at a pre-match press conference yesterday.

"We want to show our people at home that here we can compete with everyone, though we know how challenging it's going to be against tomorrow's [today's] rivals.

"We want to compete and make things difficult for Australia. That is our objective," the Spaniard added.

Captain Jamal Bhuiyan also wants to display their best in front of a familiar environment.

"Although we got short time to get prepared, the positive side was that all players had been in action in the league, and they had been at the top of fitness. We will be trying our level best to perform better against strong Australia," said Jamal, who also believes the day in Melbourne was a bad one for them.

"Wearing hand gloves, we had to play amid chilly weather in Melbourne, but this time we have some advantages – home ground, familiar conditions and home crowd. So, we want to utilise these small things to prove that the 7-0 drubbing in Melbourne was a bad day for us," said Jamal.

Australia, who enjoyed a rest day on Tuesday after arriving here, underwent their only training session yesterday in Dhaka following a four-day training in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Socceroos brought a comparatively younger side, dropping 12 players from the squad that played their last match against Lebanon in March. Also, around 10 players, who were part of the Australia squad during their recent Bangladesh encounter, will also miss today's affair.

According to Australia coach Graham Arnold, his troops would be wary of the home team.

"We do know that Bangladesh, when they play at home, they are a different team than away from home. Of course, we beat them seven-nil in November last year but that's all in the past. It's all about tomorrow and making sure our boys are mentally ready and strong for this game; and hopefully in front of a good crowd," said Arnold at yesterday's presser.

"Look, we have our standards and, when I say that, all our players understand that 'I don't care who we play against, whenever you wear the national team shirt of Australia on your heart, you play to the best of your ability with the right mindset to win the game'," remarked the Australia coach when asked about the slim chances of losing against Bangladesh.

Bangladesh and Australia players sweated it out at the practice venue of the Bashundhara Kings Arena yesterday ahead of their World Cup Qualifier today. The Men in Red and Green had lost the reverse fixture 7-0 in Melbourne in November last year.

PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

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WORKERS FAILING TO GO TO KL

People responsible will face the music

PM tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said her government will investigate why workers could not go to Malaysia before a deadline expired and will take action against those responsible.

The premier was responding to a supplementary question from Opposition Chief Whip Mujibul Haque Chunnu in parliament yesterday.

Earlier, the House went into budget session around 5:00pm, with Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair.

In the supplementary question, Chunnu enquired whether any action would be taken for the failure to send workers to Malaysia by the June 30 deadline.

In reply, the leader of the House said the government operated special flights to send workers to Malaysia.

"Workers were sent [to Malaysia] on special and regular flights. But many were left out. An investigation will be conducted to identify the reason [for not being able to send all workers to Malaysia].

"Whenever we discuss and decide how many people will go abroad, we see a group of people in our country, who deals with manpower export, try to send workers abroad in a hurry," she said.

Highlighting various steps taken by her government to send workers abroad, Hasina said that those who want to

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

India's Rishabh Pant and Shivam Dube celebrate their eight-wicket win over Ireland in their Twenty20 World Cup Group A match at Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York yesterday. India bowled out Ireland for 96 runs in 16 overs before racing to the victory target with 46 balls to spare.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Not much surprise left for Tigers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh travelled to the United States for a bilateral series with the hosts in the early hours of May 16 before beginning preparations for the T20 World Cup. Consequently, Bangladesh have had enough time to acclimatise to the conditions offered in Dallas and New York, the venues for their first two matches in the marquee event.

The Tigers have played four matches since then, with their game against USA in Dallas abandoned due to extreme weather conditions, which may have hindered a few subsequent training sessions. By and large, Bangladesh will not have an excuse in terms of adjustment to the conditions.

The wickets in question have been under scrutiny, with international media and experts calling out the subpar nature of the wickets. However, the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Ansar Al Islam raised Tk 18 lakh through crowdfunding

Say CTTC officials; three operatives arrested

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and*
EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Ansar Al Islam, a militant group inspired by al-Qaeda, has raised Tk 18 lakh through crowdfunding within a few months.

In the name of sending aid to the victims in Palestine, the outfit made Facebook posts mentioning mobile financial service accounts.

In the last two months, Ansar Al Islam raised the money after launching a platform called "Deen Islam Foundation" on Facebook.

This move was made after al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) late last year called upon the Bangladeshi citizens to provide assistance to Palestinian people.

Officials of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit disclosed this to The Daily Star recently.

The government banned Ansar Al Islam in March 2017.

On Saturday, the CTTC unit claimed to have arrested three operatives of Ansar Al Islam for collecting money under the banner of Deen Islam Foundation.

A team of the CTTC's counterterrorism investigation wing picked up Shakil Ahmed, 21, Fardin Ahmed Mirdul, 22, and Rayhan Hosain, 26, from the capital's Wari.

On the same day, the CTTC unit filed a case with Wari Police Station against the three under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Speaking to this newspaper, Jahidul Hoque Talukder, deputy commissioner of the DMP at the CTTC unit, said the arrestees had been involved in raising funds for the outfit. They gave false information like sending aid to Palestine, or Rohingya community, he added.

> **There is no evidence indicating that Ansar Al Islam has sent funds for the Palestinian people.**
>
> **AHAMEDUL ISLAM**
> Deputy commissioner of DMP

The CTTC unit later produced the arrestees before a Dhaka court seeking 10-day remand for each. The court, however, granted three-day demand.

Yesterday, a Dhaka court sent the three arrestees to jail.

According to the primary investigation

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

AZIM MURDER

Amanullah led the killing

He confesses before court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Amanullah, a key accused in the Anwarul Azim Anar abduction case, had confessed before a Dhaka court that he was in charge of the men who took part in killing the Jheniadah lawmaker.

Aktaruzzaman, a Bangladesh-born US citizen, gave him the contract to kill Azim, Amanullah said in his confessional statement yesterday.

Aktaruzzaman, known in his hometown Jheniadah as Shaheen Mia, and Azim used to syphon money out of the country through hundi and were involved in gold smuggling, said Amanullah.

After the two had a disagreement over the illegal racket, Aktaruzzaman met Amanullah and told him to kill Azim.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Israel launches new incursion into central Gaza

Mediators to resume talks on truce deal

REUTERS, *Cairo*

Israel yesterday announced a new military campaign against Hamas in central Gaza where Palestinian medics said dozens of people had been killed in airstrikes, complicating expected talks between mediators to try to finalise a ceasefire deal.

At least 44 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli military strikes in central Gaza Strip areas since Tuesday, health officials in the enclave said. "The sounds of bombardment didn't stop all night," said Aya, 30, a displaced woman in Deir Al-Balah.

The Israeli military said jets were hitting Hamas targets in central Gaza while ground forces were operating "in a focused manner with guidance from intelligence" in the area of Al-Bureij - one of Gaza's long established refugee settlements.

Residents said Israeli forces had sent tanks into Bureij and planes and tanks pounded the nearby settlements of Al-Maghazi and Al-Nuseirat as well as Deir Al-Balah city, where tanks have not invaded.

- 44 Palestinians killed in Deir Al-Balah
- Israeli ground forces move into Al-Bureij refugee camp
- Slovenia becomes latest EU country to recognise Palestinian state

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 36,586 people have been killed in the territory during more than seven months of offensive. The toll includes at least 36 deaths over the zpast 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

Meanwhile, Slovenia became the latest European Union country to recognise an independent Palestinian state after its parliament approved the

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

CUSTODIAL DEATH

Identify those responsible, take action

NHRC writes to home ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Afroza

The National Human Rights Commission has asked the home ministry to conduct a proper investigation into the death of a woman in police custody in Abhaynagar, Jashore, and identify those involved in torturing her.

The commission asked the secretary of the Public Security Division of the ministry to come up with a report on the investigation by July 30, according to a statement issued by the NHRC yesterday.

A letter from NHRC Chairman Kamal Uddin Ahmed said there were allegations that the woman's hair was tied to the ceiling fan while she

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

4TH PHASE UZ POLLS

Trend of low voter turnout continues

STAR REPORT

The fourth and last phase of upazila parishad elections was held by and large peacefully yesterday and the turnout was low like the previous phases.

In this phase, 60 upazilas went to polls.

Talking to reporters at the Election Commission after voting ended, Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal said the turnout in the fourth phase would be 34.33 percent.

He said the EC made the estimation based on information provided by the election officials of 5,144 polling centres.

The CEC did not respond to a query about the reason for the low turnout.

He said the polls were held peacefully and without any major violence.

He said 28 people were arrested over election-related offences, adding that voting at a polling station in Kishoreganj's Bhariab upazila was suspended as a ballot box was taken away.

The CEC said a presiding officer was arrested as he was found stamping ballot papers in Netrakona's Kendua upazila.

If the CEC's estimate is proven to be correct, this would be the lowest turnout

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Tree lovers observing the various trees and plants at the Jatiyo Brikkho Mela-2024, or national tree plantation drive and fair, at the old trade fair ground in the capital's Sher-E-Bangla Nagar. Organised by Bangladesh Forest Research Institute and inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday on the occasion of World Environment Day, the fair will continue till June 13.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Boeing Starliner launches first crew on third try

AFP, *Cape Canaveral*

Boeing yesterday launched its very first astronauts bound for the International Space Station aboard a Starliner capsule, which joins a select club of spacecraft to carry humans beyond Earth.

The third time turned out to be the charm for the aerospace giant, after two previous bids to fly with crew were aborted late into the countdown, for technical reasons.

Astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams, both of whom have two previous spaceflights under their belts, blasted off at 10:52 am (1452 GMT) from the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida, for a roughly one-week stay at the station.

"Suni and I are honored to share this dream of spaceflight with each and every one of you," Wilmore, who is commander of the test flight, said just before liftoff. "Let's put some fire in this rocket, and let's push it to the heavens."

Starliner becomes just the sixth type of US-built spaceship to fly Nasa astronauts, following the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo programs in the 1960s and 1970s, the Space Shuttle from 1981 to 2011, and SpaceX's Crew Dragon from 2020.

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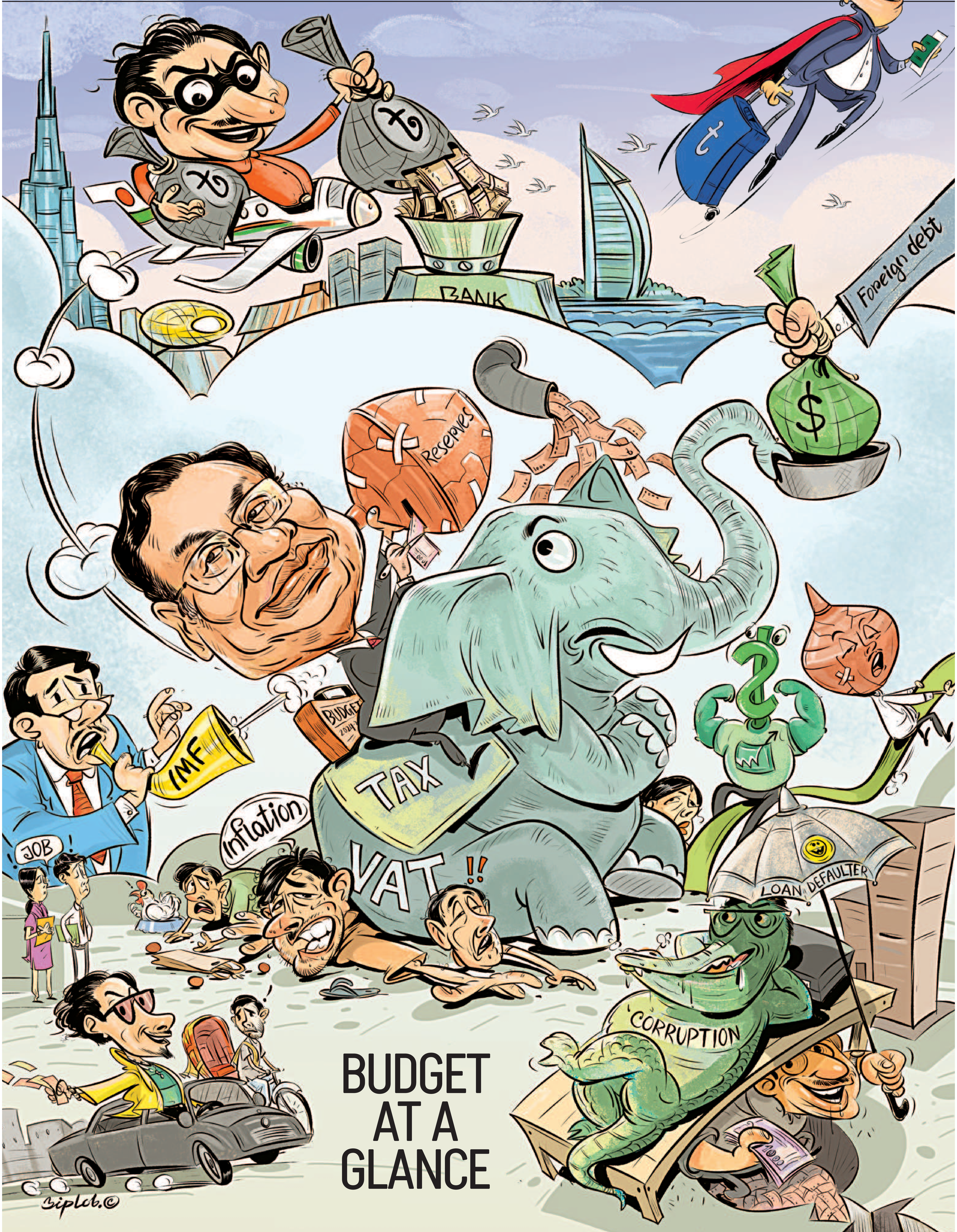
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BUDGET AT A GLANCE

BUDGET SIZE
Tk 797,000cr
(4.6% up)

REVENUE **Tk 541,00cr**

FOREIGN LOAN **Tk 90,700cr**

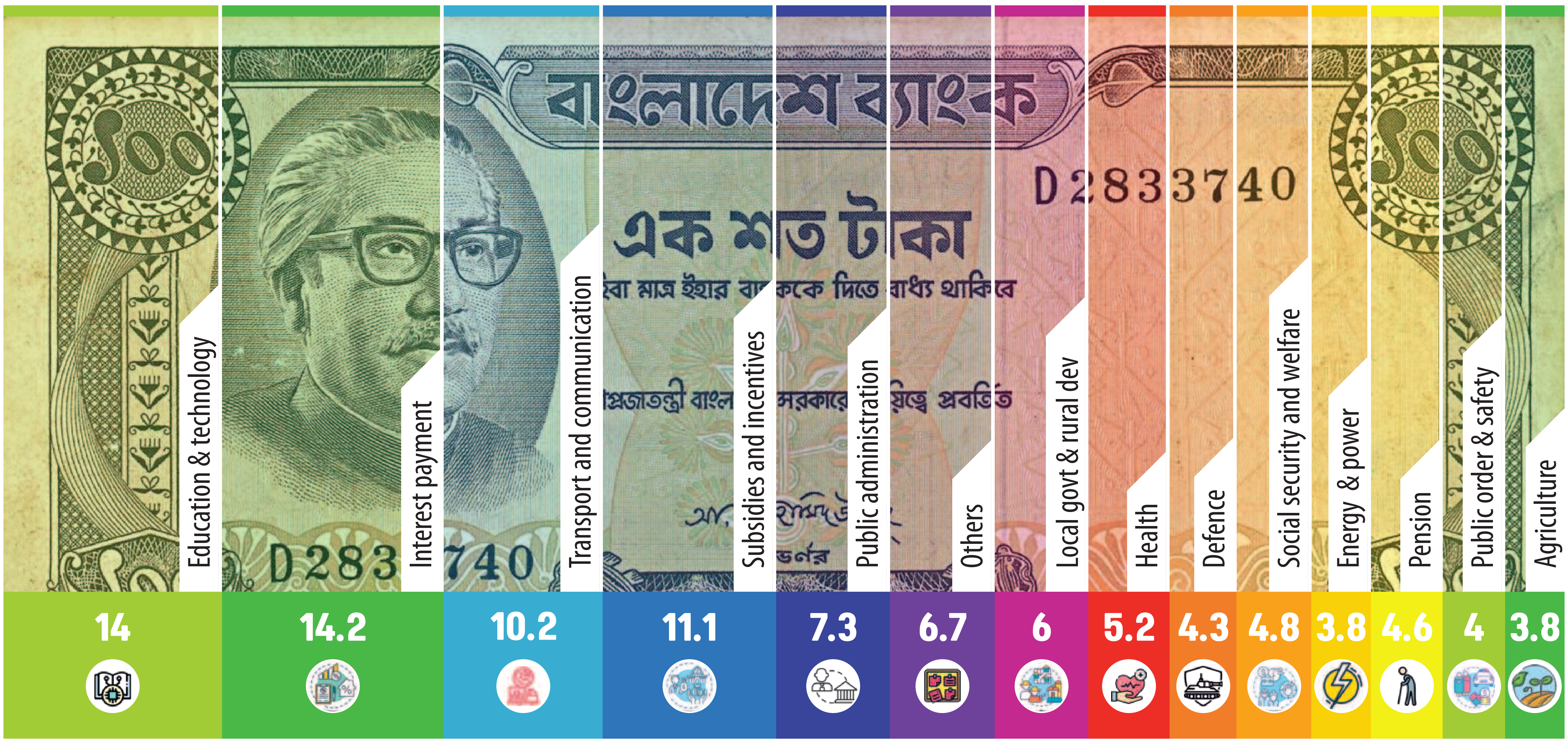
LOCAL LOAN **Tk 160,900cr**

BUDGET-TO-GDP RATIO **14%**

EXPENDITURE **Non-development: Tk 506,971cr** | **Development: Tk 281,453cr**

BUDGET OUT OF TK 100

USEOFRESOURCES



Tax burden to get heavier, life even harder

SOHEL PARVEZ

The tax measures unveiled yesterday for 2024-25 are not going to provide any relief to taxpayers.

It became apparent after the finance minister placed his proposals in parliament on income tax, value-added tax (VAT), and customs tariffs for the fiscal year beginning on July 1.

Let's consider the example of a young couple who have just started their conjugal life with a monthly income of Tk 43,800.

As the tax-free income threshold remains unchanged for FY25, the breadwinner of the two-member family will need to pay personal income tax, which will reduce their disposable income.

Now if the couple want to buy a refrigerator, they are likely to count more to get the home appliance, a necessity nowadays.

> **The wealthy will need to pay higher taxes on their incomes since the NBR seeks to reinstate a 30 percent tax rate on high-income earners after a gap of four years.**

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) will also collect higher taxes from each Tk 100 recharge on mobile phones, making phone calls and data usage costlier. The ultimate result will be reduced use of phones and internet, not only for the couple but also for all in Bangladesh, regardless of their incomes.

The higher tax burden comes at a time when people are desperately looking for a cushion from persistently higher consumer prices and preventing the erosion of living standards.

In May, inflation, a measure of the increase in the prices of a basket of commodities and services, edged up to 9.89 percent from 9.74 percent a month ago, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

Budget unlikely to make dent in soaring inflation

AHSAN HABIB

The new budget for the upcoming fiscal year is unlikely to provide respite from one of the longest spells of sustained inflation in Bangladesh as the government's measures appear to be missing the impetus required to contain the price spiral.

Although the government acknowledged that people are facing real suffering due to high inflationary pressure, the steps it took to fight the rise in prices remain inadequate.

For example, the government has kept the tax-free income threshold unchanged for the next fiscal year, starting on July 1.

At the same time, it plans to raise value-added tax (VAT) by 12 percent over the current year's target.

This may mainly be achieved by increasing value-added tax, which will ultimately compound the burden on the masses, irrespective of their income levels.

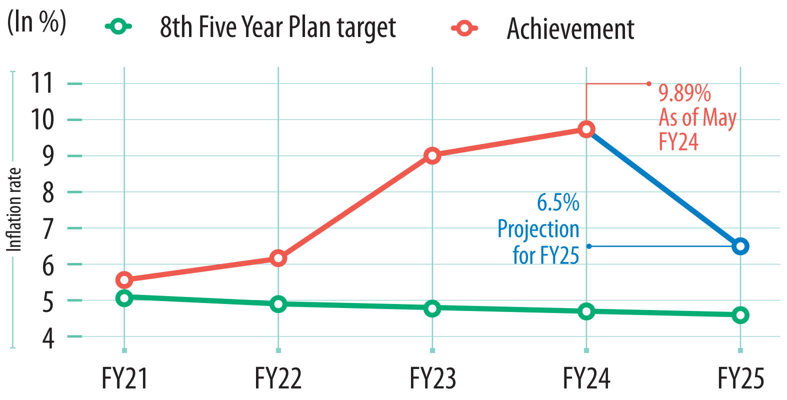
The budget has also brought no major good news when it comes to allocations for social safety net programmes although the need for state-sponsored assistance for the poor and low-income groups has never been higher.

MA Razzaque, research director of the Policy Research Institute, said the government reduced the growth of the budget size this year to squeeze deficit financing and reduce inflation.

The targeted budget deficit is 4.6 percent in FY25, which is slightly lower than the revised budget deficit for the current year, which stands at 4.7 percent.

This indicates that the budget deficit is not controlled much. As a result, the effectiveness of the budget deficit in lowering GDP growth will not translate to taming inflation, he said.

INFLATION: Projection vs reality



Although the government targeted to reduce the inflation rate to 6.5 percent, it maintained the higher GDP growth rate target of 7.5 percent. If the government targets higher GDP growth, it will stoke inflationary pressure.

"But this is normal," Razzaque said.

As inflation has remained at elevated levels for nearly two years, the government should have increased the tax-free income level.

Instead, the tax-free income level remained the same at Tk 3.5 lakh while some comfort was given to slightly upper-income people. The tax rate was 10 percent for people whose income was between Tk 4.5 lakh to TK 7.5 lakh but that slab has been changed to Tk 4.5 lakh to Tk 8.5 lakh.

Another demand from economists was increasing the allocation for social safety net programmes as poor and low-income groups have seen the rapid erosion of their purchasing power while incomes have either stagnated or declined.

But that was hardly reflected in

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

Mobile internet, talktime to be costlier

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The government has hiked the supplementary duty on mobile top-ups alongside VAT on SIM cards, pushing up costs that will be incurred by mobile and internet users, which will inevitably put a financial strain on access to essential services.

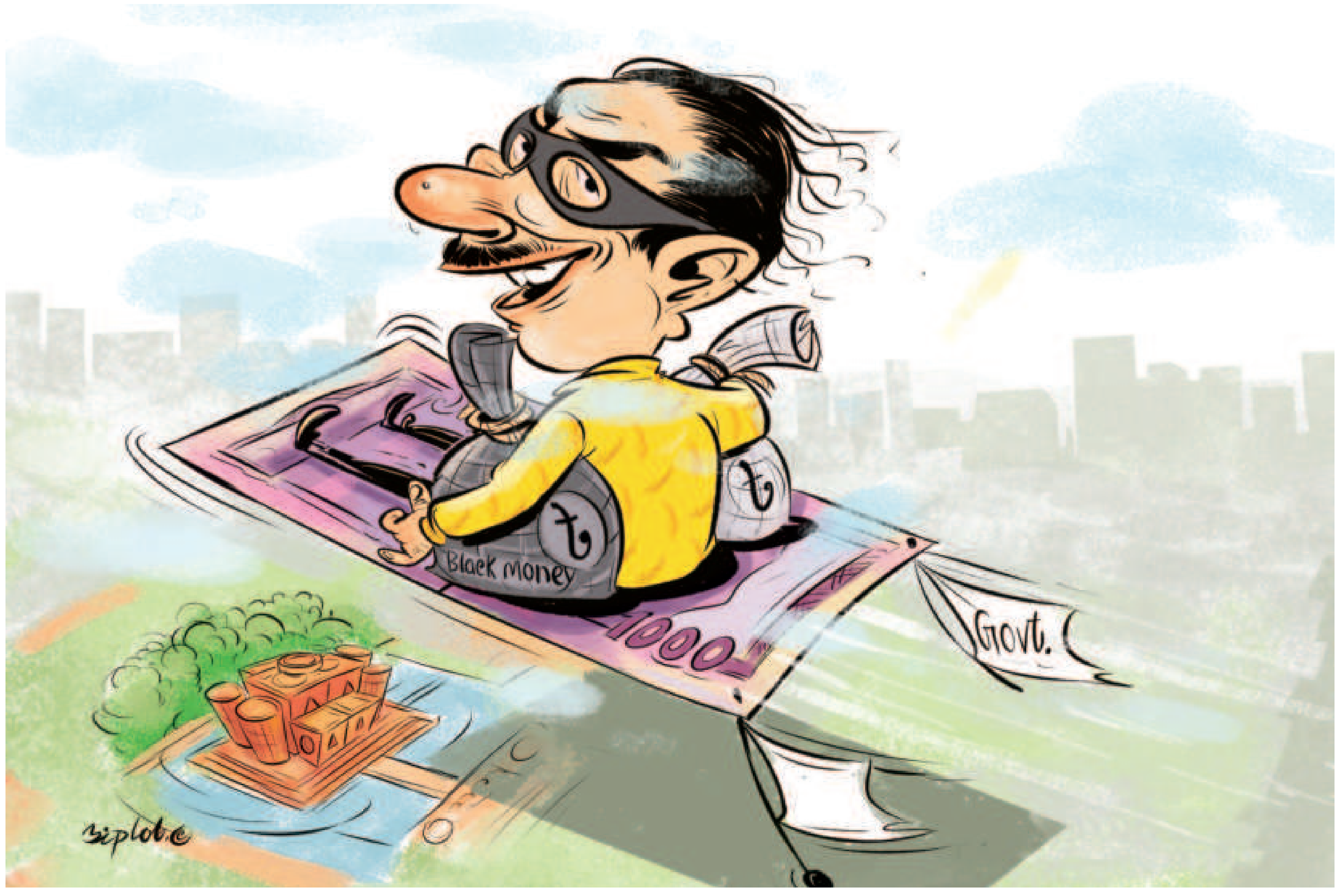
The supplementary duty has been raised from 15 percent to 20 percent in the proposed budget for fiscal year 2024-25.

This means that out of every Tk 100 top up of a user, the government will directly take Tk 28, which includes a 15 percent VAT and a 1 percent surcharge, whereas the government previously took Tk 25.

Meanwhile, the VAT was increased by Tk 100 to Tk 300 for every SIM.

The new duty rate on the telecommunication sector will exacerbate the woes of an already heavily taxed industry to unprecedented fiscal heights, potentially exerting adverse effects on digital services.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



BUDGET SNIPPETS

PER CAPITA INCOME TO TOP $3K

Bangladesh's per capita income will be $3,000 at the end of FY25 as the government expects economic growth to recover. Per capita GDP is projected at $2,780 at the end of FY24. It has been growing steadily over the last two decades. It was $700 in 2000 and about $300 in 1990.

REVENUE-GDP RATIO TO RISE TO 9.7PC

The revenue-to-GDP ratio will accelerate to 9.7 percent in FY25 as the government looks to generate higher taxes by cutting exemptions, speeding up digitalisation, and implementing reforms. The ratio stands at about 8 percent in FY24, one of the lowest in the world. India's ratio is 16.98 percent, Indonesia's 11.59 percent, Vietnam's14.03 percent, and Thailand's 15.57 percent.

MPS' DUTY-FREE CAR IMPORTS GO

The government has scrapped the duty-free privilege for lawmakers in importing cars. They have been enjoying the facility since 1988. Now, they will have to pay a 25 percent duty on car imports. People pay a 25 percent import duty, a 15 percent VAT, 5 percent advance tax, and 400 to 500 percent supplementary duty on imported cars.

BANGLADESH 33RD ECONOMY

Bangladesh has become the 33rd largest economy in the world, according to the size of the gross domestic product estimated in 2023, two notches higher than in FY24. The country aspires to achieve the upper-middle-income status in 2031 and become a developed nation by 2041.

OFFSHORE BANK DEPOSITS EXEMPTED FROM EXCISE DUTY

Depositors, who park funds in offshore banking units (OBUs), will enjoy exemption from the excise duty on their foreign currency deposits in FY25. The government has offered the benefit as banks in the country are working to attract foreign currency holders, particularly non-resident Bangladeshis, to make deposits in their OBUs.

Budget shows fault lines, not a path out of the crisis

ARUN DEVNATH

Finance ministers don't possess crystal balls to captivate the audience with mystical allure. They don't have magical foresight. They are real-world agents of economic policy. In times of crisis, which often repeats itself in modern capitalism, they chart a path out of the dark abyss. Sometimes they prove to be successful, sometimes not.

How does Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali measure up to these norms as the new finance minister of Bangladesh? He did try to leave an imprint on our minds, at least by showing the fault lines in the economy and eventually admitting weaknesses, but he blamed almost everything on the global crisis. It was akin to a PR exercise designed to mask the government's own wrongdoing. Economists suggest the new budget is a bland continuation of the past and has failed to carve a way out of the crisis.

Mahmood Ali acknowledged that the government unsuccessfully tried to tame inflation. Efforts to bridle budget spending alongside a contractionary monetary policy were futile. He attributed stubborn inflation primarily to import-induced price increases and disruptions to the domestic supply chain. But his goal to bring inflation down to 6.5 percent in the fiscal year starting in July from more than 9 percent raised eyebrows.

Bangladesh looks to fiscal consolidation by reducing the budget gap to 4.6 percent of GDP, the narrowest in a decade. The administration vowed to continue belt-tightening, a term hardly used in government circles, in a country perpetually obsessed with growth. This is not to say the government will follow an austere path for too long, as it fears this approach may slow the growth rate.

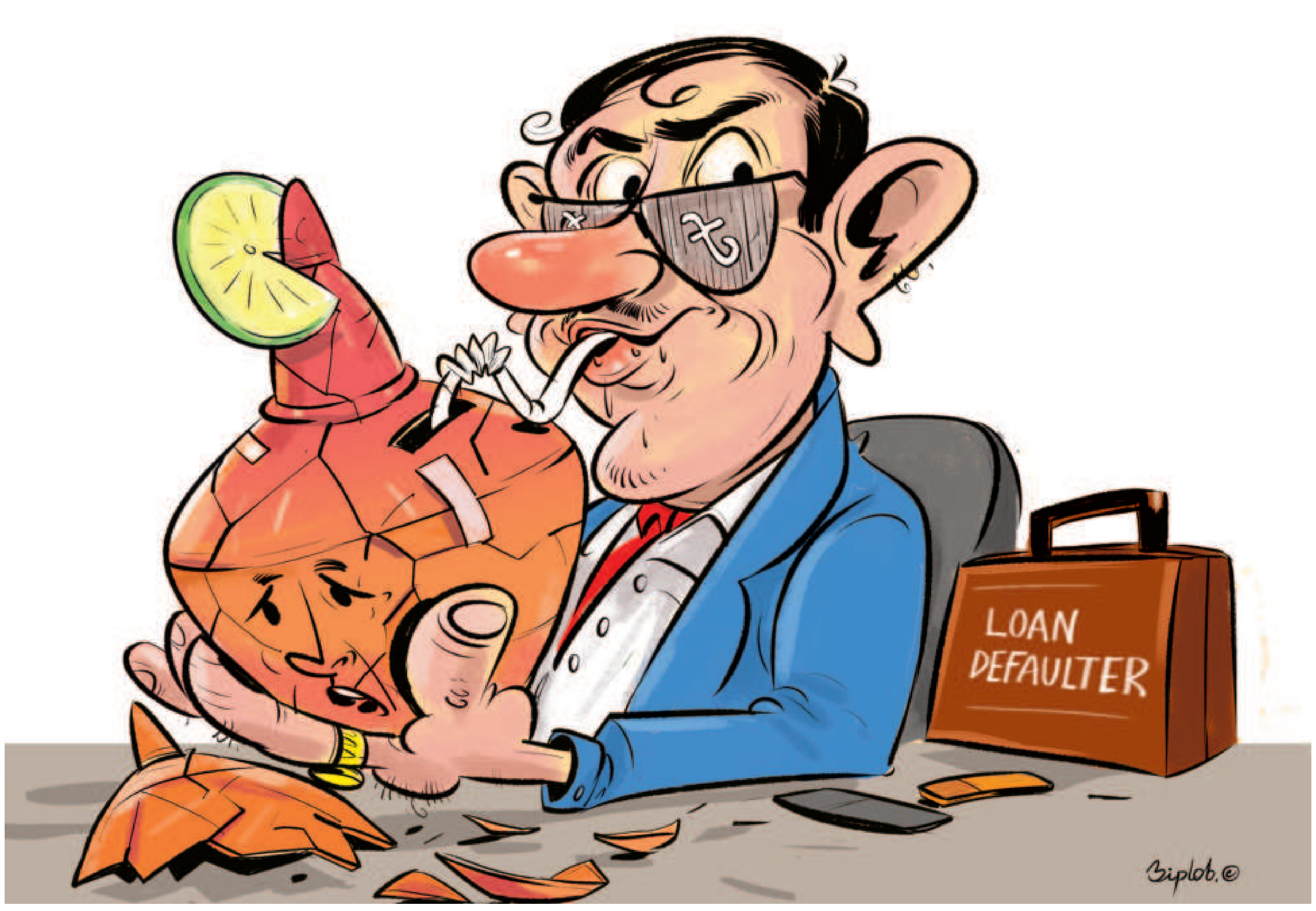
"Therefore, our goal will be to increase government spending gradually in the second half of the upcoming fiscal year. This will be possible if the revenue realisation increases. To this end, we will lay emphasis on removing tax exemptions gradually," the finance minister said.

The GDP growth target, 6.75 percent, appears to be a decent goal as rating agencies and multilateral lenders have kept the forecast closer to this number. The medium-term growth outlook is favourable, supported by garment exports and stable remittance inflows. In the near term, however, growth may be affected by a lingering dollar shortage.

Amid persistent worry over the economy, the government raised the national budget by 4.6 percent year-on-year to Tk 7,97,000 crore, the slowest pace since Sheikh Hasina's party returned to power in 2009.

Can the budget win back the confidence of local and foreign investors? Very unlikely. That is evidenced by a 14 percent drop in foreign direct investments in 2023 from a year earlier. The trust deficit has also been exposed by the massive sell-off by foreign and local investors. The market lost 1,000 points in just three months, just before the budget, once it allowed investors to sell their shares at will.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



Solutions not offered

Say economists; some businesses term it time-befitting

JAGARAN CHAKMA *and* A M JAHID

The proposed budget for 2024-25 lacks creativity and offers no solutions to the many complex challenges facing the country's economy, economists have said.

In their instant reaction yesterday, they also termed the outlay "traditional".

Rizwanul Islam, former special adviser for the employment sector of the International Labour Organization, Geneva, said the budget has been presented at a time when the country's economy is experiencing major challenges like low foreign reserves, high inflation, fluctuating exports, and stagnant remittance inflow through formal channels.

"But one does not see any new thinking and recalibration of the policy approach that was needed to reduce inflation, boost employment and to protect the vulnerable," he said.

According to him, the targets for GDP growth and inflation rate appear to be unrealistic due to the internal inconsistency between GDP growth and restrictive monetary policy, the precarious state of foreign reserve and import compression.

"The goal of reining in inflation through reduction in import duties of some items hinges critically on the transmission of such reduction to the domestic market. Previous record on this does not generate much hope," he added.

Rizwanul said a more realistic approach should have been taken for macroeconomic stabilisation with a lower rate of GDP growth, gradual reduction of the inflation rate, adoption of job creation programmes, and greater support to the poor and vulnerable.

Zahid Hussain, former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office, said the proposed budget has a few positive features, but overall it falls well short of being consistent with the immediate needs and the medium-

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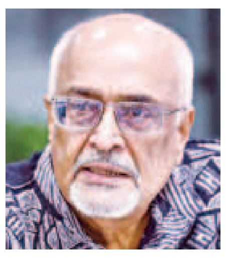


Old malaise flaring up

DEBAPRIYA BHATTACHARYA

The budget for the upcoming fiscal year, presented in the context of inordinately complex economic circumstances, reflects both the government's restraint and limitations.

The broad macroeconomic framework for the next fiscal year provides a moderate GDP growth rate of 6.75 percent, a public investment rate of 6.0 percent of GDP (less than that of the earlier year), and an inflation rate of 6.5 percent (down from 10 percent). The tax-GDP ratio is expected to remain static at less than 10 percent.

The trade-off between growth and inflation is pretty apparent. It implies loss of employment and income. The critical factor in this respect is the availability and effective

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

WHITENING BLACK MONEY

'Unethical, unjust and unacceptable'

Economists blast the provision

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

Backtracking on its promise to eliminate black money, the government has once again made room to allow both individuals and companies to whiten money without facing scrutiny and by paying a 15 percent tax, a move that drew sharp criticism from economists and civil society.

The government hopes the initiative will increase the flow of money into the economy despite such measures failing to yield any fruitful benefits in the past.

According to the new provision, no authority can raise any question if a taxpayer pays tax at fixed rates for immovable properties such as flats and land and 15 percent tax on other assets, including cash, irrespective of the existing laws of the country.

The scope to whiten black money will remain in place till June 2025.

Before the last national election, the Awami League's election manifesto promised strong measures against those hoarding undisclosed money as well as those engaged in corruption.

But economists and corruption watchdogs said that successive governments allowing the whitening of black money was akin to "licencing corruption".

"This scope shouldn't be allowed at all," said Prof Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, a think tank. "It's unacceptable, ethically and financially."

When countries such as India and Indonesia provided the scope to whiten black money, they only did so for a certain period and with the warning attached that they would penalise anyone who failed to whiten money within the deadline.

"Bangladesh, however, continues to provide amnesty year after year. As a result, the objective remains unachieved," said Mustafizur.

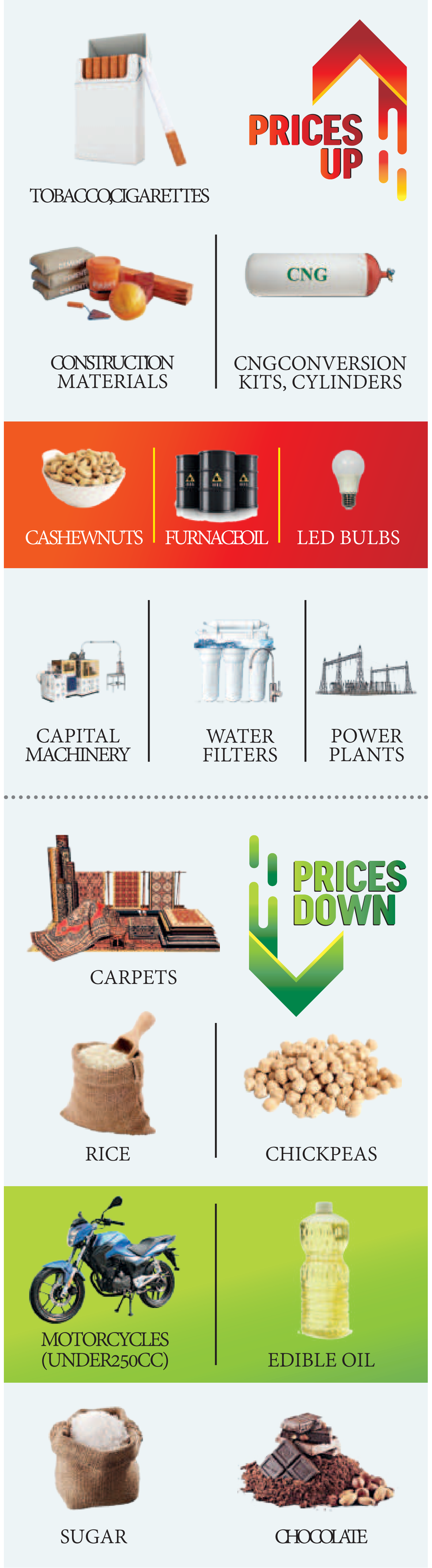
Since independence, schemes to legalise undeclared money have been introduced at least 22 times. But the response has been lukewarm.

According to data from the National Board of Revenue (NBR), nearly Tk 45,522 crore was whitened between 1972 and 2022, with the collector getting Tk 4,641 crore in taxes in total.

A record Tk 20,600 crore was legalised in 2020-21, when the government offered a full amnesty similar to yesterday's provision. This helped the NBR collect Tk 2,064 crore in taxes in FY21.

In 2006-07, the caretaker government offered the scope to legalise black money after paying a penalty, which is not normally levied. In that year, Tk 9,682 crore was whitened.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5



AL MANIFESTO

Budget passes over some key promises

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

In its first proposed budget after assuming power for a fourth consecutive term, the Awami League government skirted round some of the promises the party made in its election manifesto for the January 7 parliamentary polls.

The proposed budget for 2024-25 fiscal year outlined a vision for marching towards a smart and prosperous Bangladesh by 2041.

To achieve the goal, it listed 14 key areas, which closely align with the party's manifesto.

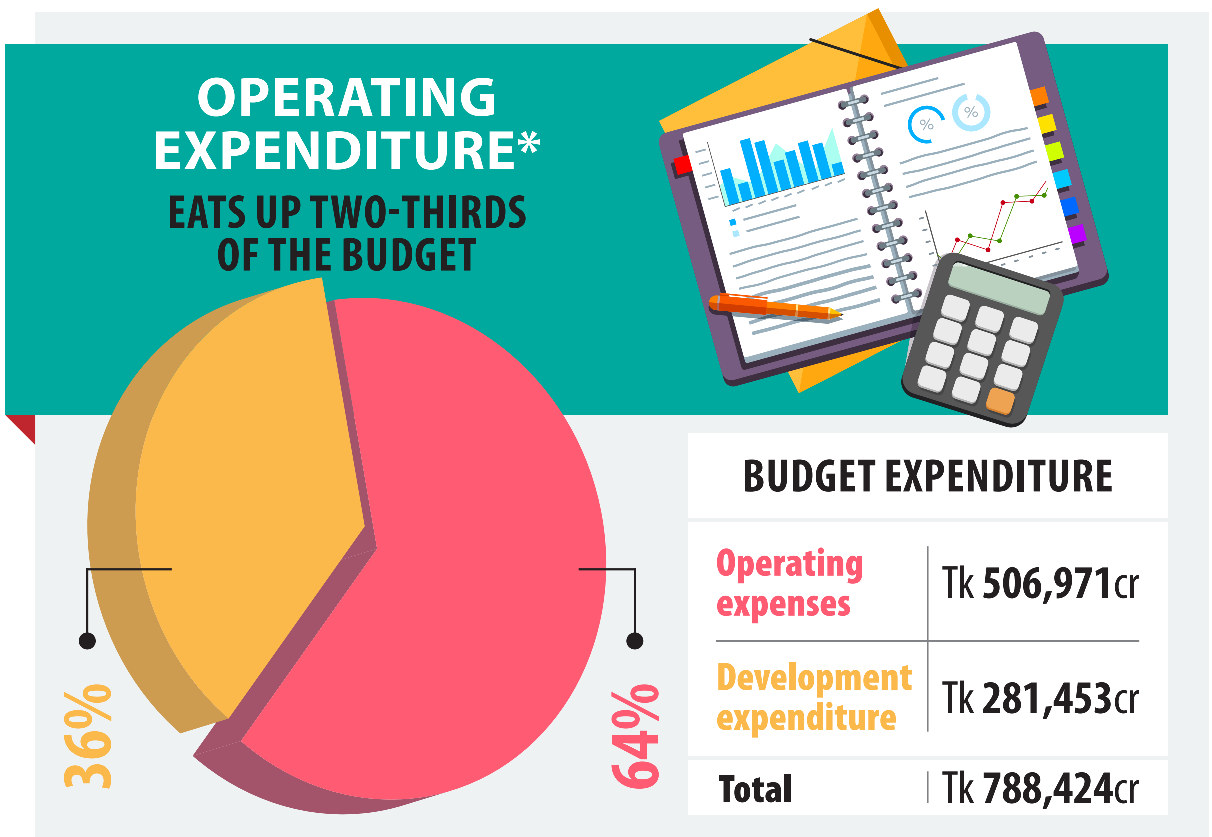
Keeping the prices of essentials within people's reach was stated as a top priority in the manifesto, but it did not make it to the finance minister's list of priorities.

When the AL unveiled its manifesto in December last year, it had vowed to cut inflation and ensure a smooth supply chain to bring down commodity prices.

The food inflation, which was 9.58 percent at that time, went up to 10.76 percent last month, a seven-month high.

However, the finance minister in his budget speech yesterday expressed optimism that the inflation will come

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4



BUDGET EXPENDITURE	
Operating expenses	Tk 506,971cr
Development expenditure	Tk 281,453cr
Total	Tk 788,424cr

*Salary and allowance of govt officials, subsidy, loan interest, etc.

SOCIAL SAFETY NET

Share of the poor dwarfed by others

ZYMA ISLAM *and* **NILIMA JAHAN**

Under the FY24-25 social safety net programme of Bangladesh, the allocations for pension for retired government employees and savings scheme interest payments are nearly equivalent to the amount allocated for social assistance for the poor, the old and the disaster-struck.

The budget shows that social protection for senior citizens disproportionately benefits the rich and retired government employees over the poor.

The social assistance programme, which covers myriad cash transfers for 54 types of vulnerable target populations, including senior citizens, was allocated Tk 49,871.65 crore.

Specifically, cash assistance in the form of old age allowance was allocated only Tk 4,350.97 crore, with widows getting a further Tk 1,844.32 crore.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, along with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, is entering the parliament yesterday to present the national budget for fiscal 2024-25.

PHOTO: PID

Breakdown of money spent over 13 years

Fastest expenditure growth
FY10-FY23

Civil aviation and tourism ministry: **15,527**%
Science and tech ministry: **4,975**%
Liberation War affairs ministry: **4,712**%
Financial institutions division: **3,027**%
Shipping ministry: **2,431**%

Slowest expenditure growth
FY10-FY23

Statistics and informatics division: **4.40**%
Planning division: **5.19**%
Food ministry: **9.25**%

ZYMA ISLAM *and* **TAHIRA SHAMSI UTSA**

The food ministry spent less in fiscal 2022-2023 compared to fiscal 2009-2010, according to data on expenditure over the last 13 years.

In FY23, as the general public battled rising food prices, the government's spending was Tk 5,014 crore, which is Tk 500 crore less than it spent in FY10.

The finance ministry saw the highest increase in terms of money spent – Tk 71,994 crore more in FY23 than in FY10, when it spent only Tk 4,034 crore.

The second highest rise was in the expenditure for interest paid domestically by the government. This includes interest paid on the government's loans from the commercial sectors, as well interest on its many savings instruments.

Interest payments by the government reigned supreme out of all sectors in FY23, in terms of expenditure as a portion of the Gross Domestic Product.

The GDP in FY22-23 was Tk 44,39,273 crore, and interest payments, crossing Tk 92,107 crore, made up 2.07 percent of the GDP.

In FY23, the Anti-Corruption Commission was in the bottom 10 when it came to increase in expenditure. However, in FY21, it saw the lowest increase in budgetary allocation, among all the sectors.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Bad loans hit historic high

No reform initiative to fight the menace

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Default loans in the banking sector of Bangladesh hit an all-time high of Tk 182,295 crore, but no reform programme to reduce it has been announced in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

The default loans amounted to Tk 145,633 crore by the end of December. This means it surged by Tk 36,662 crore, or 25 percent, in January-March compared to the preceding quarter, according to the latest data of the Bangladesh Bank.

Besides, non-performing loans (NPLs), also known as toxic assets, climbed by Tk 50,675 crore in the quarter compared to same period of 2023.

The central bank released the figure on a day when Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali unveiled the new government's first budget.

Industry insiders said the rise in NPLs is a result of irregularities, scams, weak corporate governance and a lack of proper monitoring by the central bank.

They also said the actual volume of default loans is higher than the official figure.

At the end of March this year, the total disbursed loans stood at Tk 1,640,855 crore, of which Tk 182,295 crore was defaulted, the highest in the history of Bangladesh. This means 11.10 percent of the disbursed loans have turned sour.

Bad loans in the banking sector stood at only Tk 22,481 crore when the Awami League formed the government in 2009.

When asked for the reason for the spike in bad loans, Bangladesh Bank Executive Director and Spokesperson Md Mezbaul Haque could not give a suitable answer.

He told The Daily Star that bad loans at the state-run banks rose sharply, leading to higher NPLs overall.

Default loans at state-run commercial banks stood at Tk 84,221 crore in March, accounting for 27 percent of their total Tk 312,266 crore disbursed loans, as per BB data.

Scam-hit Janata Bank registered the highest volume of bad loans, contributing Tk 30,495 crore. This represented 31 percent of the loans it had disbursed.

Agrani Bank's bad loans amounted to Tk 20,864 crore, or 28 percent of its disbursed loans.

Moinul Islam, a former professor of economics at Chittagong University, said the actual volume of bad loans is more than Tk 500,000 crore if written-off loans, rescheduled loans and loans with court injunctions are considered.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, said the default loan figure is not new and it has now been uncovered due to the condition of the International Monetary Fund.

He thinks around 25 percent loans turn defaulted. This will bring the bad loan volume to around Tk 4 lakh crore. "There are bad loans that are yet to be made official. They will be disclosed in the future."

He said the banking sector has weakened due to the higher level of bad loans and it has a negative impact on good borrowers.

Bankers say there is tendency among borrowers to refrain from repaying loans citing excuses of the present economic condition.

On the other hand, most of the loans of the state-run banks were availed through irregularities and scams, and that is why it is difficult to recover those loans.

Bad loans at private commercial banks stood at Tk 88,900 crore, or 7.28 percent

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

A fresh blow to stock investors

They'll face 15pc tax if income crosses Tk 50 lakh

AHSAN HABIB

In yet another blow to stock market investors, the government plans to impose a capital gains tax on them from next fiscal year.

Although this has disheartened stock market analysts, they welcomed another move allowing black money into the stock market and increasing corporate tax for listed companies that have not offloaded at least 10 percent of their shares.

The government plans to impose at least 15 percent capital gains tax on general investors if their income from share trading crosses Tk 50 lakh.

Since 2015, individual investors had been exempted from paying tax on capital gains from stocks, mutual funds, bonds and debentures.

However, sponsors and directors of listed companies currently face a 5 percent tax deduction at source on capital gains from share transfers.

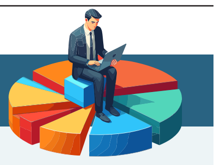
The government has increased this rate to 10 percent in the proposed budget.

However, the tax will not be applicable in case of shares transferred as a gift between parents and children and between spouses.

Market analysts fear that the market is losing

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

BUDGET SNIPPETS



TAX ON PROVIDENT FUND RISES TO 27.5PC

The NBR is going to bring back the 27.5 percent tax rate on the incomes generated by provident, gratuity, superannuation, and pension funds. In December, the rate was cut to 15 percent from 27.5 percent. The Income Tax Act 2023 lifted the tax exemption and amnesty on the compulsion to file returns for the funds maintained by the private sector.

SURCHARGE STRUCTURE UNCHANGED

The government has kept the existing structure of surcharge, which is imposed on the wealthy. Currently, the rate of surcharge payable up to the net asset value of Tk 4 crore is nil. If the net asset value exceeds Tk 4 crore, a 10 percent surcharge is slapped. When the value crosses the maximum limit of Tk 50 crore, the rate rises to 35 percent.

CIGARETTES TO BECOME PRICIER

The supplementary duty on cigarettes has gone up by 1 percentage point to 66 percent in the upcoming fiscal year of 2024-25 as the government plans to make them costlier and cut their consumption. The value-added tax on the local production of cigarettes and bidi paper has been raised to 15 percent from the existing 7.5 percent.

ACs, REFRIGERATORS TO BE DEARER

The finance minister has proposed imposing 7.5 percent VAT on air conditioners, refrigerators, and freezers. At present, there is no VAT on ACs while it is 5 percent for refrigerators and freezers. Manufacturers and retailers estimate that 5.3 lakh ACs were sold in 2023, up from 3.3 lakh in 2022, as the country is increasingly witnessing higher temperatures.

15PC VAT ON AMUSEMENT PARK VISITS

The government has imposed a 15 percent VAT on amusement parks and theme park services. At present, they pay 7.5 percent VAT. In addition, the existing VAT exemption for tour operator services has been withdrawn. Over the last two decades, about Tk 12,000 crore has been invested in amusement parks, where about 6 lakh people are directly employed.

TAX RATES FOR INDIVIDUALS

YOUR INCOME AND CORRESPONDINGTAXRATE	FY25 TAX RATES(IN%)
Up to Tk 3.5 lakh	0
Tk 3.50 lakh plus to Tk 4.5 lakh	5
Tk 4.5 lakh plus to Tk 8.50 lakh	10
Tk 8.50 lakh plus to Tk 13.50 lakh	15
Tk 13.50 lakh plus to Tk 18.50 lakh	20
Tk 18.50 lakh plus to Tk 38.50 lakh	25
Tk 38.50 lakh plus	30

FY25 BUDGET

TAX RATES FOR COMPANIES

TYPE	FY24(%)	FY25(%)
Listed companies that issue shares over 10% of paid-up capital	20	22.5*
Listed companies that issue shares below 10% of paid-up capital	22.5	25*
Non-listed companies	27.5	27.5*
One-person company	22.5	22.5*
Merchant banks	37.5	37.5
Listed mobile phone operators	40	40
Listed banks and financial institutions	37.5	37.5
Non-listed banks and financial institutions	40	40
Non-listed mobile phone operators	45	45
Cigarette and tobacco companies	45**	45**
Cooperatives	15	20

* Rates will be 2.5 percentage points lower if expenses and investments above Tk 5 lakh in each single transaction and above Tk 36 lakh in total annually are done through bank transfers

** 2.5% surcharge

FOR WEALTH, YOU HAVE TO PAY A SURCHARGE TAX

FY25						
NET WEALTH	Up to Tk 4 crore	Tk 4 crore plus to Tk 10 crore, or ownership of more than one car, or ownership of 8,000 square feet house	Tk 10 crore plus to Tk 20 crore	Tk 20 crore plus to Tk 50 crore	Above Tk 50 crore
SURCHARGE RATES (IN %)	0	10	20	30	35

BUDGET FY25

What does it mean for you?

TAX-EXEMPTED INCOME THRESHOLD UNCHANGED AT TK 3.5 LAKH A YEAR

- You will be under tax net if you earn over Tk **43,800** a month
- Your tax rate will be 10% if you earn Tk **80,440** a month
- You will pay **15%** tax for income of up to Tk **106,300** a month

TAX RATE OF 30% REINTRODUCED

- Your tax liability will increase if you earn more than Tk **3.58** lakh+ per month

NEW MEASURES

- Tax rates to remain unchanged for two years
- Your tax planning will be easier for knowing tax rate in advance
- Your capital gains over Tk **50** lakh from share selling will come under tax net

BUSINESSES

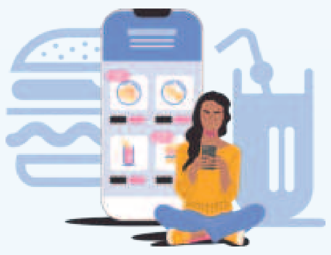
- Tax of your firm will fall if you do cashless transaction
- Assess the tax liabilities of your businesses by yourself
- Taxmen may audit, but will not assess anymore

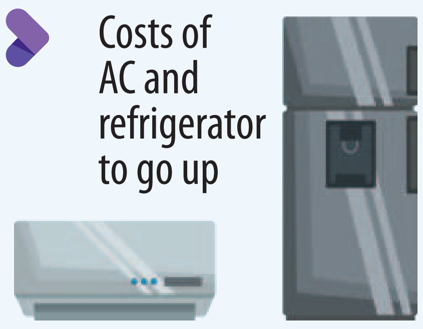
SMOKING IS BAD *for* POCKETS TOO!

NO TOBACCO

VAT & CUSTOMS MEASURES

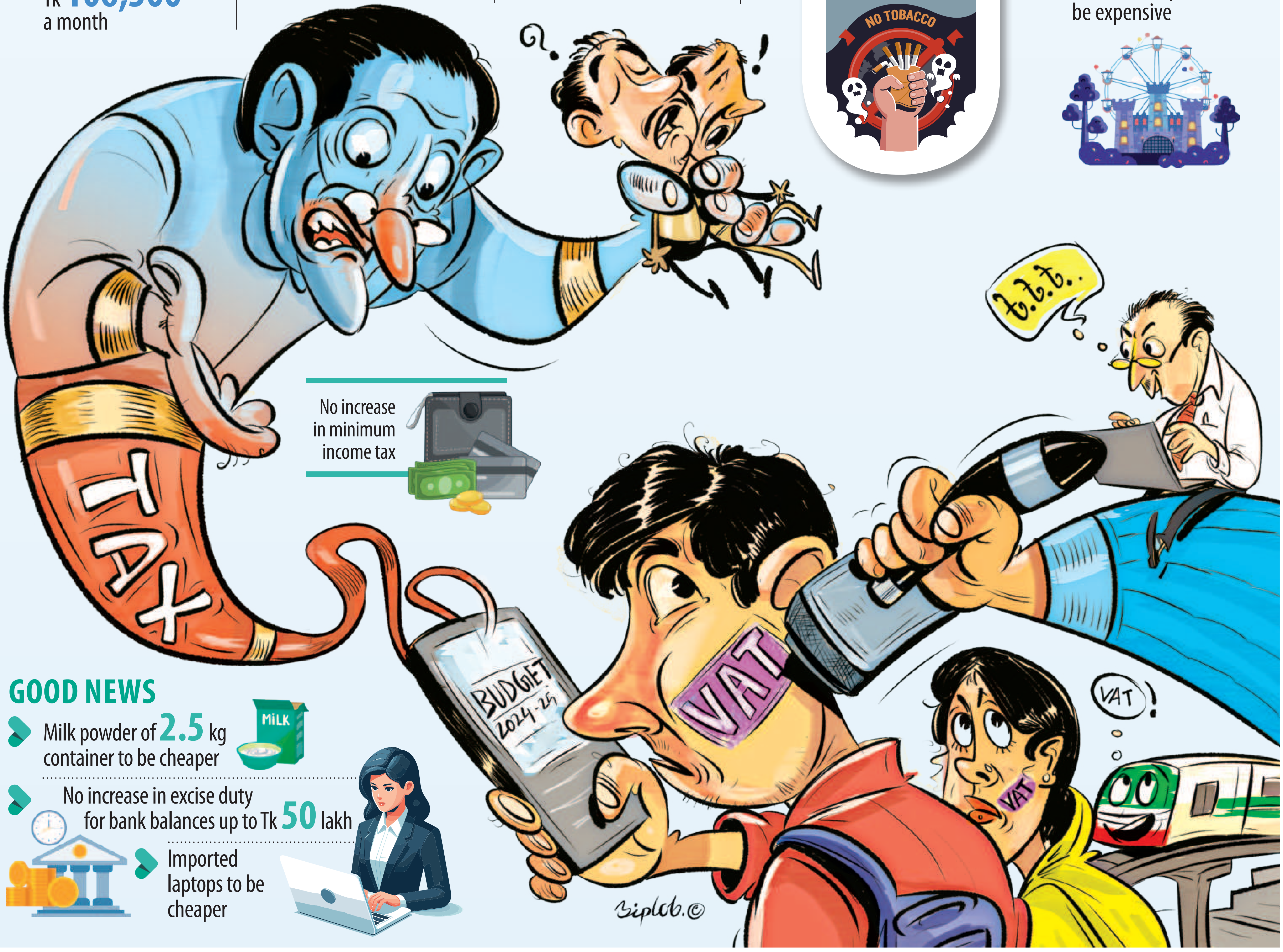
- Your mobile phone, and data usage expenses will rise





- Costs of AC and refrigerator to go up

- Ice cream and beverages will be costlier
- Having fun at amusement parks to be expensive

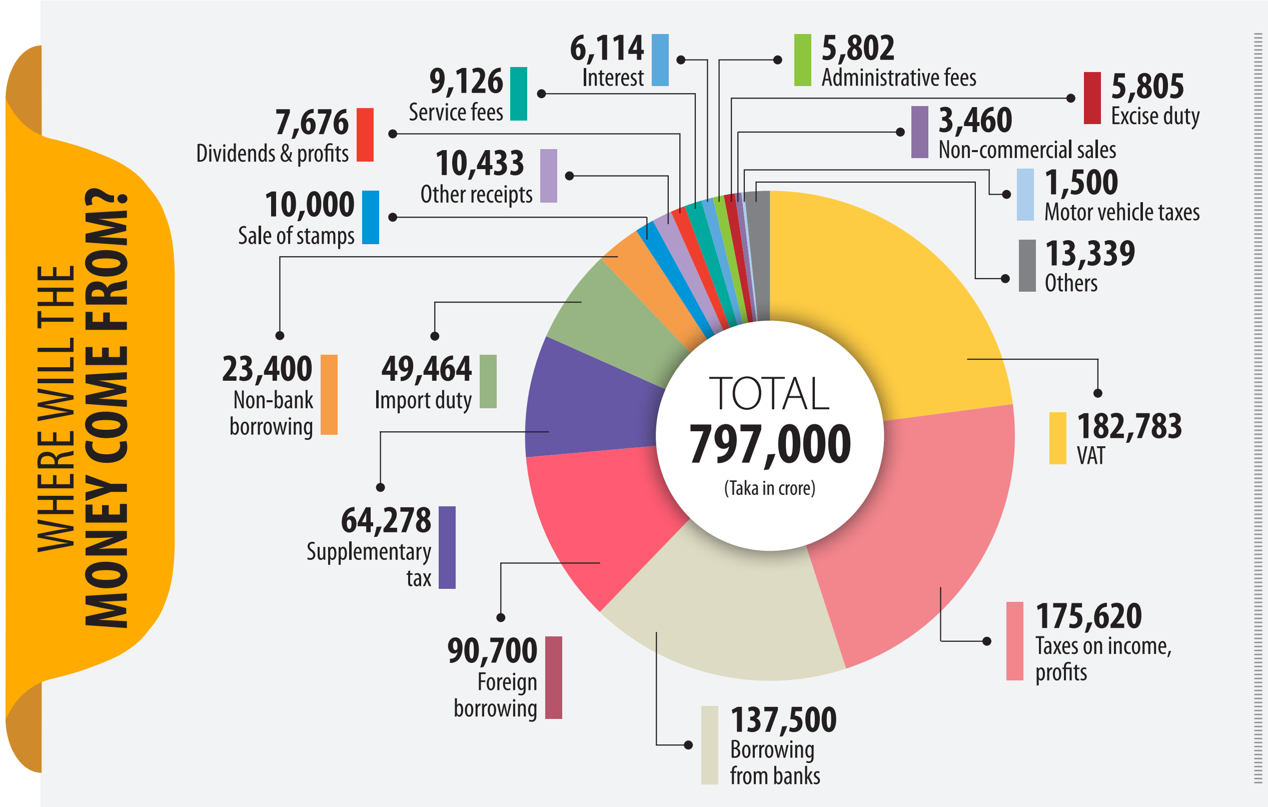


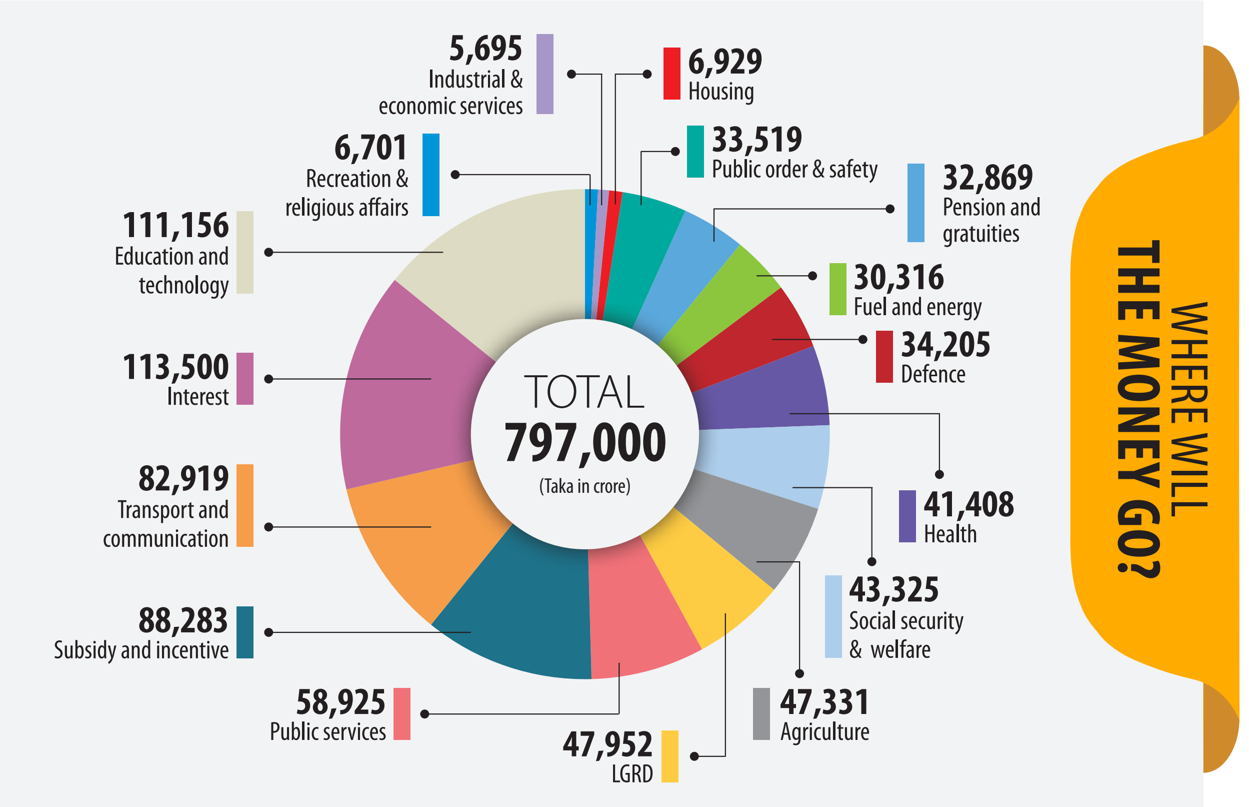
No increase in minimum income tax

GOOD NEWS

- Milk powder of **2.5** kg container to be cheaper
- No increase in excise duty for bank balances up to Tk **50** lakh
- Imported laptops to be cheaper

2024-25 BUDGET IN FOCUS





Budget embraces correct strategic direction

ASHIKUR RAHMAN

The proposed national budget for FY25 has remained a widely speculated topic for the people of this country. Bangladesh has been navigating a precarious global economy over the last 24 months, and the economic aftereffects of Covid-19 and the Ukraine-Russia have not only complicated macroeconomic management but created widespread concerns across both domestic and international actors.

This has manifested in international agencies downgrading Bangladesh's credit ratings. For instance, Fitch Ratings recently downgraded Bangladesh's long-term foreign-currency issuer default rating to "B+" from "BB-" owing to the lingering weakening of the country's foreign reserve buffers.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

Budget deficit may stoke inflation

MD DEEN ISLAM

The budget for fiscal 2024-25 proposes a total expenditure of Tk 797,000 crore with a total tax revenue of Tk 541,000 crore, resulting in a deficit of Tk 256,000 crore.

While several initiatives in the proposed budget are commendable, there are areas where further improvements could align better with the identified priorities.

The most important challenge highlighted in the budget is inflation, and several policies have been proposed to address it in the coming year. Notably, the size of the proposed budget is realistic rather than ambitious.

The budget deficit is approximately 4.6 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) while it was 4.7 percent, or Tk

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

No ray of hope for taxpayers

JASIM UDDIN RASEL

While the cost of living remains high, with the inflation rate hovering at over 9 percent throughout the year, no ray of hope came for the common people in the budget declared yesterday. This is upsetting for the low and middle-income groups of society.

Individual taxpayers expected the budget to reduce their tax burden, but the minimum tax-free limit remains the same as that of last year. Moreover, one must pay a minimum tax of Tk 5,000. What can the government do to ease the high inflationary pressure?

On May 14, Treasurer Jim Chalmers in Australia also presented the budget for fiscal year 2024-25. The cost of living is also high there and the first priority was to reduce living

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4

Allocation for transport, energy drops slightly

REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* **DWAIPAYAN BARUA**

Unlike in the previous budgets, the government yesterday proposed reducing the allocations for communications and energy sectors and increasing, albeit slightly, the money for education, healthcare, and social security.

The communications and energy sectors had received high priorities in budgets since the Awami League-led alliance assumed power in 2009.

The expenditure on communications and power and energy had been growing for more than a decade. The government in FY09 spent 7.67 percent of its budget on communications and energy. The spending swelled to 16 percent in the FY22.

At least 16 percent of the outgoing fiscal year's budget went to the communications and energy sectors, but next year it will be 14 percent.

The sectors got Tk 1,22,448 crore in the original budget for FY24. The finance minister yesterday proposed Tk 1,13,235 for the sectors in FY25.

The cuts in allocation actually started in the revised budget for the current fiscal year -- Tk 1,03,558 crore.

However, several mega projects in the communications sector, including Padma Bridge, Bangabandhu Tunnel, Padma Bridge Rail Link, and the elevated expressway in Chattogram were either complete or close to completion. And this could have contributed to the government reducing the allocation.

Amid shrinking foreign currency reserves and an economic downtrend, the policymakers are preferring to go slow on the spending on transport and power and energy.

Economists have also been urging public spending cuts, especially on mega projects, and spending more on widening the social safety net programmes to help people cope in these tough times.

The actual spending on education, healthcare, and social security had been declining over the years.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 6

Energy sector overlooked: experts

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The proposed increase of Tk 93 crore for the energy and mineral resources division in the budget is not enough for the explorations needed to discover domestic gas and other mineral resources, said experts.

In their instant reactions, they, citing the volatile fuel market, said the budget allocation predominantly focused on importing fuel to cover needs when sourcing primary energy like gas and coal from the domestic front was needed.

They also said the huge difference in allocation between the energy and the power division would further add to the price burden on consumers.

The allocation for the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources declined 13 percent to Tk 30,317 crore. It was Tk 34,819 crore in the outgoing fiscal year.

The power division is expected to get Tk 29,230 crore, a reduction of Tk 4,595 crore. The energy and mineral resources division is set to receive Tk 1,087 crore, which is Tk 93 crore more than in FY24.

In the budget speech, Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali said BAPEX plans to drill and overhaul 48 wells between January 2023 and December 2025 to explore and extract gas or oil onshore. The budget has a target to drill at least 12 wells this fiscal.

Prof Mohammad Tamim, a former adviser to a caretaker government, said the finance minister's speech doesn't reflect the allocation.

"In the current context, it is clear that local gas exploration and extraction is more important than the import of high-cost LNG and other fuels. But the allocation is miniscule for the energy division."

Prof M Shamsul Alam, energy adviser of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh, echoed Prof Tamim.

He, however, said more allocation to the power sector will ultimately result in increasing the production cost.

"Those who prepare the budget, I guess, don't realise that."

He said the discrimination between the two divisions reflects that they are increasing power generation capacity only without having secured the energy supply chain.

The finance minister said the government has plans to expand the power transmission lines to 24,000 circuit kilometres from 15,246 circuit kilometres now by modernising the grid.

The minister also proposed a special allocation of Tk 100 crore to encourage the development and use of renewable energy. Besides, another Tk 100 crore was proposed to allocate against the blue economy research.

Shafiqul Alam, lead analyst of Bangladesh at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, appreciated the move.

"It's just a start, but it reflects the government's focus on renewables. We hope they will increase it further," he said, adding that there were demands from many groups involved with this sector to reduce the VAT from solar products but there is no mention of this in the budget.

Mobile internet, talktime to be costlier

FROM PAGE 2

This measure threatens to escalate the cost burden on consumers and service providers alike, hindering accessibility to mobile services and impeding digital inclusion efforts, according to experts.

"The National Board of Revenue's [NBR's] decision to extend tax exemption by another 3 years for 19 digital services, including the software sector, was commendable," said Fahim Mashroor, a former president of the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS).

"However, I think imposing 5 percent extra supplementary duty on mobile internet is contradictory with the Smart Bangladesh vision," he said.

"It will further widen the digital divide. Use of smartphones and data by low-income people will be affected. So, the government should reconsider. Supplementary duty can only be imposed on talk time, but not data purchase," he added.

The mobile telecommunication sector is already burdened with high taxes, said Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory officer at Robi Axiata.

An additional increase in the supplementary duty of various services in the mobile telecommunication sector will have an adverse impact on customers as well as the overall consumption of mobile internet services, he said.

Especially when the number of mobile internet users has been declining for the past few quarters, the increased tax burden will further accelerate the negative trend.

"We think that the overall objective of increasing the tax rate will not be attained as it will reduce the amount of total mobile consumer spending," Alam said.

"We must remember that in the journey towards building a Smart Bangladesh, 41 percent of the country's population still remains unconnected to telecommunications services," he added.

Besides, compared to neighbouring countries, data usage in Bangladesh at the consumer level is significantly low. So, there is a huge opportunity to increase revenue from this sector by increasing the number of users, Alam said.

Bangladesh had 19.37 crore active mobile phone connections as of April this year, according to data of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission.

The Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh, said in a statement that additional supplementary duty on mobile services would further burden the telecom industry and mobile subscribers.

This increase will raise the cost of voice and internet services, putting financial pressure on users, particularly those from marginalised communities, and potentially lead to decreased mobile service usage.

"This reduction in usage will negatively impact businesses and reduce government revenue," it said.

Amtob also said the higher VAT on SIM cards will discourage new users, slowing the growth of mobile connections in the country.

"These moves will result in slowing down the overall digitalisation of the country, which will not only have an impact on GDP growth, but also contradict the Smart Bangladesh vision," it said.

"So, we urge the government to reconsider these duties and take into account budget recommendations the telecom sector provided earlier," the association added.

Govt officials to come under new pension

FROM PAGE 16

Soon, we will introduce this system from July 1, 2025, for new recruits of other government institutions," said the finance minister.

He claimed it would be one of the most attractive pension schemes in the world as the government bears the fund management costs and the investment profits are among the depositors.

"If we can bring all citizens above 18 years of age under the Universal Pension Scheme, all will be covered by a well-organised social security structure, which would ensure their security in the future," said Mahmood Ali.

The Universal Pension has 4 schemes. The government has already launched "Prabash" for Bangladeshis working abroad, "Pragati" for private sector employees, "Suraksha" for self-employed citizens and "Samata" for citizens living below the poverty line.

Besides, employees of autonomous, state-owned, and other statutory organisations, along with their subordinates recruited after July 1 this year will be included in the Prottoy scheme, the minister added.

As per the prevailing system, government employees deposit money in the general provident fund (GPF) and those of autonomous and state-run corporations in a contributory provident fund (CPF), with interest rates ranging from 11 to 13 percent.

Court appoints administrators

FROM PAGE 16

investigating Benazir had set the date.

On May 28, the commission requested Benazir to attend the hearing that was supposed to take place yesterday and his wife and daughters on June 9.

When a reporter asked whether the latter hearings would take place, the ACC secretary said, "Let June 9 come. Then we will see."

Speculation is rife that Benazir and his family members had left the country.

Bad loans hit historic high

FROM PAGE 4

of their Tk 1,221,166 crore in disbursed loans.

Default loans at foreign commercial banks stood at 5.20 percent of their disbursed loans and it was at 13.88 percent at specialised banks, central bank data showed.

Moinul Islam said the default loans issue has become a major problem now.

"The government is not taking adequate action against loan defaulters, and that is why their numbers are continuously rising."

Stressed assets, including written-off and rescheduled loans, stood at Tk 377,922 crore till December 2022, central bank data showed.

NPLs have risen at a time when the government has fixed a target to reduce the volume of bad loans as prescribed by the IMF with its $4.7 billion credit programme.

As per the government's direction, the BB has fixed a target to reduce bad loans at the state-run banks to 10 percent by 2026. The target for private commercial banks is 5 percent.

NO REFORM PROGRAMME

The finance minister yesterday did not mention any specific reform agenda for the banking sector, which is struggling with a high NPL ratio, stressed assets, weak financial health, liquidity challenges and weak regulations of the central bank.

In his budget speech for FY20, former finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal hinted that the government was taking a number of reforms to bring about discipline in the banking sector.

He would go on to refer to such reforms while announcing the next four budgets, but only a few were ever implemented, leading to the sector becoming even more undisciplined.

On January 10, 2019, Kamal said: "NPL becomes a matter of grave concern, but it is still in a manageable position. From today, NPL will not increase."

His predecessor Abul Maal Abdul Muhith also hinted at forming the country's first banking commission in his budget speech for FY16. However, there was no further discussion regarding that topic after FY20.

Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, recently said an independent banking commission is needed to ensure good governance in the banking sector.

She added that a goal-specific, time-bound, inclusive, transparent, unbiased and independent citizen's commission on banking should be set up to bring transparency.

A fresh blow to stock

FROM PAGE 4

investors for having been on a bear run for a long time.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the DSE, dropped by around 1,000 points, or 16 percent, in the last three months.

Against this backdrop, this new tax will not only prompt more investors to leave the market but also discourage large investors from coming to invest.

Although the chief of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) had earlier assured investors that he had spoken to the National Board of Revenue to keep the tax from coming into effect, this has not happened yet.

Saiful Islam, president of the DSE Brokers Association of Bangladesh, called for reviewing the plan on the capital gains tax as the market was now passing through tough times.

"We are not against the capital gains tax, but the time is not appropriate," he said.

Moreover, he welcomed the move to attract listed companies to offload more shares in the stock market in exchange of getting a corporate tax rate cut.

The finance minister yesterday proposed that listed companies which will offload at least 10 percent of their shares in the stock market and abide by a condition on bank transfers will be able to avail an income tax reduction from 22.5 percent to 20 percent.

The condition is that all types of income, receipts, single transactions of over Tk 5 lakh and all annual expenses and investments exceeding Tk 36 lakh must come about through bank transfers.

If the share offloading is less than 10 percent, the company has to pay income tax at a rate of 25 percent.

However, if this company abides by the bank transfer condition, the income tax rate will be 22.5 percent. Other analysts pointed out that these conditions result in the difference in tax payable by listed and non-listed companies to 2.5 percentage points, but it should have been higher to make it more lucrative to get listed.

Islam also lauded the finance bill allowing black money into the stock market and barring the questioning of investors in this regard, saying it would have a positive impact on the stock market.

Budget shows fault lines

FROM PAGE 3

Mahmood Ali underlined the need for raising the tax-to-GDP ratio to 10 percent from 8 percent now and upskilling workers going abroad for jobs at the beginning of his speech. But he was conspicuously silent on the runaway banking sector that counted Tk 182,000 crore in non-performing loans, the highest ever.

His path is laden with moral hazard. The government has once again allowed both individuals and companies to whiten black money by paying a 15 percent tax without facing scrutiny. It undermines the government's fight against deep-rooted corruption at a time when excesses by former government officials are in full view.

"The measures such as 'anti-corruption committees' in every metropolis, district, and upazila and 'public hearing' sessions on corruption in government and semi-government offices seem trivial, if not laughable," said Zahid Hussain, former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

One of the key concerns is that the government plans to borrow about Tk 137,000 crore from domestic banks to finance its development spending. This is likely to increase the risk of a crowding-out effect as deposits in the banking sector are likely to grow only by Tk 160,000 crore over the next fiscal year.

"In other words, such borrowing targets will raise fiscal dominance in the overall macroeconomic management and will create pressure for the government to resort to central bank financing if such goals are aggressively pursued," said Ashikur Rahman, principal economist at the Policy Research Institute. "It is advisable to rationalise its borrowing target from the banking sector."

TAX PAIN DEEPENS

While the cost of living is high, lower-income families see no light at the end of the tunnel. The minimum tax-free limit remains unchanged in the most difficult times. The burden complicated by increased VAT rates feels heavier when people desperately seek a cushion from unrelenting inflation.

The minister increased the maximum tax rate to 30 percent from 25 percent now for individual payers, "distributing the burden equitably so that higher income individuals pay a larger share of their income or wealth as income tax than lower-income individuals." The corporate tax rate was lowered by 2.5 percentage points, but analysts questioned the benefits given to companies.

The government introduced a prospective tax system in Bangladesh to help expand trade and boost local and foreign investment. The demand for the new system was long-standing, though. It will create some tax predictability. For that, the proposed tax rate for fiscal 2024-25 will be retained for the 2025-26 assessment year. Currently, the country follows a retrospective tax regime.

"I believe that through a prospective tax system, taxpayers can do proper tax planning and help increase tax compliance," the minister said.

The government finally seems to be waking up to the burden of foreign debt. Bangladesh is facing pressure from two sides simultaneously: capital outflows outstrip inflows of funds. That increases the deficit in financial accounts on the one hand and creates the burden of repayment of foreign loans on the other. The interest payment for foreign loans exceeded $1 billion for the first time. The government now fears if the forecast that the interest rate will decline in the United States and other developed nations goes wrong, the trend of higher payment will continue in the future as well. Bangladesh now estimates that the interest payment for foreign loans will swell to $1.86 billion in FY25.

The new budget provides clarity on what's going on in the economy. But the minister shied away from explaining if the crisis reached gale-force intensity and the worst would be over soon.

Are we survivors of the crisis struggling to pick up the pieces? A period of uncertainty creates panic. We expected more than the sense of how we got into this mess. We wanted a roadmap of how to get out of this.

His silence is deafening.

Tax burden to get heavier, life even harder

FROM PAGE 2

There is some good news for individuals, however.

For example, there will be no spike in the amount of minimum tax for FY25. The minimum tax applicable to individual taxpayers in Dhaka North, Dhaka South and Chittagong city corporations will be Tk 5,000. For other cities, it will be Tk 4,000.

For areas outside city corporations, a taxpayer will have to pay Tk 3,000 in tax if their total tax liability stands below the amount.

There will be some breathing space for taxpayers who earn between Tk 11 lakh and Tk 21 lakh.

The wealthy will need to pay higher taxes on their incomes since the NBR seeks to reinstate a 30 percent tax rate on high-income earners after a gap of four years.

Those taking home more than Tk 43 lakh annually will face a 30 percent tax.

However, the rich will also receive some relief since they will not have to pay any additional surcharge on their wealth. The rate of the surcharge tax remains unchanged.

There is also good news for the holders of undeclared wealth, both individuals and corporates. They are again going to enjoy full amnesty and no government agencies will raise any questions about the sources of their wealth.

However, they will have to pay a 15 percent tax on cash, bank deposits, financial securities, or any other forms of wealth. Furthermore, they will have to count a specific tax on properties -- land, buildings, flats, or commercial spaces -- to whiten their wealth.

The amnesty will undoubtedly discourage compliant taxpayers.

Except for the firms that have already taken the initiative to carry out transactions through banks, there is no good news for listed corporate taxpayers.

A firm will qualify for a reduced tax rate if it uses the banking system while receiving funds and making expenses and investments above Tk 5 lakh in each transaction. Bank transfers are mandatory if annual transactions go past Tk 36 lakh.

The rule stays despite calls from firms to relax it. The NBR did not entertain the proposal because it wants to promote cashless transactions, formalise the economy, and collect more taxes. Roughly, half of the economy of Bangladesh is still informal.

As such, the tax authority wants to make it mandatory for hotels, restaurants, motels, hospitals, clinics, and diagnostic centres to furnish it with the proof of submission of returns, known as PSR, in order to obtain and renew licences.

They will face a penalty, which will be no less than Tk 20,000, if they fail to display the PSR in a prominent place within public view.

The good news for individual and corporate taxpayers is that the new tax rates will remain effective for two years, giving some predictability they have long demanded.

The NBR says it wants to retain the proposed tax rates for the years to facilitate the expansion of trade, improve investor confidence in the country's tax system, and encourage local and foreign investments.

The tax administration has termed it as a prospective tax system, saying it will enable taxpayers to do proper tax planning and ensure higher compliance, crucial to raising revenue collections and cutting the government's reliance on loans.

The NBR is going to bring back the 27.5 percent tax rate for the incomes generated by provident, gratuity, superannuation, and pension funds. It is 15 percent presently.

Cooperatives will bear a 20 percent tax rate on their incomes.

For FY25, the NBR has been given the task of collecting Tk 4.80 lakh crore through direct and indirect taxes. This is 11 percent higher than the original target set for FY24 and 17 percent more than the revised target for the outgoing financial year.

As usual, it will rely on indirect taxes such as VAT and supplementary duty, to reach the goal. Of course, the bid to increase SD on cigarettes and tobacco products is a laudable initiative in view of the health risks they pose.

In order to pull off the collection target, the administration has trimmed the list of exemptions.

For instance, visitors to amusement parks will face a 15 percent VAT in FY25, double the amount they are subjected to in FY24.

And if the new couple plan to buy a holiday package from a tour operator, they will have to accept higher costs because the VAT exemption for the tour operators' service is coming to an end. This means holidaymakers will have to count a 15 percent VAT.

If the couple shelve the plan of holidaymaking and choose instead to take a short ride on the metro rail, a new attraction, they will face higher ticket fares as the NBR is set to lift the VAT exemption on ticket prices, making commuting less cheerful from July 1.

Solutions not offered

FROM PAGE 3

"The domestic borrowing target of Tk 160,900 crore will exacerbate pressure on the taka and dollar liquidity in the banking system and hinder the possibility of achieving the ambitious 6.75 percent GDP growth target. Nor will it help soften inflation," he said.

Fahmida Khatun, executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said changes in the tax rates seem positive.

"But 2.5 percent of the budget shortfall will come from bank loans. In that case, it will be more difficult for businessmen to get bank loans."

In her opinion, the medium-term macroeconomic indicators given in the budget are not realistic. The targets for GDP, investment, inflation, and foreign exchange do not reflect the reality. These are attempts to meet IMF targets.

"Overall, given the challenges against which the budget was announced, we expected this budget to be quite innovative, creative and bold, but it did not happen. A traditional budget cannot provide any solutions in challenging times," she said.

M Masrur Reaz, chairman of Policy Exchange of Bangladesh, said the highest priority of the budget should be stabilisation of the macroeconomic challenges. From that perspective, the size of the budget is okay. But at a time when inflationary pressure is already biting both citizens and businesses hard, increase in tax rates is not the right step.

"Increasing tax rate does not allow or does not often lead to increase in revenue. Rather, increasing tax base, addressing leakage, reducing tax expenditure, finding new sources of tax are required to increase tax revenue. But we don't see that effort," he added.

Salehuddin Ahmed, former governor of Bangladesh Bank, said there are three major challenges right now -- higher inflation, shrinking foreign reserves, and energy crisis.

"These three challenges are affecting our overall economy. As a result, the macroeconomy is very unstable. In this scenario, I think the size of the budget is realistic. But whatever the size, I have some questions about government spending."

The budget deficit is huge, which means the cost should have been reduced, he said.

"For example, what is the need for 1,258 projects under the Annual Development Programme? If the Annual Development Programme is cut down, the deficit will come down."

He said 40 percent of the budget will be spent for the administration. Besides, after spending on other less important sectors, it will be seen that there is no money for development.

BUSINESSES' REACTION

According to a number of businesspersons, considering the various global and domestic economic challenges, the proposed budget is time-befitting.

"In particular, the size of the budget is limited to Tk 7.97 lakh crore. The rate at which the budget has seen an increasing trend in the past few years has not been observed this time. This may give some relief to the taxpayers," said Asif Ibrahim, chairman of Chittagong Stock Exchange PLC.

He also said the revenue collection target (Tk 5.41 lakh crore) may be somewhat challenging due to the current macroeconomic crisis.

"The inflation control target has been fixed at 6.5 percent. But considering the current global economic situation, how inflation will be brought down from 9.30 percent is still not clear in the budget framework," he said.

FBCCI President Mahbubul Alam said the budget is realistic and implementable.

However, he called on the government to fix the personal tax limit at Tk 4.5 lakh instead of Tk 3.5 lakh.

Ashraf Ahmed, president, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the government has tried to increase the revenue collection. "Import duty on almost 30 essential products has been reduced, which is a good move."

He hailed the government's bank borrowing target which, although still high, is almost 11.82 percent lower than the outgoing fiscal year.

Abdul Matlub Ahmad, former president of FBCCI, said there is no clear message in the budget to reduce the price of essentials to give relief to the common people from the inflationary pressure.

He stressed the need for subsidy on essential products, which is absent in the proposed budget.

Humayun Rashid, president of the International Business Forum of Bangladesh (IBFB), said the proposed budget does not address the high cost of doing business amid shortage of dollar due to shrinking forex reserves.

Syed Ershad Ahmed, president, American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh, stressed the need for revising individuals' tax-free income limit to provide a cushion against the rising inflation.

'Unethical, unjust and unacceptable'

FROM PAGE 3

"As the country has been allowing the scope for years, many people are evading taxes and waiting for such opportunities. This is a huge loss for the economy," said Mustafizur.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of the Transparency International Bangladesh, said the provision was unjustifiable.

"It is distinctly contradictory to the Constitution, which criminalises illegitimate income."

It further violates the constitution as it is discriminatory against honest income earners, who are subjected to up to 30 percent tax, he added.

As such, black money holders are practically being rewarded for corruption as they are being offered the rate of only 15 percent.

Echoing those sentiments, Muhammad Abdul Mazid, a former NBR chairman, said the provision is totally illogical.

"Honest taxpayers will be discouraged and will not want to come under the tax net. Such a provision will instigate corruption and deepen tax injustice."

This initiative will also not be politically helpful as the masses will believe that the ruling party is allowing the wrongdoers to continue with their misdeeds. "It's totally in contrast with the government's agenda," Mustafizur Rahman said.

Iftekharuzzaman added: "The provision is against the ruling party's lofty commitments contained in their manifesto in support of so-called zero tolerance against corruption often repeated by those in power, including the head of the government.

"In other words, the government is in reality advising people to be corrupt with a guarantee of impunity. The government should stop licencing corruption now and forever."

Additionally, the government wants to provide the opportunity for companies to correct any "errors" made while submitting their income tax returns.

Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali said the introduction of a data verification system created legal complications over the disclosure of undisclosed income and assets of various companies.

"In this situation, I propose to add a clause on tax incentives in the Income Tax Act with a view to providing taxpayers with an opportunity to correct this error in their income tax returns and to increase the flow of money into the mainstream economy," Ali said in his budget speech.

A leader of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry opined that no illegal income should be legalised. However, if any reasonable issues remain, it should be taken into account.

There is no accurate data on how much black money there is in Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh Economic Association estimated that the accumulated amount would be Tk 13,253,500 crore, said Prof Aynul Islam, general secretary of the platform.

In a report published in April, the World Bank also criticised the existing government scope to legalise undisclosed wealth through investments, saying such policies demotivate honest and regular taxpayers and encourage tax evaders to continue their misdeeds.

"Also, these policies have failed to earn a significant amount of revenue."

Old malaise flaring up

FROM PAGE 3

use of the government's fiscal space.

Unfortunately, the fiscal space is getting increasingly squeezed. As a result, the government is resorting to huge borrowing from both domestic and foreign sources. Thus, debt management will be a major issue in FY25.

THE FAULT LINES

The national budget for the FY25 once again brings to the fore the fault lines of the country's recent development experiences.

First, over the last decade and a half, the growth trajectory was deprived of incremental private investment. The private investment-GDP ratio has remained stagnant at around 22-23 percent.

The medium-term budgetary framework (MTBF) puts the targets concerned for FY25 at a very ambitious level, i.e. more than 27 percent of the GDP.

The second fault line has been the stagnating revenue-GDP ratio, which remains less than 10 percent. Indeed, this indicator, including its tax component, has experienced a decline in recent years. However, due to the low level of implementation of public expenditure programmes, the budget deficit has remained manageable.

Although the budget deficit has been projected at 4.6 percent of the GDP, the net foreign financing of that would be around 40 percent. On the other hand, hardly any revenue surplus will be available to underwrite the Annual Development Plan (ADP).

The budget for FY25 has not been very ambitious in this regard as the revenue-GDP target has been set at a modest 9.7 percent.

The third fault line of the mid-term development trajectory emerged due to the marginal public investment in the health sector (less than 1 percent of the GDP), education sector (less than 2 per cent of the GDP), and social protection (less than 1 percent of the GDP).

Sadly, the budget for FY25 also fails to find additional resources for these sectors. This has happened due to overly physical infrastructure-driven public investment. This has been done in the pursuit of visible indicators of progress.

Unfortunately, the ADP allocations for FY25 does not indicate any rethink in this regard.

The fourth and final fault line in the ongoing national development efforts relates to growing inequality in the country. Increasing inequality is manifested in asset accumulation, income flow, and consumption of food and non-food goods and services.

The budget for FY25 does make a number of promises to ease the situation in the face of soaring inflation. These include tariff rationalisation for a set of consumables, increasing the number of social protection beneficiaries, and distributing food items under government management. But the revenue efforts are focused on indirect taxes affecting across income groups.

It seems all these fault lines are creating structural challenges for macro-economic management as well as implementation of public expenditure programmes.

Regrettably, the budget for FY25 does not make headway in this regard.

The author is a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

Budget unlikely to make dent in soaring inflation

FROM PAGE 2

stagnated or declined.

But that was hardly reflected in the budget.

Funds equivalent to about 2.43 percent of the GDP were allocated for social safety net schemes for FY25 compared to 2.52 percent in the current year.

Still, the allocated amount increased to Tk 136,026 crore from Tk 126,272 crore.

The government also increased the number of beneficiaries by around 4.5 lakh.

However, the allowance per person remained almost the same, with the sole exception being the programme for widows, which has been boosted from Tk 500 to Tk 550 per month.

And although the allotment rose by around Tk 10,000 crore, more than Tk 9,600 crore of that will have to be spent on pension management.

So, poor and marginalised people will not really benefit from this incremental increase, Razzaque said.

Furthermore, the government has targeted to raise Tk 137,500 crore from the banking sector to meet the budget deficit.

In the budget for the current year, the government had targeted to raise Tk 132,395 crore from the banking sector. However, it revised this to Tk 155,935 crore to meet its budget deficit amid lower revenue.

If the government similarly revises up the amount it borrows from the banking sector in FY25 and the central bank prints money to narrow the deficit, inflationary pressure may be fuelled.

The Consumer Price Index grew by an average of 9.73 percent in the first 11 months of the current fiscal while it was 8.64 percent during the same period a year prior, showed data of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

In fiscal 2022-23, the average inflation rate was 9.02 percent, far higher than the average of 6 percent in recent years.

Such elevated levels of inflation have forced many people to cut down on consumption.

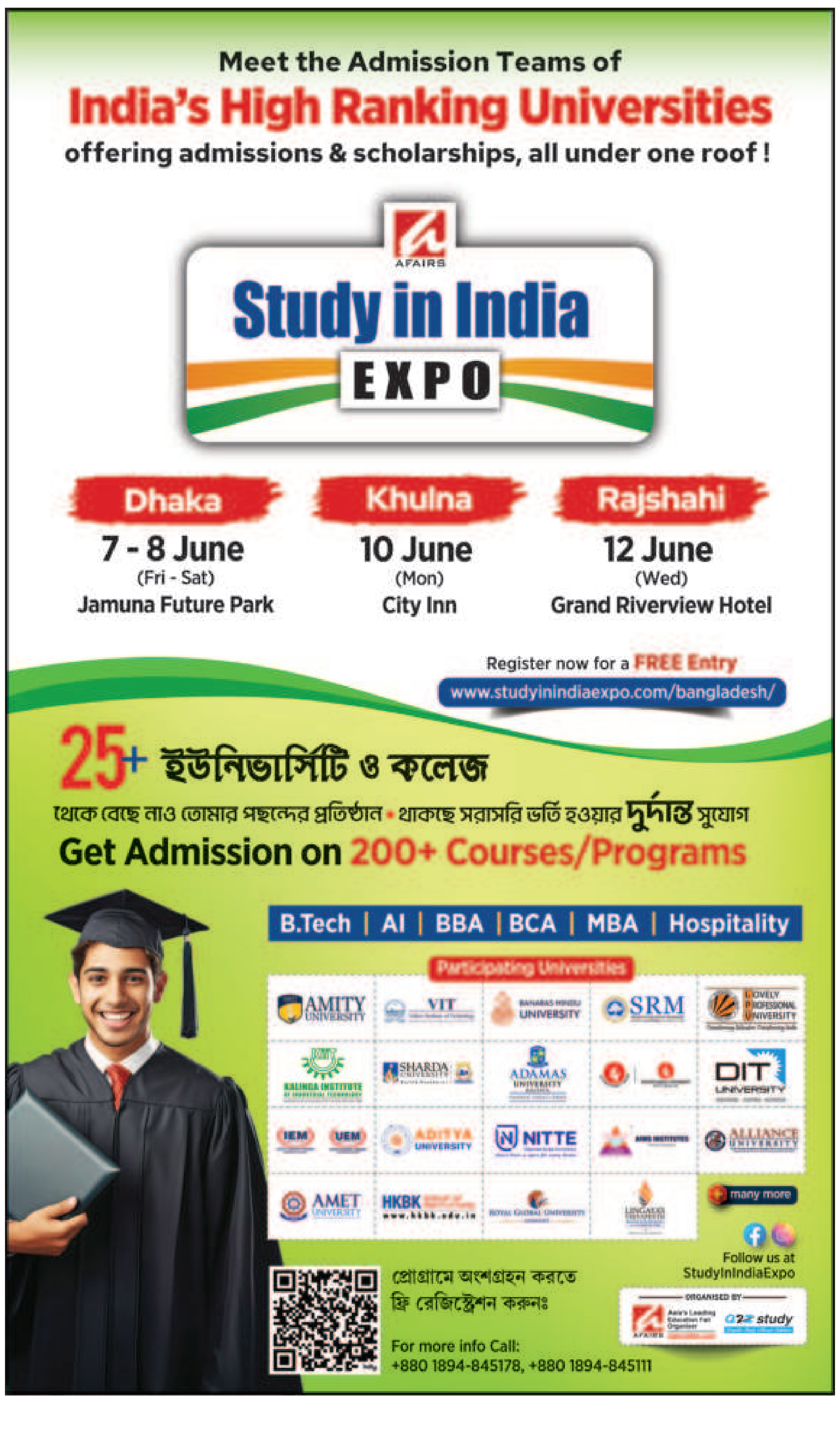
The World Bank has projected that the decline in purchasing power has led to the inclusion of many among the new poor.

This means the country may witness challenges in reducing the poverty rate despite its previously stellar performance in this regard.

So, economists urged the government to cut spending and make effective the contractionary monetary policy, which was announced recently.

Some good news is that the government cut the source tax for rice, wheat, potato, onion, garlic, lentils, ginger, turmeric, dry chilli, pulses, flour and some other food items from 2 percent to 1 percent.

That should create the opportunity to reduce the prices of these products. However, whether the benefit will reach the consumers will depend on suppliers and producers that control the prices of these products.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Three killed, 25 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed and 25 injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Tangail, a pickup driver and his helper were killed as the vehicle hit a truck from behind on Bangabandhu Bridge East Link Road in the Analiabari area.

Driver Shipon Ali, 40, from Kushtia; and his helper Muhammad Aslam, 55, from Bagerhat died on the spot.

Police handed over the bodies to the families.

Meanwhile, at least 25 passengers were injured as a bus fell into a ditch beside Tangail-Mymensingh road at Shahpur in Ghatail upazila. The accident happened as the driver lost his control over the steering.

In Thakurgaon, a woman was killed when a truck ran her over while she was walking along Ranishankoil-Pirganj road at Patgaon village in Ranishankoil upazila.

HC questions legality of iron cage at courtrooms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of a rule that allows the authorities concerned to install metal cages where accused persons stand during case proceedings in courtrooms across the country.

Rule 82 of the Criminal Rules and Orders (Practice and Procedure of Subordinate Courts), 2009 has laid out the provision for establishing metal cages for the accused in every court so that no prisoner can escape from there.

Yesterday, the HC issued a rule asking the government to explain why the provisions of rule 82 of the Criminal Rules and Orders should not be declared contradictory to article 35(5) of the constitution as "inhuman and degrading treatment".

The HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice SM Masud Hossain Dolon issued the rule following a supplementary writ petition filed by 10 Supreme Court lawyers. The petitioners' lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir told the court that the provision of Rule 82 of the Criminal Rules and Orders is being used as a vehicle to inhuman and degrading treatment to the accused.

And this goes against the spirit of the constitution.

UPAZILA POLLS

4th phase sees lowest turnout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The overall turnout in the fourth phase of the upazila polls on Wednesday was 34.77 percent -- the lowest since the 2009 elections.

This was also the lowest turnout among the four phases of polls so far this year.

The Election Commission data shows that turnout in the third phase of the polls, held on May 29, was 36.24 percent; in the second phase of polls, held on May 21, it was 37.61 percent. And in the first phase, held on May 8, it was 36.10 percent.

During the 2009 upazila polls, 70.57 percent of voters had cast their ballots. This figure then dropped to 61.23 percent in 2014.

In the first phase of elections across 78 upazilas in 2019, the turnout was 43.31 percent. In the subsequent four phases, the turnouts were 41.25 percent, 41.41 percent, 36.54 percent, and 38.62 percent, respectively. The average turnout was 40 percent.

In the fourth phase of this year's upazila polls, the average turnout where voters used electronic voting machines to cast votes was lower than in places where ballot paper was used.

In Wednesday's polls, 29.70 percent of voters cast their votes in six upazilas where EVMs were used. Whereas, turnout was 35.60 percent in 53 upazilas where ballot paper was used.

EC Additional Secretary Ashok Kumar Debnath said a thorough analysis will be needed to know the reason behind the difference in turnouts.

In the fourth phase, Bhola's Manpura witnessed the highest turnout of 60.68 percent, while Naogaon Sadar recorded the lowest at 20.87 percent. Voting in both the upazilas was conducted using paper ballots. Similar to the three previous phases, Awami League men won the lion's share of chairman positions during the fourth phase as well.

Turnout in the fourth phase of the polls held on June 5 was 34.77 percent; third phase of the polls, held on May 29, was 36.24 percent; in the second phase of polls, held on May 21, it was 37.61 percent. And in the first phase, held on May 8, it was 36.10 percent.

Though the ruling party did not field candidates this year, grassroot AL leaders ran for chairman posts as independents.

BNP boycotted the elections, saying polls cannot be held in a free and fair manner under the incumbent Election Commission. The party also expelled many grassroots leaders for running in the elections.

The sixth upazila parishad elections were held in four phases this year.

However, 22 upazilas where elections were postponed due to Cyclone Remal, will see elections be held on June 9.

'It's an anti-Bangladesh budget'

Says Fakhrul

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday termed the proposed national budget "anti-Bangladesh", saying it contains new schemes to facilitate the embezzlement of public money by the ruling party-backed looters.

"The government has become looters. The budget crafted by these looters seems to be aimed at further indulging in plundering. I believe that fresh plans have been devised in the budget for embezzlement (of public money)," he said.

Talking to reporters on the budget in front of the BNP Chairperson's Gulshan office, Fakhrul also said the worst aspect of the proposed budget is the lack of any direction towards new job creation.

"The entire budget seems to be formulated for mega projects, mega theft, and corruption. So, I not only call this so-called budget anti-people but also anti-Bangladesh," he observed.

Earlier in the day, Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali placed a Tk 7,97,000 crore proposed national budget for 2024-25 in parliament.

A bridge without approach road

SAHIDUL ISLAM NIRAB, *Jamalpur*

A 96-meter-long bridge over the Fatika canal in Jamalpur's Islampur remains unused over a year since its inauguration due to the absence of an approach road.

The bridge, inaugurated on January 3 last year by Minister for Religious Affairs Md Faridul Haque Khan, has seen no further development, locals alleged.

Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) spent over Tk 5.68 crore on the bridge, constructed by Chowdhury Enterprises.

However, without a connecting road on the west side, the bridge remains inaccessible and local farmers have been using the bridge as a threshing floor.

A visit to the area revealed that a 500 to 600-meter stretch of connecting road is missing, forcing people to use a muddy path beside the bridge to cross the canal.

Locals claim that around 50,000 people would benefit if the roads were constructed.

Anshar Ali, a farmer, said, "With no approach road on one side, cars can't access the bridge, so we use it for threshing paddy since it's left idle."

Upazila Assistant Engineer Aminul Haque cited landowner's objections as a challenge in constructing the road.

"We hope construction works of the approach road will start soon," he said.

"The department concerned is processing everything. The road work will begin soon if funds are allocated," Haque added.

FEUD OVER WINDOW SEAT

Train passenger punched to death

STAR REPORT

A passenger was killed after he was punched by another following an altercation over taking window seat in a Dhaka-bound train at Narsingdi Railway Station yesterday morning.

The deceased is 42-year-old Jhumor Kanti Baul, a garment worker in Dhaka.

The incident occurred around 7:00am on the Dhaka Mail Express train, said Sub-inspector Shahidullah. Police detained Monjur Mia, 55, from the train at Kamalapur Railway Station in Dhaka.

As the train reached Narsingdi Railway Station, and the passenger from the window seat disembarked, Monjur attempted to move to that seat. Jhumor, who was waiting at the station, placed his bag on the seat through the window, the SI said.

An altercation started when Jhumor boarded the train. During the argument, Monjur punched and kicked Jhumor, leaving him critically injured.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 7

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-30	5-00	6-45	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-50	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

TIME EXTENSION OF IFT FOR HEALTH PRODUCTS

With reference to the **Invitation for Tender** for Health Products **(Ref: IFT/SCI/B-DCO/FY-24/(Manual)/0002)** published in 'The Daily Star and Daily Prothom Alo on 10-May-2024; the submission date has been **extended** up to **2 PM, 23-June-2024, only for the potential vendors who still wish to participate. Those who have already submitted, please, don't submit again.** For details please visit the link http://procurement.scibd.info/ .

Note: All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.

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Date: 09.06.2024

Tender Notice (OTM)

Department of Public Health, University of Dhaka, invites quotation for purchase of Scientific Equipment's, AC and Photocopier Machine from local & foreign markets. The interested suppliers, manufacturer and local/foreign agent may procure quotations from the department during office hours from 09.06.2024 to 25.06.2024 with cash (non-refundable) of Taka 4000.00 (four thousand) Deposit Janata Bank Ltd DU Br A/C No. 36000392. The tender should be dropped by 26.06.2024 at 11.00am and Open at 11.30am. The undersigned reserves the right to accept/reject any quotation or all the quotations without assigning any reason thereof.

Dr. Emran Kabir Chowdhury
Professor and Chairman
Department of Public Health

GD- 961

এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস্ কোম্পানী লিমিটেড
৩৯৫-৩৯৭, তেজগাঁও শিল্প এলাকা
ঢাকা-১২০৮।

পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ইডিসিএল নিম্নোক্ত আইটেমটি প্রকৃত প্রস্তুতকারী/ সরবরাহকারীদের (সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যবসার সহিত জড়িত) নিকট হইতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করছে ঃ-

ক্রমিক নং	দরপত্র নং ও তারিখ	বিবরণ	পরিমান
০১।	ইডিসিএল/ক্রয়/লোকাল/পুনঃদরপত্র/২০২৪/২৩৫ তারিখ ঃ ০৫/০৬/২০২৪ইং	**Sodium Chloride (Nacl) BP (Endotoxin Free)** (সিডিউল মোতাবেক)	১০,০০০ কেজি

সিকিউরিটি/ আর্নেষ্ট মানি	দরপত্র শিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরৎযোগ্য)	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়
২.৫%	টাকা ১,০০০.০০ প্রতি সেট	২৫/০৬/২০২৪ইং বেলা ১২-০০ ঘটিকা	২৫/০৬/২০২৪ইং বেলা ১২-১৫ ঘটিকা

সকল কার্যদিবসে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে উপরোক্ত কার্যালয় হইতে শর্ত ও নিয়মাবলীসহ দরপত্র সিডিউল ক্রয় করা যাইবে।
উল্লেখ্য যে, যাহাদের ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন নাই তাহাদের দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করার প্রয়োজন নাই।

দরপত্র খোলার দিনে কোন দরপত্র শিডিউল বিক্রয় করা হইবে না।

মহাব্যবস্থাপক
প্রকিউরমেন্ট
পক্ষেঃ ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক।

সাইজ- ৪.৫˝x ৪ক.

বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট
Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute
সংগ্রহ ও ভান্ডার শাখা
গাজীপুর-১৭০১

কৃষিই সমৃদ্ধি

Email: dd.procure@bari.gov.bd
Younusali.bari@gmail.com
Phone: 50350, 49270140

Memo No. 12.21.0000.007.05.106.24.5040 Date: 02 June 2024

e-GP: Tender Notice No. 37 (2023-2024)

e-Tender is invited in the e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following goods. Details are given below:

SI No.	Package No.	Tender ID & Ref No.	Description of goods	Tender documents last selling (date & time)	Tender closing date & time	Tender opening date & time
01	PN GD-06	994284 & IRN: 106	Office Furniture 19 (Nineteen) Items.	19.06.2024 10:30	19.06.2024 12:00	19.06.2024 12:00
02	PN GD-07	994412 & IRN: 109	Office Equipment 01 (One) Item.	19.06.2024 13:00	19.06.2024 14:30	19.06.2024 14:30

The interested persons/firm may visit the website www.eprocure.gov.bd to get the details of the tender.
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal is required.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).
Project Name: "Research, Development and Extension of Cashew nut & Coffee" Project.

02.06.24
Md. Younus Ali
(BARI-0663)
Deputy Director (In-Charge)
On behalf of Director General

GD-963

PALLI KARMA-SAHAYAK FOUNDATION (PKSF)
PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
Phone: 88-02-222218331-33, 02-222218335-39; Website: https://www.pksf.org.bd

Vacancy Announcement

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), an apex development organization, was established by the Government of Bangladesh in 1990 for sustainable poverty reduction through employment generation. Since its inception, PKSF has been implementing various poverty-alleviating and employment-generating programs and projects through its Partner Organizations (POs) all over the country.

PKSF has been implementing a 5-year-long project titled 'Sustainable Microenterprise and Resilient Transformation (SMART)' jointly financed by the World Bank and PKSF since August 2023. The objective of the project is to increase resource-efficient and resilient green growth of the microenterprises (MEs).

PKSF hereby invites online applications from the eligible candidates for the following posts under the SMART project:

SN	Name of the Posts	No. of the Post	Consolidated Monthly Salary (BDT)
1	Environment and Natural Resource Management Specialist	01	2,20,000/-
2	Resource-Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) Specialist	01	2,20,000/-
3	Assistant Program Manager (Information and Communication Technology)	01	1,20,000/-

The employees will be recruited initially for one year with the opportunity for annual performance-based renewal during the project period. Interested candidates who fulfill the requirements may submit online applications by **23 June 2024**. Please visit the PKSF Website (**www.pksf.org.bd**) for detailed job descriptions and instructions to apply.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. PKSF is an equal-opportunity employer. Any kind of persuasion will be treated as disqualification of the candidate. PKSF reserves the right to cancel this recruitment process without assigning any reason whatsoever.

****Women are highly encouraged to apply.**

Deputy Managing Director

BUDGET REACTION

It's practical and pro-people. Issues like controlling price, employment opportunities and social safety nets have been prioritised.

OBAIDUL QUADER
AL General Secretary

This budget is designed for looting. I would not call this budget anti-people; it is an anti-Bangladesh budget.

MIRZA FAKHRUL
BNP Secretary General

Indirect taxation will increase the tax burden on people. Bangladesh will face a major economic crisis after this budget.

GM QUADER
Leader of Opposition

Taxes and prices have been increased in various ways. The low-income people will bear the brunt of corruption and looting of the rich because of the budget.

MD SHAH ALAM
CPB President

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR EDUCATION

Lowest in 16 years in terms of GDP

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Despite repeated calls from educationists to increase the budget for education sector, the proposed allocation this fiscal year is still far behind the expected level.

The allocation of Tk 94,710 crore for education is only 1.69 percent of GDP (gross domestic product), which is the lowest in the last 16 years.

It is way less than Unesco's recommendation of four to six percent allocation of the GDP for the sector.

Countries like Nepal and Myanmar are ahead of Bangladesh in terms of spending on education. Nepal spent 3.6 percent and Myanmar 2.1 percent of their GDP on education in 2022, according to World Bank data.

"It's nothing but a usual budget. I'm frustrated," Manzoor Ahmed, emeritus professor at BRAC University, told The Daily Star.

While placing the budget yesterday, Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali set aside Tk 44,108 crore for Secondary and Higher Education Division, Tk 10,602 crore for Technical and Madrasa Education Division, and Tk 38,819 crore for Primary and Mass Education Ministry.

FISCAL YEAR	EDUCATION BUDGET IN CRORE TK	ALLOCATION IN % OF GDP	ALLOCATION IN % OF BUDGET
2020-21	66,401	2.09	11.69
2021-22	69,953	2.01	11.58
2022-23	81,449	1.83	12.01
2023-24	88,162	1.76	11.57
2024-25	94,710	1.69	11.88

The allocation is 11.88 percent of the total outlay. However, in terms of amount, the allocation rose by 7.42 percent from the outgoing year.

But when it comes to the share of GDP, which is Tk 55,97,414 crore, the allocation stands at 1.69 percent.

In the fiscal year of 2009-10, the maiden year for the Awami League's four consecutive terms, the education sector's allocation was 2.04 percent of GDP.

The allocation went up to 2.49 percent of the GDP in the 2016-17 fiscal year and then started decreasing over the past eight years.

Manzoor Ahmed, also the founding director of BRAC Institute of Educational Development, said, "The gap between projection and actual allocation shows that there is an inconsistency between planning and implementation -- such a gap upsets the total planning."

Educationists expected that the government would emphasise downsizing the large classroom size, reducing the student-teacher ratio and enhancing teachers' capacity.

"But we don't see any significant moves regarding the matter," he added.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue, in an analysis of the national budget for FY2023-24, said on average, at least 35 LDCs (least-developed countries) spent two percent or more of their GDP on education from 2016 to 2022.

In the same period, Bangladesh's average education expenditure was 1.8 percent of GDP, it said.

Share of the poor dwarfed by others

FROM PAGE 4

The poor signed up with the National Pension Authority were allocated another Tk 150 crore.

In comparison, government retiree pensions were allocated Tk 36,580 crore and savings scheme interest payments were allocated a further Tk 8,828.32 crore.

This year, the allocation for the social safety net programme rose to Tk 1,36,026 crore from Tk 1,26,272 crore in FY 2023-24.

The Tk 9,754 crore increase makes the social safety net account for 17.06 percent of the national budget, as per the finance minister's speech.

However, if pensions and savings scheme interests are excluded from the programme's budget, its share in the national budget gets yanked down to roughly 11 percent.

"This increment reflects a substantial commitment to enhancing social protection programmes across various vulnerable groups," said Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali in his inaugural budget speech in parliament yesterday.

Another 2 lakh more senior citizens will be given Tk 600 per month this year, raising the number of beneficiaries from 58.01 lakh to 60.01 lakh. In addition, the number of widows and abandoned women beneficiaries will rise from 25.75 lakh to 27.75 lakh.

However, the Centre for Policy Dialogue in a research last year found that an estimated 33 lakh old people and 25 lakh widows eligible for assistance were not covered by the programme, showing just how many more beneficiaries require coverage not afforded by the paltry rise this year.

According to the FY24-25 budget, the number of disability allowance recipients will increase from 29 lakh to 32.34 lakh, while the stipend for students with disabilities will rise from Tk 950 to Tk 1,050 at the higher secondary level.

Meanwhile, the number of beneficiaries under the mother and child support programme increased by over a lakh this year to 16.55 lakh.

Currently, 6,880 individuals from the Hijra community receive allowances and this will increase to 12,629 beneficiaries.

However, in spite of these rises, the proportion of the social safety net programme as a percentage of the gross domestic product dipped from last year's 2.55 percent to 2.43 percent in FY24-25.

If government employee pensions and savings scheme interest payments are discounted from the programme, the share further dips down to being 1.62 percent of the GDP.

This falls short of the National Social Security strategy's aim to have the programme's budget be three percent of the GDP.

Breakdown of money spent over 13 years

FROM PAGE 4

In fiscal year 2009-2010, its actual expenditure was Tk 23 crore, and in FY21 this went up to Tk 32 crore, leaving it only Tk 9 crore richer. It got a significant bump in FY23, spending Tk 121 crore.

The civil aviation and tourism ministry's expenditure saw a 15,527.27 percent rise between 2009 and 2022.

This 150-fold increase made it the government body whose spending rose the fastest in 13 years.

In 2009, it spent only Tk 33 crore, while in 2022 its expenditure saw a sharp rise to Tk 5,157 crore.

Over the past 13 years, the ministry has expanded airport services, built runways and invested in the third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

The second fastest growth was in the science and technology ministry's spending, courtesy of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

Between 2009 and 2022, its expenditure grew nearly 5,000 percent.

The Liberation War ministry's share of the national budgetary expenditure increased 10 times in 13 years, making it the ministry whose slice of the pie fattened the highest number of times.

Between 2009 and 2022, the ministry's expenditure grew by 4,713 percent, from Tk 163 crore to Tk 7,845 crore.

This is followed by the religious affairs ministry, whose share of the nation's pie increased nine times in 13 years.

The health ministry, the food division and the Election Commission saw their share of total national expenditures rise only four times in this period.

The sector with the lowest expenditure in FY23 as a proportion of the GDP was the industry and economic services, which includes the labour and expatriate welfare ministries.

The sector had the lowest spending compared to the GDP in FY10 as well -- being only 0.11 percent, and in FY23 it went further down to 0.08 percent.

The expenditure for the sector of social security and welfare as a proportion of the GDP also went down in 13 years, from one percent in 2009-2010 to 0.84 percent in FY23.

As a share of the GDP, expenditure in the public services saw the highest growth -- from 0.87 percent in 2009-2010 to more than double of that in FY23 (2.02 percent).

This sector includes departments like the prime minister and president's offices; the parliament; Election Commission secretariat; the public administration and foreign ministries; the divisions of finance, economic relations, planning, internal resources, statistics, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and the cabinet.

Historic Six-point Day today

BSS, *Dhaka*

The historic Six-point Day, marking the demand for autonomy for the then East Pakistan, will be observed today across the country.

On June 7 in 1966, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman launched a massive movement against the misrule of the Pakistanis on the basis of the 6-point demand, the Magna Carta of the Bangalees, demanding autonomy for the then East Pakistan.

Eleven people, including Manu Mian, Shafique and Shamsul Haque, were gunned down by the police and paramilitary EPR on June 7, 1966 in Dhaka and Narayanganj during a hartal called for the release of Bangabandhu and other leaders detained for launching the six-point movement against the then barbaric ruling clique.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid rich tributes to the memories of Bangabandhu and all who embraced martyrdom for implementing the demand.

Different socio-political organisations have taken elaborate programmes to mark the day.

102, the new hotline of fire service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fire Service and Civil Defence has introduced a new hotline number, 102, for any fire related emergency service.

The hotline has been launched as it is easy to memorise than the existing land phone number and current hotline number 16163, says a press release.

Users of all operators except T&T landline will be able to call at 102 to get services.

HEALTH BUDGET

Utilising full allocation main challenge for govt

AHMED DEEPTO

Although allocation for the health sector has increased in the proposed budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year, the major challenge for the government will be to ensure its proper utilisation.

Notably, a significant portion of health funds remains unspent every year.

The government needs to develop the capacity to spend money efficiently so that people get the benefit of the allocation, said experts.

- Allocation for this year Tk 41,407cr
- It's 5.19pc of total budget
- Last year's allocation was Tk 38,051cr

Finance Minister AH Mahmood Ali yesterday proposed an allocation of Tk 41,407 crore for the health sector for FY25, which is 5.19 percent of the total budget.

"We have seen in past years that the health ministry fails to spend the entire allocation. They should spend the entire budget efficiently. This will be their main challenge," said Prof Abdul Hamid of Institute of Health Economics at Dhaka University.

As of April of the outgoing fiscal year, Health Services Division of the ministry could spend only 37.33 percent, while the ministry's Medical Education and Family Welfare Division spent 39.82 percent of their respective allocations.

The total allocation for health sector in the outgoing fiscal year was Tk 38,051 crore.

The government raised special duty on over 200 medical devices from one percent to 10 percent in the proposed budget. This could increase medical service costs for patients.

However, there will be some comfort too, as the finance minister proposed reducing tax on dengue test kits and cancer treatment equipment.

In addition, the duty on filters and circuits used for kidney dialysis, alongside the duty on raw materials for cancer medicines, has been reduced.

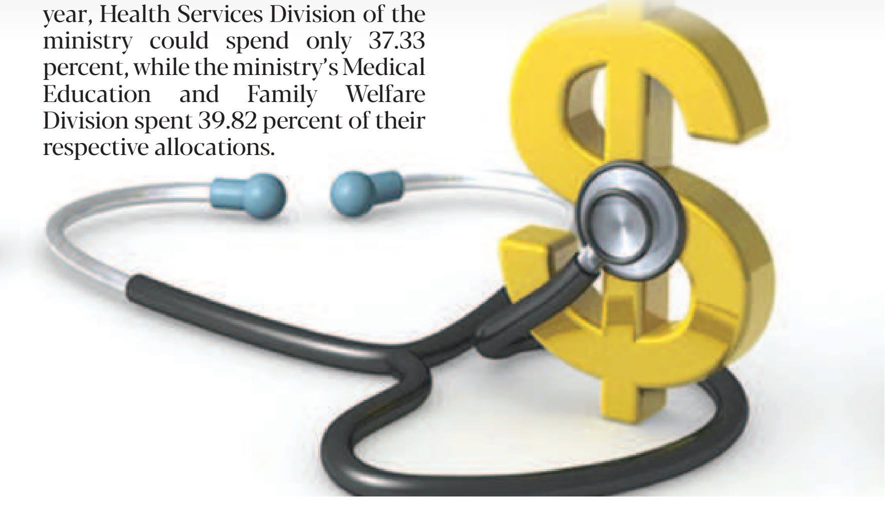
Like previous years, the minister also proposed a special allocation of Tk 2,000 crore to tackle health risks.

He also proposed an allocation of Tk 100 crore for the "Integrated Health Science Research and Development Fund," considering the importance of basic and applied research in medical sciences.

Prof Hamid termed these special allocations positive initiatives.

"The size of this year's budget has increased, which is good. But the problem is that the health budget shrinks following revision after six to nine months. In the last fiscal year, the revised budget decreased by about 16 percent.

"We hope it will not happen this time," he said, saying, the health ministry has to spend the allocated money efficiently.



ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

সম্পত্তি বিভাগ

আপনার পরিবেশ সুন্দর ও পরিচ্ছন্ন রাখুন
আপনার শিশুকে টিকা দিন

উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

আমাদের ঢাকা
আমাদের ঐতিহ্য

স্মারক নং-৪৬.২০৭.০০০.১৩.০২.৪৬৬৪.২০২৪

তারিখ ঃ ০৬/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রি.

ঃ ইজারা বিজ্ঞপ্তি ঃ

১।	মন্ত্রণালয় ও বিভাগ	ঃ	স্থানীয় সরকার, পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় মন্ত্রণালয়, স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগ।
২।	সংস্থার নাম	ঃ	ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন।
৩।	দরপত্র আহবানকারী বিভাগ	ঃ	সম্পত্তি বিভাগ, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন।
৪।	ক্রয় পদ্ধতি	ঃ	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM), সিলগালা যুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান।
৫।	ইজারার মেয়াদ	ঃ	কার্যাদেশের তারিখ থেকে পরবর্তী ০১ (এক) বছর।
৬।	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	ঃ	ব্যক্তির ক্ষেত্রে (ক) পাসপোর্টের সাইজের ছবি-০২ কপি। (খ) ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর/ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান/১ম শ্রেনির গেজেটেড অফিসার কর্তৃক জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি। (গ) হালনাগাদ টি.আই.এন সনদের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি। (ঘ) কোম্পানীর ক্ষেত্রে হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স এর সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি। (ঙ) ইজারা দরের ৩০% (শতকরা ৩০ ভাগ) অর্থ পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট দরপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে, ২৫% অর্থ ইজারা মূল্যের সাথে সমন্বয় করা হবে এবং বাকী ৫% অর্থ জামানত হিসেবে সংরক্ষিত থাকবে। (চ) সিডিউল ক্রয়ের চালানের ফটোকপি।
৭।	সিডিউলের টাকা জমা দেয়ার খাত	ঃ	সিডিউল মূল্য বাবদ নির্ধারিত অর্থ মেয়র, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন, চলতি হিসাব নং-২০০০১৭৮৩৯ (বিবিধ), সোনালী ব্যাংক লিঃ, নগর ভবন শাখা।
৮।	দরপত্র বিক্রির স্থান	ঃ	বিভাগীয় কমিশনারের কার্যালয়; ঢাকা বিভাগ, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের সম্পত্তি বিভাগ, হিসাব বিভাগ ও সকল আঞ্চলিক নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়।
৯।	দরপত্র জমা দেয়ার স্থান	ঃ	বিভাগীয় কমিশনারের কার্যালয়; ঢাকা বিভাগ, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের সম্পত্তি বিভাগ ও সকল আঞ্চলিক নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়।
১০।	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	ঃ	প্রধান সম্পত্তি কর্মকর্তার দপ্তর, সম্পত্তি বিভাগ, ৪র্থ তলা, রুম নং-৩২৫, নগর ভবন, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন নয় —

১১। সিডিউল ক্রয়ের তারিখ, দরপত্র জমা দেওয়ার তারিখ ও খোলার সময় নিম্নরূপঃ

দরপত্র আহবানের পর্যায়	সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র বাক্স ও খাম খোলার তারিখ ও সময় (দরদাতার উপস্থিতিতে)
১ম পর্যায়	২৬/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ	২৭/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তাং- সকাল ৯ টা হতে দুপুর ১২.৩০ টা পর্যন্ত	২৭/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তাং- দুপুর ২.৩০ টা
২য় পর্যায়	০৯/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ	১০/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তাং- সকাল ৯ টা হতে দুপুর ১২.৩০ টা পর্যন্ত	১০/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তাং- দুপুর ২.৩০ টা
৩য় পর্যায়	২৩/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ	২৪/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তাং- সকাল ৯ টা হতে দুপুর ১২.৩০ টা পর্যন্ত	২৪/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তাং- দুপুর ২.৩০ টা

১২। কাজের বিবরণ ঃ

ক্র. নং	পার্কিংয়ের বিবরণ	সরকারী মূল্য	সিডিউল মূল্য
০১.	ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের আওতাধীন ২১ নং ওয়ার্ডস্থ সাকুরা মার্কেটের পিছনে খালি জায়গায় মোটর সাইকেল/এম্বুলেন্স/প্রাইভেট কার (পার্কিং সংখ্যা-২৮টি) পার্কিং।	২,২৫,২৫০/-	১,২০০/-

১৩। বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলীঃ সরকারী ছুটি/অনিবার্য কারণবশত নির্ধারিত দিনে দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও খোলা সম্ভব না হলে পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসে ও একই সময়ে দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও খোলা হবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যাতিরেকেই যেকোন দরপত্র/সমুদয় দরপত্র বাতিল বা গ্রহণ করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। টেন্ডার সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্য টেন্ডার শিডিউলে বর্ণিত থাকবে।

কাইজার মোহাম্মদ ফারাবী
(উপসচিব)
প্রধান সম্পত্তি কর্মকর্তা
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The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Another mostly disappointing budget

Budget admits we are in a crisis, but offers no direction out of it

The finance minister on Thursday unveiled the country's 54th budget amounting to Tk 7,97,000 crore for FY2024-25, which is 4.6 percent bigger than the current one. The increase in budget size, however, is much lower than the year-on-year average spike of 11 percent seen in the last five years, illustrating the monetary constraints the government is facing as well as some of the realities of the crisis which requires a certain degree of belt-tightening. The main aim of this budget had to be the restoration of macroeconomic stability, reduction of inflation, and containment of ongoing pressure on our foreign currency reserves, which the finance minister himself admitted. On top of that, the finance minister emphasised the need to address corruption but then offered a facility to whiten black money, which is a contradiction in itself.

It means that firms and individuals with black money will again have the opportunity to legalise their undeclared wealth without having to face any questions about the source of their income, paying a 15 percent tax, whereas people belonging to the highest tax slab will have to pay a 30 percent tax, compared to 25 percent last year. This once again raises the question: why is the budget favouring corrupt people and companies over honest and hardworking individuals? And why are our laws continually being formulated in a way that makes honest individuals lose out to corrupt ones? It would not be far-fetched for honest taxpayers to ask, what is the point of them paying taxes every year when those who are evading taxes can get away with paying a much lesser amount on their undeclared income to bring it into the mainstream.

As far as allocations are concerned, while on the one hand the government has had to reign in its expenditure, it is disappointing to see, on the other hand, where the government's priorities truly lie. They certainly do not lie in the education or healthcare sectors, which is worrying. The allocation for education actually went down from 1.76 percent of GDP in the last budget to 1.69 percent in the proposed one—the lowest in the last 16 years. If the government is really looking to create a "Smart Bangladesh," how can such a low allocation be justified? And the same applies for the healthcare sector, whose budgetary allocation went slightly up from 5 percent of GDP in the last budget to 5.19 percent of GDP in the upcoming one—a negligible increase. In a country having one of the highest out-of-pocket healthcare expenditures in the world and experiencing soaring inflation simultaneously, healthcare costs have become a massive burden for the people. Therefore, the sector deserved a much greater allocation (and attention) from the government than what it received.

However, on a more positive note, it is good to see the government allocate Tk 2,000 crore for health emergencies, which we hope would be used properly to provide some relief to struggling families. Additionally, we are encouraged to see the government allocate Tk 1,000 crore on health research, similar to the current budget's allocation. However, questions remain over the ministry's ability to utilise its budget as, according to a review, there was a significant decrease in budgetary use compared to the allocation in the last fiscal year. Experts have urged that there should not be a repeat of that going forward. So, it is vital that the government increases the capacity of the health sector—as well as the education sector—to actually absorb and properly utilise their respective budgetary allocations.

The budget deficit this time is historically lower than other budgets in the last decade. This gives the impression that the authorities are concerned about financing the budgetary deficit, as well as servicing the debt. It shows that the authorities have taken a very practical decision. But again, the way the allocations have been made shows that the authorities have failed to take into account what common people are most concerned about. And while the government's growth estimates seem to be more practical compared to previous, overly optimistic approximations, the setting of a 6.5 percent inflation target seems completely oblivious to the current reality, with the average inflation remaining at 9 percent for the past two years.

These contradictions and inadequacies, as well as the lack of specific strategies to address what has been the worst economic crisis facing the country since the Covid-19 pandemic, show that even though the budget admits to the existence of this crisis, it does not provide any real way out of it. And here is where it falls woefully short of what the country needed at this moment. We hope that before giving its final seal of approval on the budget, the government will genuinely take these and other concerns raised by experts into account.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Lateran Treaty ratified

Through the Lateran Treaty—signed February 11, 1929, by Benito Mussolini for Italy and by Pietro Gasparri, cardinal secretary of state, for the papacy and ratified this day in 1929—Vatican City became a sovereign state.

VISUAL: **ANWAR SOHEL**

What's in the NEW BUDGET?

MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun
is executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and a non-resident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council. Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

Yesterday, the new finance minister presented the proposal for the national budget for FY2024-25 at a time when Bangladesh's economy is under tremendous pressure. The finance ministry deserves credit for undertaking the humongous task of preparing a budget during an economically challenging time. However, the proposed budget falls short of fully assessing the depth of the problem and making realistic targets, andthus suggesting practical measures to solve some of the problems.

How prudent is the fiscal framework?

With a size of Tk 7,97,000 crore, the FY2024-25 budget is equivalent to 14.2 percent of the GDP, which is the same as the revised budget of the outgoing fiscal year.

The gap between expenditure and revenue is large, which is common in Bangladesh. Since the revenue target is set at Tk 5,41,000 crore, or 9.7 percent of GDP, the government has to rely on both domestic and foreign sources. However, given the high inflationary pressure over the last two years and the resource constraints the country faces, it would have been prudent to keep the budget deficit low, somewhere between three or four percent of GDP, even though traditionally it has been set around five percent in the annual budget. In FY2023-24, the budget deficit was set at 5.2 percent of GDP, which has now been revised to 4.7 percent. In the upcoming fiscal year, it has been set at 4.6 percent. Of this deficit, 2.9 percent will be financed from domestic sources, and 1.9 percent from foreign sources.

A large amount of domestic funding will come from bank loans by the government, which is set to be Tk 1,37,500 crore—2.5 percent of the budget deficit. In the revised budget of FY2023-24, the amount of bank loans has been increased to Tk 1,55,935 crore. In the outgoing fiscal year, there was low demand for bank loans by the private sector. But the government's consistent dependence on the banking sector will create the crowding out effect for the private sector at some point. Besides, the government's interest payment against the bank loans continues to increase.

So, the proposed budget falls short of taking a pragmatic fiscal consolidation through restrained spending and meeting the expenses through higher domestic revenue collection. Of course, the target for revenue generation has been increased slightly, from 9.5 percent of GDP in the revised budget in the outgoing fiscal year to 9.7 percent for in the upcoming fiscal year.

How realistic are the key targets?

According to the finance ministry, the total revenue collection recorded a 13.3 percent growth during the July-January period of FY2023-24. This is a considerable improvement from the corresponding figure of FY2022-23. Despite this improvement, the revenue growth still has to be as high as 63.2 percent during the remainder of FY2023-24 to meet the annual target, which seems unplausible. Therefore, a practical and achievable target is essential for planning expenditures. There is an attempt by the government to enhance revenue collection through various tax measures.

The projections on some key economic indicators are also far from reality. For example, the proposed budget has set GDP growth at 6.75 percent for FY2024-25. Amid the current economic pressure, this projection is high. In FY2023-24, the GDP growth was estimated to be 7.5 percent. However, provisional estimates by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) revealed that in FY2023-24, the GDP growth rate could be 5.82 percent.

Similarly, gross investment as a share of GDP has been projected to be 33.41 percent in FY2024-25. This is in contrast to the fact that gross investment as a share of GDP has been declining over the past few years. Between FY2019-20 and FY2023-24, the decline in the gross investment-GDP ratio has been 0.33 percentage points. Most importantly, the private investment-GDP ratio also declined from 24.18 percent in FY2022-23 to 23.51 percent in FY2023-24. So, how the projection of higher private investment at 27.34 percent of GDP will be achieved in FY2024-25 remains a mystery.

What is there to curb inflation?

Amid the existing economic pressure, the government will have to settle for a low-level equilibrium, i.e. low inflation and low growth. Spending cuts are needed in unnecessary operational costs, unproductive projects, and special support to certain privileged groups. Higher allocations should be made for the poor, low- and middle-income groups through social protection.

Another way to provide some respite to ordinary citizens is through employment. In the absence of private investment, job creation has become limited. Despite a reasonable GDP growth, the capacity of the economy to generate employment is reducing. The employment elasticity is a measure to see how employment is changed due to economic growth. The quarterly GDP estimates and the Labour Force Survey (LFS) data from the BBS reveal that the employment elasticity of GDP is on a downward trend. More worryingly, the opportunity for decent employment is limited. The LFS 2022 data indicate that 90.5 percent of the industrial employment and 67.8 percent of the service sector employment are in the informal category.

For the poor, an important source of support is the government's social safety net (SSN) programmes. The overall SSN budget as a percentage of the total budget increased marginally—from 17.0 percent in the revised budget for FY2023-24 to 17.1 percent in FY2024-25. The SSN budget as a percentage of GDP saw an increase—from 2.40 percent in the revised budget to 2.43 percent in the proposed budget.

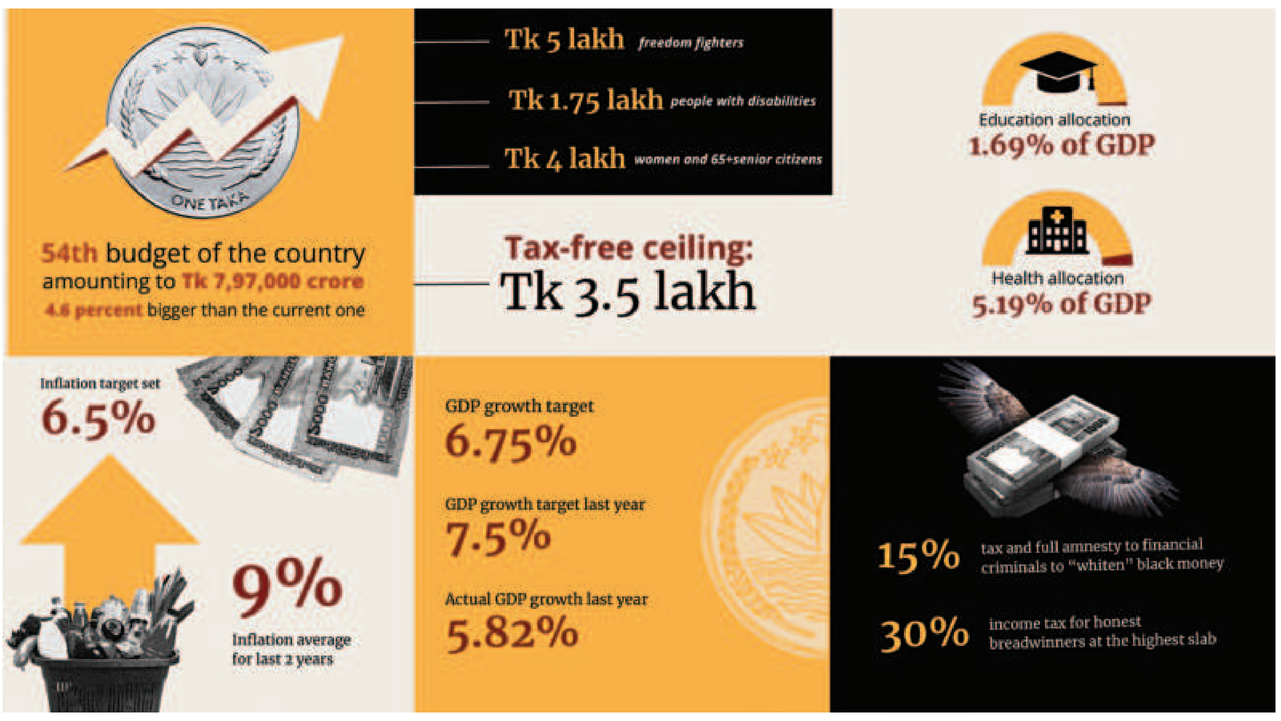
However, as before, pension for the retired government employees and their families, interests from savings certificates, agriculture subsidy, and programmes for freedom fighters are included in the SSN, inflating the allocation for the sector. If these allocations, which don't directly help the poor, are taken out, the actual allocation for SSN is much smaller. For example, if we exclude pension for the retired government employees and their families, interests from savings certificates, and agricultural subsidy, the SSN allocation drops to 9.2 percent of the total budget and only 1.32 percent of GDP.

There hasn't been any support in terms of tax measures for the low-income groups. In the budget for the outgoing fiscal year, the government increased the threshold level of tax-free annual income from Tk 3 lakh to Tk 3.5 lakh. However, the inflation continued to be close to 10 percent through the fiscal year. Food inflation is even higher. Indeed, food expenditure in Bangladesh is much higher than many countries with more per capita income (CPD 2024).

In such circumstances, the threshold of tax-free income should have been increased to Tk 5 lakh as expenditure for essential items eat up most of the earnings of low-income households. This rebate will not cost the government much. Instead, it should collect taxes from the tax evaders and new sources. The hard-earned money of the taxpayers should be used prudently. This will increase public confidence in the tax system. This will create fiscal space for the government to spend on priority areas, including support to the poor and low-income families. The announcement by the government to reduce taxes on many commodities is a positive step.

However, the authorities have to make sure that the reduced tax is reflected through reduced prices in the market. This initiative should be continued till the prices are down at a tolerable level. Allocation for programmes such as open market sales (OMS) should have been higher because the supply is inadequate compared to the demand. This is not a requirement for the low-income families only—the middle class also has a demand for such support.

Finally, the government has set the target for inflation at 6.5 percent in FY2024-25. Unfortunately, this is an unrealistic target. The policymakers have to take several pragmatic, bold and unpopular measures to reach the target within the next 12 months.



VISUAL: **STAR**

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

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Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
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Subscription:
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The only budget I care about is one that reduces my bills

OF MAGIC & MADNESS

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BADIUZZAMAN BAY

Every year, as budget day approaches, I feel a strange sense of déjà vu. It's like preparing for election day: the air is thick with anticipation, promises fly around like confetti, and hope flutters tentatively in our hearts. These two days are to newsmen what the two Eid days are to devotees—the culmination of journalistic pursuits that leaves us simultaneously animated and exhausted. On both days, journalists remain caught up in frantic activities, speeches and interviews, press conferences, and tireless decoding of every proposed plan or promise. The newsroom buzzes with excitement from midday to midnight. There are special meals, special pick-and-drop services.

As a journalist, I am encouraged to look at the bigger picture on budget day, and think less of my own wallet and more of the wallets of my compatriots. But this façade, if I may call it so, is getting harder to keep up. For every time, as the finance minister concludes his speech and the numbers roll out, reality hits with a greater force. You worry where you fit into this maze of numbers.

But seen from a wider perspective, both days also seem to be following the same script—lots of build-up and rituals but a disappointing anti-climax in the end.

As a journalist, I am encouraged to look at the bigger picture on budget day, and think less of my own wallet and more of the wallets of my compatriots. But this façade, if I may call it so, is getting harder to keep up. For every time, as the finance minister concludes his speech and the numbers roll out, reality hits with a greater force. You worry where you fit into this maze of numbers. You rummage through them for a solution to your problem: stagnant income but inflated bills. And you feel as helpless as the next working person looking at the widening gulf between your budget plan and that of the government.

Budget day is thus turning into our very own Groundhog Day. Each time, we hope for change, yet the same reality comes back to haunt us. And the reality is, even after the proposed budget for FY2024-25 comes into effect, that cycle of stagnation and inflation will likely remain in motion. This may be my years of accumulated distrust talking. But think about it. When did we last have a budget, big or small, that sufficiently addressed job crisis or brought down essential prices? Even the FY2023-24 budget, which was 12.35 percent bigger than the previous year's, failed on both fronts. As Jaime Lerner once put it, "If you want creativity, take a zero off your budget. If you want sustainability, take off two zeros." I don't know about the government's motivation for going for a "tight" budget this time. But our main problem, in my view, is not that we don't have enough zeros for the more important sectors but that we don't know how to spend it even when we do.

I don't want to go into details about our budget implementation problem which we talk about, like clockwork, after every budget, and then throughout the year. But suffice it to say, this, along with corruption, irregularities and various entrenched systemic issues, have had deeply destabilising effects. The prices of almost everything from groceries and utilities to housing and education have gone through the roof. People are paying through their noses for essential healthcare. A budget has to make sense on a practical level for citizens, right? It has to deliver results beyond shiny economic indicators or infrastructure development. Right now, this is not happening. I see scrolls and infographics detailing the proposed increase or reduction in import duties, and I find myself asking: what does it all mean? Will it help reduce my monthly bills, or inflate them?

Perhaps I'm simplifying it a bit. You could say that rising prices are a global trend. In India, where I found the prices of food or groceries or commuter fares to be much cheaper compared to Bangladesh, one of the factors apparently leading to the humbling election result for the ruling BJP is high prices—or as they are calling it, people's "bread-and-butter issues". I guess, in the end, it all comes down to your lived experience. Your income versus living cost. You spend what you earn. What if you don't earn enough? Or you do, but just barely? You still try to set aside some savings for a rainy day, but what if every day becomes a rainy day? What's the strategy then?

VISUAL: **STAR**

Not long ago, I remember willing myself to survive on two meals a day, especially towards the end of the month. It doesn't help, though. You have a family to take care of. And you need more than a full stomach to pass through life. I can only imagine how people lower in the food chain are getting by amid the never-ending struggle between low or stagnant incomes and inflated bills.

If you ask me what kind of a budget I need, the answer is pretty simple. I need a budget that relieves me of having to pay so much for the most basic of services and amenities. I need it to treat the cost-of-living crisis as a national emergency, not just a by-product of some economic influences that can't be helped.

So, if you ask me what kind of a budget I need, the answer is pretty simple. I need a budget that relieves me of having to pay so much for the most basic of services and amenities. I need it to treat the cost-of-living crisis as a national emergency, not just a by-product of some economic influences that can't be helped. Above all, I want a solution to the unique development enigma that Bangladesh has become as at once one of the poorest and yet costliest countries in the world.

Is it too much to ask for?

The election verdict greatly tempered Modi's shine and energised the opposition. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

The majesty of 'public will'

Rebirth of the Indian opposition

THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

On Sunday, Narendra Modi will commence his third consecutive term as India's prime minister, a first after Jawaharlal Nehru, India's founding prime minister. The Indian people have chosen their leaders and representatives in parliament, and we congratulate them for it. This election marks the return of coalition government that had been the norm before BJP's single-party domination ended it in 2014. This will be the first time that BJP, having failed to obtain enough seats on its own—getting 240 while needing 272—will have to depend on its alliance partners to form a coalition government with Nitish Kumar of Bihar and Chandrababu Naidu of Andhra Pradesh. As reported in Indian media—and not unexpected in the tradition of coalition politics in the subcontinent—the two are already trying to extract the maximum price possible for their crucial backing, without which Modi cannot form his new government. The bargain is, of course, focused on crucial ministries and the position of the speaker for the Telugu Desam Party, according to *The Telegraph*.

This election marks the return of coalition government that had been the norm before BJP's single-party domination ended it in 2014. This will be the first time that BJP, having failed to obtain enough seats on its own—getting 240 while needing 272—will have to depend on its alliance partners to form a coalition government with Nitish Kumar of Bihar and Chandrababu Naidu of Andhra Pradesh. As reported in Indian media—and not unexpected in the tradition of coalition politics in the subcontinent—the two are already trying to extract the maximum price possible for their crucial backing.

The election verdict greatly tempered Modi's shine and energised the opposition. A message doing the rounds on WhatsApp, as quoted by journalist Swapan Dasgupta in the aforementioned paper, goes, "The Indian voter has given a verdict that will be remembered for a long time. They have given the BJP and allies a victory that feels like a defeat. They have given the INDI [sic] alliance a defeat that feels like a victory."

By all accounts, Modi's victory is very impressive. BJP won 240 seats on its own, which is more than the combined seats won by the opposition and more than double that of Congress's tally of 99. Why, then, should a tinge of defeat be associated with it? Because it overplayed its success, and the slogan that BJP would win more than 400 seats in the House of 543 itself exhibited an arrogance and overconfidence that has made its success look like a defeat—a case of shooting oneself in the foot.

When democracy is on the slide in many countries, and election as an event is suffering from many distortions, especially instigated by the ruling party (don't we know it?), for the Indian national election to have come through with credibility and overall acceptance is an achievement that must be praised and celebrated by democracy-loving people everywhere. Around 969 million people, 70 percent of a population of 1.4 billion, were eligible to vote. According to figures from the Election Commission of India, 642 million voters voted, of whom 312 million were women, making for the highest participation by women voters in the country's history.

Though victorious, the ruling coalition NDA has been dealt a body blow that has surprised most election watchers both inside and outside India. Though Narendra Modi as the tallest leader in India and the BJP as the largest single party have retained their strong positions, the resurgence of the opposition and, within it, that of Congress—the grand old party that many pundits had written off—are signs of the emergence of functioning democracy that can only bode well for India and its neighbours.

What we consider to be the most noteworthy aspect of the Indian election is the rebirth of the opposition. In fact, it can be termed a "rebirth" of a parliament long overwhelmed by a single-party dominance, and without a viable opposition, the House really loses its functionality. In a parliamentary form of government, the House acts as the centre of all national politics. It is where national issues are debated, the government made answerable, polices judged, and resource allocation scrutinised in depth. It is the parliament where a government, however powerful, is made aware that people are its "master."

The gradual erosion of the central role of parliament, which we have witnessed in Bangladesh, was also evident in India with the dominance of BJP. With 232 seats in the House—the central institution that holds sway over the functioning of India's governance structure—the role of the opposition is likely to see an effective revival. The importance of this particular fact cannot be overestimated. The most important outcome will be to ensure greater accountability of the government in running its affairs. Each bill will be far more scrutinised, and all megaprojects and expensive initiatives will be delved deeper into. In a House with a strong opposition, each individual MP will feel far more empowered to question the government and the administration as a whole—especially the bureaucrats, whose mindset is far from serving the people.

Reviving the effective role of the opposition in monitoring and holding the government accountable is of great significance for us in Bangladesh, as we have almost forgotten that the parliament is really where public representatives are supreme. In our case, the overwhelming presence and almost monopoly control of the House by one party has literally obliterated the powerful role of the House, the role of the speaker, and of individual MPs.

Along with the all-India elections, the one in West Bengal also has special significance for us in Bangladesh. The popular expectation that BJP would fare better than the last time and might even get more seats than before was proven wrong. Mamata Banerjee, due to her political acumen, election strategy, and campaigning energy, must be congratulated for the way she single-handedly held back the Hindutva tide to return her own candidates in the election.

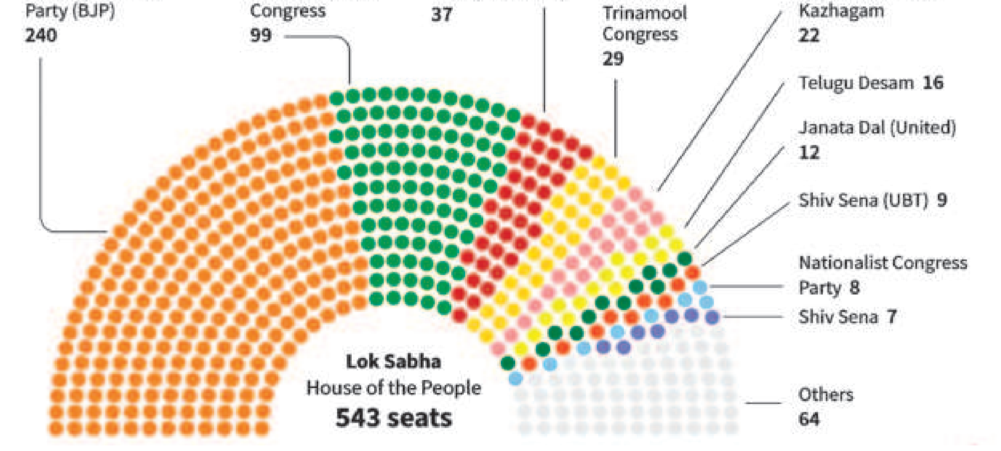
A significant takeaway from the results of the Indian election is that religion-based election campaigning has its serious limits. Voters in a country where democracy has been practised since 1947 have the wisdom to see the damaging impact of such campaigns and the courage to set a corrective course in motion.

For us, a nation constantly badgered by endless controversies surrounding every poll of any sort, the Indian election is a matter of envy as no one as yet has raised any objection about the election process or the outcome. The results of each phase—and there were seven in total—were stored by the Election Commission of India and made public after 44 days when the whole process was completed. The whole election was conducted through EVMs that provided a paper trail to reinforce voters' confidence in the machines. For us, EVMs remain a far cry as public confidence, instead of rising, has dwindled further during the last election.

As we congratulate India's new leadership, we celebrate the victory of democracy in our giant neighbour, with whom we have forged partnership for our mutual benefits. It was the might of the verdict of the Indian voters that resonated throughout the world, the region and also, hopefully, within Bangladesh where our own voters aspire for the same power. It proved that a mature voter can see through the superficiality of populism, the danger of divisive politics, the pitfalls of using religion to gain votes, and the price that people end up paying when hate and othering becomes instruments of gaining support. In some fundamental ways, the Indian voters saw the tragedy of opting for creating deep wounds that has the possibility of festering into long-term, if not permanent, fault lines. The Indian election proved once again that, if allowed free expression, public will always strengthens democracy. Conversely, if not allowed, it destroys democracy from within.

The Indian parliament after the 2024 election

Composition of the directly elected lower house



SOURCE: **ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA**

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Climate Resilient Livelihoods Improvement and Watershed Management in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CRLIWM-CHT) Sector Project
Project Management Office
Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council
Rangamati

Memo No. Four-3/CRLIWM-CHT/OS/2024-82 Date: 06/06/2024

Re-Advertisement of Invitation for Expression of Interest (EOI)

1.	Ministry	:	Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs
2.	Executing agency	:	Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council
3.	Procuring entity	:	Project Director, Climate Resilient Livelihoods Improvement and Watershed Management in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Sector Project.
4	Project name	:	Climate Resilient Livelihoods Improvement and Watershed Management in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Sector Project
5	Invitation date	:	06 June 2024
6	Invitation for	:	Proposal for deployment of manpower through outsourcing Services
7	Source of fund	:	GoB & ADB
8	Procurement method	:	OTM (Open Tender Method)
9.	Package name and No.	:	CRLIWM/SD-01
10	Last date of proposal selling	:	26 June 2024, 4:00pm
11.	Last date of proposal submission	:	27 June 2024, 12:00pm
12.	Date and time of opening bidding documents	:	27 June 2024 at 12:30pm
13	Address of selling proposal document	:	Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council, Head Office, Rangamati
14	Address of receiving proposal document	:	Project Management Office, Climate Resilient Livelihoods Improvement and Watershed Management in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CRLIWM-CHT) Sector Project, Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council, Rangamati
15	Eligibility of the bidder	:	As per bid document
16	Brief description of the service to be provided:		

Sl No.	Proposed manpower	No. of post	Qualification & experience
1	Assitant Engineer (Civil)	03	B.Sc. in Engineering (Civil) with 2 years experience or Diploma in Civil Engineering with at least 05 years work experience; strong skills in technical need assessment, program design, material development and impact evaluation; Excellent written and spoken in English; Computer literacy in MS Word MS Excel; well conversant about the Hill District culture; At least one ethnic community language of CHT;
2	District Program Coordinator (Planning, Monitoring & MIS)	03	Post-Graduation in Statistics/Economics/Development Administration/Mangement or any other relevent disciplin; Minimum 05 years works experience in planning under any social development project; preferably working with development project in monitoring and evaluation system; English profiency and computer literacy are must; well conversant about the Hill District culture; At least one ethnic community language of CHT;
3	Sub-Assistant Engineer (Civil)	03	Diploma in Civil Engineering with at least 02 years experience; strong skills in technical need assessment, program design, material development and impact evaluation; Excellent written and spoken in English; Computer literacy in MS Word MS Excel; well conversant about the Hill District culture; At least one ethnic community language of CHT;
4	Sub-Assistant Forestry/ Horticulture Officer (Watershed)	03	Diploma in Agriculture/Forestry at least 02 years experience; Excellent written and spoken in English; Computer literacy in MS Word MS Excel; well conversant about the Hill District culture; At least one ethnic community language of CHT;
5	Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer (Agriculture Production etc.)	03	Diploma in Agriculture/Forestry at least 02 years experience; Excellent written and spoken in English; Computer literacy in MS Word MS Excel; well conversant about the Hill District culture; At least one ethnic community language of CHT;
6	Office Assistant cum Typist	05	Minimum Graduate with 05 years in related experience; Excellent written and spoken in English; Computer literacy in MS Word MS Excel; well conversant about the Hill District culture; At least one ethnic community language of CHT;
7	Store Assistant	01	Minimum Graduate with 05 years experience in store keeping in any development project or any other organization; Have competencies in data entry, analysis and management; Have knowledge of proper book keeping and inventory management
8	Driver	04	Minimum class Eight passed with valid driving licence and 05 years practical experience.; well conversant about the Hill District culture;
9	Office Helper/MLSS	04	Minimum class Eight passed; well conversant about the Hill District culture;
10	Night Guard	04	Minimum class Eight passed; well conversant about the Hill District culture;

17	Documents are required to be submitted along with the proposal	:	The following documents are required to be submitted with the Proposal: • Valid trade licence, • Up-dated VAT registration certificate, Tax Identification Number (TIN), certificate with income tax clearance • Registration from Directorate of Inspection for Factories and Establishment • Specific experiences related to the providing Manpower services through outsourcing. • Certificate from office of the register of joint stock companies and firms • All certificates in favour of bid document.
18	Contract period	:	Up to 30 June 2030
19.	Proposal price	:	A non-refundable amount of Tk 4000.00 (Taka four thousand) and 15% VAT.
20.	Name of the officer inviting proposal	:	Project Director, CRLIWM-CHT Sector Project, Rangamati.
21.	Contact details	:	Phone No. 01556511231 E-mail: pd.crliwmcht@gmail.com

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals and the whole processes.

Paban Kumar Chakma
Project Director
Climate Resilient Livelihoods Improvement and Watershed Management in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Sector Project, Rangamati

GD- 954

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

ঔষধ প্রশাসন অধিদপ্তর
ঔষধ ভবন, মহাখালী, ঢাকা-১২১২
www.dgda.gov.bd

স্মারক নং ডিজিডিএ/এসডিএএম-ওপি/২০১৭-২০২৪/১৯৭ তারিখঃ ০৬/০৬/২০২৪

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে,

ক) সরকারী বিশ্লেষক কর্তৃক মান-বর্হিভূত/ভেজাল ঘোষিত হওয়ায় নিম্নবর্ণিত প্রতিষ্ঠান সমূহের পার্শ্বে বর্ণিত পদ/পদসমূহের রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাময়িক বাতিল/উৎপাদন ও বাজারজাতকরণ স্থগিত করা হয়।

ক্রমিক নং	প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও ঠিকানা	উৎপাদন লাইসেন্স নং	গৃহীত ব্যবস্থাদি
০১	মেসার্স মেডিকন ফার্মাসিউটিক্যালস লিঃ, প্লট নং-১৭/এ, ব্লক ডি, সেকশন-১০, মিরপুর ঢাকা	অজৈব-৪০২, জৈব-১৪৮	স্মারক নং-ডিজিডিএ/এমএল-২৩৮/(অংশ-২)/২০২৩/১৭৩৫৯ তারিখঃ-২০/০৯/২০২৩ মোতাবেক প্রতিষ্ঠানটির লাইসেন্সভূক্ত **Pamel 20 Tablet** (**Pantoprazole BP 20 mg** (DAR No-U-238-110-067) নামীয় পদটির রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাময়িক বাতিল পূর্বক উৎপাদন ও বাজারজাতকরণ স্থগিত করা হয়।
০২	মেসার্স মার্কসম্যান ফার্মাসিউটিক্যালস লিঃ, গেন্ডা, সাভার, ঢাকা	অজৈব-৪৬৮, জৈব-২৪৫	স্মারক নং-ডিজিডিএ/এমএল-৩৩১/০৩/১৬২ তারিখঃ-০৩/০১/২০২৪ মোতাবেক প্রতিষ্ঠানটির লাইসেন্সভূক্ত **Neozith Tablet (Azithromycin USP 500 mg** (DAR No-331-21-023) নামীয় পদটির রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাময়িক বাতিল পূর্বক উৎপাদন ও বাজারজাতকরণ স্থগিত করা হয়।
০৩	মেসার্স গ্লোব ফার্মাসিউটিক্যালস্ লিঃ, বেগমগঞ্জ, নোয়াখালী	অজৈব-১৮২, জৈব-৫০	স্মারক নং-ডিজিডিএ/এমএল-০৮৩/০১৪/৩১৩ তারিখঃ-০৮/০১/২০২৪ মোতাবেক প্রতিষ্ঠানটির লাইসেন্সভূক্ত **Deslona Tablet (Desloratadine)** (DAR No.: 083-370-021) নামীয় পদটির রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাময়িক বাতিল পূর্বক উৎপাদন ও বাজারজাতকরণ স্থগিত করা হয়।
০৪	মেসার্স ইমা ইউনানী ল্যাবরেটরীজ বিসিক শিল্প এলাকা, প্লট নং#আর/০৪, হোল্ডিং নং-১৫৬, কোনাবাড়ী, গাজীপুর।	ইউ-২৪১	স্মারক নং-ডিজিডিএ/ইউ-১৯/৮৪/১৭৩৬২ তারিখঃ-২১/০৯/২০২৩ মোতাবেক প্রতিষ্ঠানটির লাইসেন্সভূক্ত **IMAFIT (liquid) Generic name: Arq Maul-Lahm**, ডিএআর নং ইউ-১৯-এ-০০৫ নামীয় পদটির রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাময়িক বাতিল পূর্বক উৎপাদন ও বাজারজাতকরণ স্থগিত করা হয়।

(খ) অনুমোদিত মোড়ক সামগ্রীর ডিজাইন পরিবর্তন করে অন্য প্রতিষ্ঠানের মোড়ক সামগ্রীর ডিজাইন হুবহু নকল করে ঔষধ উৎপাদন ও বাজারজাত করায় নিম্নবর্ণিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের পার্শ্বে বর্ণিত পদটির রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাময়িক বাতিল করা হয়।

ক্রমিক নং	প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও ঠিকানা	উৎপাদন লাইসেন্স নং	গৃহীত ব্যবস্থাদি
০১	মেসার্স এমএসএফ ফার্মাসিউটিক্যালস লিমিটেড, ছোট মোহাম্মপুর, চাঁদগাও-৩৫১৭, দাউদকান্দি, কুমিল্লা	অজৈব-৫২১, জৈব-৩১৪	স্মারক নং-ডিজিডিএ/ইউ-১৯/৮৪/১৭৩৬২ তারিখঃ-২১/০৯/২০২৩ মোতাবেক প্রতিষ্ঠানটির লাইসেন্সভূক্ত **পেটামল এক্সট্রা (প্যারাসিটামল বিপি ৫০০ মি. গ্রা এবং ক্যাফেইন বিপি ৬৫ মি, গ্রা ট্যাবলেট), (DAR No-388-008-006)** নামীয় পদটির রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাময়িক বাতিল পূর্বক উৎপাদন ও বাজারজাতকরণ স্থগিত করা হয়।

(গ) কারখানায় উৎপাদন ও মাননিয়ন্ত্রণের প্রয়োজনীয় সুযোগ সুবিধা না থাকায় পরিদর্শক দলের মতামতের ভিত্তিতে নিম্নবর্ণিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের পার্শ্বে বর্ণিত পদসমূহের উৎপাদন ও বাজারজাতকরণ স্থগিত করা হয়।

ক্রমিক নং	প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও ঠিকানা	উৎপাদন লাইসেন্স নং	গৃহীত ব্যবস্থাদি
০১	মেসার্স সীমা ফার্মাসিউটিক্যালস লিঃ, শহীদ কোর্ট, ফুলবড়িয়া, সাভার, ঢাকা	অজৈব-২৩১ ও জৈব-১১১	স্মারক নং-ডিজিডিএ/এমএল-১৭১/১২/৭৯১২ তারিখঃ-০৩/০৪/২০২৩ মোতাবেক প্রতিষ্ঠানটির উৎপাদন লাইসেন্সভূক্ত (অজৈব-২৩১ ও জৈব-১১১) সকল প্রকার পদের উৎপাদন ও বাজারজাতকরণ স্মারক ইস্যুর তারিখ হতে ০২(দুই) বছরের জন্য স্থগিত করা হয়।
০২	মেসার্স ওরিয়েন্টাল ল্যাবরেটরীজ (ইউনানী) লিঃ, শ্রীপুর, ফেনী সদর, ফেনী		স্মারক নং-৪৫.০৪.০০০০.০০৬.৯৭.০৪০.২৩.১৬০৯ তারিখঃ-১৭/০৯/২০২৩ মোতাবেক প্রতিষ্ঠানটির লাইসেন্সভূক্ত **হাব্বে মুমসিক (ডি.এ.আর নং-ইউ-১৬-এ-০২৪), হাব্বে মুনইশ (ডি.এ.আর নং-ইউ-১৬-এ-০২৪) ও যষ্টিমধু লজেন্স (ডি.এ.আর নং-ইউ-১৬-এ-০২৪)** নামীয় পদসমূহের উৎপাদন ও বাজারজাতকরণ স্থগিত করা হয়।

(ঘ) ঔষধ ও কসমেটিক আইন ২০২৩ এর ১৮(১) (খ) ধারা লংঘনের দায়ে একই আইনের ১৮(৩) ধারা মোতাবেক নিম্নবর্ণিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের ঔষধ উৎপাদন লাইসেন্স সাময়িক বাতিল হয়।

ক্রমিক নং	প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও ঠিকানা	উৎপাদন লাইসেন্স নং	গৃহীত ব্যবস্থাদি
০১	মেসার্স বেস্ট ওয়ান আয়ুর্বেদীক, শহিদ আলী সড়ক, নতুন ব্রীজ, কাঠেরপুল, যাত্রাবাড়ী, ঢাকা	আয়ু-১২৮	স্মারক নং-ডিএ/আয়ু-১৪২/৮৪/২১৯৫৫ তারিখঃ-১০/১২/২০২৩ মোতাবেক প্রতিষ্ঠানটির উৎপাদন লাইসেন্স নং আয়ু-১২৮ সাময়িক স্থগিত করা হয়।

(ঙ) ঔষধ ও কসমেটিক আইন ২০২৩ এর ১৭(১) ধারা লংঘনের দায়ে একই আইনের ১৮(১) ধারা মোতাবেক নিম্নবর্ণিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের ঔষধ উৎপাদন লাইসেন্স সাময়িক বাতিল হয়।

ক্রমিক নং	প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও ঠিকানা	উৎপাদন লাইসেন্স নং	গৃহীত ব্যবস্থাদি
০১	মেসার্স ব্লেস ল্যাবরেটরীজ (আয়ুর্বেদীক), একুতা, কালিগঞ্জ, গাজীপুর।	আয়ু-২০৩	স্মারক নং-ডিএ/আয়ু-১৮/৮৪/২১৯৫৫ তারিখঃ-১০/১২/২০২৩ মোতাবেক প্রতিষ্ঠানটির উৎপাদন লাইসেন্স নং আয়ু-১২৮ সাময়িক স্থগিত করা হয়।

চ) ঔষধ নিয়ন্ত্রণ কমিটির (ডিসিসি) এর ২৫৪তম সভার সিদ্ধান্ত মোতাবেক নিম্নবর্ণিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের পার্শ্বে বর্ণিত আমদানিকৃত পদটির রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাময়িক বাতিল করা হয়।

ক্রমিক নং	প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও ঠিকানা	গৃহীত ব্যবস্থাদি
০১	M\s City Overseas Ltd., 218, Mitford Road, Mumtaz Market, Dhaka-1100.	স্মারক নং-ডিএ/১৫-৫/৯০(২০৮)/৮৪/১৯১৪৮ তারিখঃ-২৫/১০/২০২৩ মোতাবেক প্রতিষ্ঠানটির লাইসেন্সভূক্ত Kontab Tablet (Trypsin Crystalline 50mg +Bromelain 1mg (DAR No-208-2915-97) নামীয় পদটির রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাময়িক বাতিল পূর্বক উৎপাদন ও বাজারজাতকরণ স্থগিত করা হয়।

সূত্রে বর্ণিত তারিখ হতে সাময়িক বাতিল লাইসেন্সের আওতায় কোন প্রকার ঔষধ, রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাময়িক বাতিলকৃত ঔষধসমূহ এবং উৎপাদন স্থগিতকৃত ঔষধসমূহ উৎপাদন, মওজুদ, বিক্রয়, বিতরণ ও প্রদর্শন করা যাবে না। সম্মানিত চিকিৎসক/কেমিস্ট/জনসাধারণকে উপরিউক্ত সাময়িক বাতিলকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহের উৎপাদিত ঔষধ, রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাময়িক বাতিলকৃত/উৎপাদন স্থগিতকৃত ঔষধসমূহ ব্যবস্থাপত্র প্রদান/বিক্রয়/ক্রয় ও ব্যবহার করা থেকে বিরত থাকার জন্য বিশেষ ভাবে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

মেজর জেনারেল মোহাম্মদ ইউসুফ
মহাপরিচালক
ঔষধ প্রশাসন অধিদপ্তর
এবং
লাইসেন্সিং অথরিটি (ড্রাগস)
ফোন-০২২২২২-৮০৮০৩
Email: dgda.gov@gmail.com

GD- 955

1 in 4 under age 5 face 'severe' food poverty: UN

AFP, *United Nations*

More than one in four children under the age of five globally live in "severe" food poverty, Unicef has warned -- meaning more than 180 million are at risk of experiencing adverse impacts on their growth and development.

"Severe child food poverty describes children who are surviving on severely deprived diets so they're only consuming two or less food groups," Harriet Torlesse, a lead writer of a new Unicef report published late Wednesday, told AFP.

"It is shocking in this day and age where we know what needs to be done."

Unicef recommends that young children eat foods daily from five of eight main groups -- breast milk; grains, roots, tubers and plantains; pulses, nuts and seeds; dairy; meat, poultry and fish; eggs; vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables; and other fruits and vegetables.

RED SEA, ARABIAN SEA

Houthis attack three ships

REUTERS, *Cairo*

Yemen's Iran-allied Houthis said they had launched attacks on three ships in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea - though shipping giant Maersk MAERSKb.CO dismissed the militants' report that the targets included one of its vessels.

The movement used missiles and drones against two ships - Roza and Vantage Dream - in the Red Sea, military spokesperson Yahya Saree said in a televised address on Wednesday, adding that this group also used drones against the US vessel Maersk Seletar in the Arabian Sea, without giving further details.

Palestinians mourn for their relatives killed in Israeli strikes in Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza Strip yesterday. The strikes took place at a sensitive moment in mediated negotiations on a ceasefire agreement entailing the release of hostages and some of the Palestinians held in Israeli jails.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Gaza refugees stuck in limbo in Egypt

AFP, *Cairo*

Every time a plane flies overhead, Mohanad al-Sindawy shudders. It takes him a moment to remember he isn't in Gaza anymore and that no one is bombing the Egyptian capital.

"But the sound terrifies us every time, even passing cars remind us of missiles," the 23-year-old Palestinian told AFP in Cairo.

The Israeli offensive raging since October 7 has sent tens of thousands of Palestinians fleeing Gaza to neighbouring Egypt where they are granted temporary stays.

Although Egypt insists it won't do Israel's bidding by allowing permanent refugee camps on its territory, it has allowed in medical evacuees, dual passport holders and others who somehow managed to escape.

Sindawy, who worked in digital marketing back in Gaza, could find work online but said he "can't concentrate" on anything except "following the news and making sure our families are safe".

As the bloodiest ever Gaza offensive grinds on just a five-hour-drive away, he said, "we can't even think about what comes next for us until there's a ceasefire".

Like him, many Palestinians are traumatised, disoriented in exile and struggling to find help.

"We lost everything," said another recent arrival, Raghda Shbeir, 22. "We've contacted organisations for help, but nothing has worked. Some never responded, some told us to wait our turn."

Shbeir's family is lucky to have relatives in Cairo but faces another huge obstacle, she said -- "our legal status in Egypt: our residence permit is only valid for 45 days." In the longer term, she said, "staying in Egypt is not an option".

Amid an Israeli siege of the coastal territory of 2.4 million people, the Rafah border crossing with Egypt was a lifeline until it was shut last month, letting aid trucks in and allowing the lucky few to escape.

POST-POLLS SURVEY

Modi factor seems to have stagnated over a decade

THE HINDU ONLINE

Ever since the rise of Narendra Modi on the national scene in 2014, his leadership has attracted voters to the BJP on a considerable scale.

The electoral strategy of the BJP (and the NDA) in the 2024 polls was to make Modi's leadership the face of their campaign.

However, the opposition alliance consciously did not declare a Prime Ministerial face. The CSDS-Lokniti data indicate the possible impact of the leadership factor in shaping the electoral outcome.

FADING POPULARITY

Modi remained in the lead as voters' choice to become Prime Minister. A little over four in 10 respondents (41 percent) stated that their preferred Prime Ministerial choice was Narendra Modi.

Rahul Gandhi was mentioned by a little over one-fourth (27 percent) of the respondents as their preferred choice.

It may be important to record that the question on preferred Prime Ministerial choice has been asked during earlier elections also. This time, there was a six-percentage point decline in the mention of Narendra Modi as the Prime Ministerial choice compared with 2019.

The gap between Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi as the preferred Prime Ministerial choice has fallen by eight percentage points.

IMPACT OF PM PREFERENCE

Six in 10 respondents (60 percent) reported that it had an impact on the voting decision. Three-fourths of the respondents who reported voting for the BJP mentioned that it had an impact with as high as four in 10 saying that it had a great impact.

The impact of the leadership factor in determining voter preference was much less among those who voted for the Congress and its allies.

The post-polls surveys have been tapping the response to whether there would have been any change in voting preference if Narendra Modi was not the Prime Ministerial candidate.

When this question was asked in 2014, a little over onefourth (27 percent) of those who voted for the BJP said that they would have changed the way they voted. In 2019, two-thirds (32 percent) took this stand. This time, one fourth (25 percent) said that they would have changed the way they voted if Modi was not the Prime Ministerial candidate. Clearly, the initial ability of the Modi factor to make voters move to the BJP seems to have stagnated over the decade.

Budget embraces correct strategic direction

FROM PAGE 6

More precisely, if we take a 40,000-foot view of the overall economy – we notice four growing fault-lines within our economic space, which is increasingly undermining our macroeconomic stability. These are: (i) a very stubborn inflation rate which has almost remained close to double digits over the last twenty-four months; (ii) foreign reserves continue to deplete as we have lost approximately $24 billion over the last 24 months – creating significant pressure on our exchange rate; (iii) the fiscal space is almost nil as the entire development budget is now financed through domestic and international borrowing – which is an unsustainable strategy due to the rising domestic and international interest rates – while the entire government revenue (i.e., tax and non-tax revenue) is exhausted on the wage bill, growing subsidies and interest payments; (iv) the hazardous situation in the banking sector which utterly limits government's ability to borrow from the domestic banking system.

Against this backdrop, the economic stabilisation framework demands contractionary economic management manifested in both contractionary monetary and fiscal policies. Earlier, we noted that the Bangladesh Bank committed (albeit quite late) to a contractionary monetary policy by the: (i) unification of the exchange rate in the interbank market and adoption of a market-based crawling peg system; (ii) abandoning the 6 percent to 9 percent caps and the successor SMART system for interest rate determination and restoring the market determination of the interest rates by banks and financial institutions; (iii) and a 50-basis points increase in the policy rate of Bangladesh Bank.

Consequently, to ensure that the overall macroeconomic management is guided by a consistent framework – the broader expectation from the National Budget FY25 is that it too supports the contractionary monetary stance through contractionary fiscal policies and increased revenue mobilisation.

Moreover, as one can broadly observe – the recently proposed national budget for FY25 articulates a fiscal framework that recognises the ongoing macroeconomic problems and commits to support contractionary demand management through increased revenue mobilisation and limiting public expenditure.

For instance, in prior years (at least over the past one-and-a-half decades) the proposed annual development programme (ADP) maintained an annual growth rate of around 20 percent, culminating in a budget deficit of around 5 percent of the GDP.

Yet, in the recently placed national budget for FY25, it is satisfying to observe that the government has avoided that trend and settled for an annual development programme that is almost similar to that proposed for FY24.

The proposed budget is also only 4.7 percent higher than that of the current fiscal. This means that the Treasury has committed to a budget deficit of only 4.6 percent, which is the lowest in the last 10 years.

Moreover, if we factor in the average trend that only around 85 percent of the proposed ADP gets executed, the effective budget deficit will be around 4 percent of the GDP.

This contractionary fiscal stand embodies a correct strategic direction that will help support economic stabilisation over the coming years.

However, there is one area where some concerns remain. In the proposed outlay, the Treasury underscores that the government plans to borrow more than Tk 1.35 lakh crore from domestic banks to finance its development spending in FY25.

This is likely to substantially enhance the overall crowding out effect as deposits in the banking sector are likely to grow by only 1.6 lakh crore over the next fiscal year. In other words, such borrowing targets will raise fiscal dominance in the overall macroeconomic management and will create pressure for the government to resort to central bank financing if such targets are aggressively pursued.

Thus, it is advisable for the government to rationalise its borrowing target from the banking sector so that no structural obligation is created to borrow at such length from the banking sector.

Of course, policymakers must also internalise and adjust to a difficult political economy reality that is commonly associated with the undertaken stabilisation policies in the current budget, which is: the costs associated with contractionary demand management for achieving economic stabilisation are generally incurred in the short run while the benefits appear in the medium term.

This underscores that policymakers and the economic team within the government must be ready to show patience and stubbornness -- and must be willing to not surrender to any pressure from vested quarters that could lobby to dislodge the economic trajectory from this stabilisation path due to their narrowly defined economic objective.

In other words, for the government to reap the wider benefits from the undertaken strategic direction in the national budget, they must have patience, clarity and commitment to the broader objectives that have shaped their recent decision-making.

In short, the challenge facing policymakers now is to walk the talk and do what is necessary for supporting broader economic stabilisation.

The author is the principal economist at the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh.

Budget deficit may stoke inflation

FROM PAGE 6

2023-24.

But despite being a lower percentage of the GDP this time around, the Tk 256,000 crore deficit will still exert significant inflationary pressure.

Additionally, the plan to finance the Tk 137,500 crore deficit through already fragile banking sources could increase borrowing costs for businesses, leading to cost-push inflation. It would be more prudent to reduce the deficit magnitude and finance it through external sources with lower borrowing costs and longer repayment schedules.

One positive feature of the proposed budget is the increased allocation for major social protection programmes, including support for mothers and children, the elderly, widows, people with disabilities, abandoned women, and other less privileged groups.

Both the allocated amount and the number of beneficiaries is proposed to increase, which is crucial for protecting these vulnerable groups during periods of high inflation and reducing inequality.

The budget proposes an increase in allocation for primary, secondary, and higher education, but it lacks specific programmes for research in higher education. Moreover, technical education has not received enough attention.

While one of the priorities identified in the proposed budget is transformative technology and human resource development, it requires more investment in modern technical education and cutting-edge research at higher educational institutions, which is absent.

The author is an associate professor of economics at the University of Dhaka.

No ray of hope for taxpayers

FROM PAGE 6

expenses. In every interview, Jim repeatedly said only one word, "responsible".

He said it is the responsibility of his government to reduce living costs. Australia reduced tax rates, provided subsidies for utility bills to every Australian household, reduced education loans interest etc. But what are the steps in our budget to give comfort to our people?

The corporate tax rate has been reduced by 2.5 percent. For this, publicly traded companies and non-publicly traded companies will pay tax at 22.5 and 27.5 percent respectively. But is there any ultimate benefit that will be enjoyed by the corporate taxpayers?

The income tax act stipulates that a minimum tax be paid on gross receipts or cash revenue irrespective of a profit or loss.

Every year there is a demand to reduce the corporate tax rate like in other countries. But the focus is never on the real point – to set the withholding tax in consideration with reality.

This year the IT sector was scheduled to see an end to their tax exemption, but they got an extension for three years on condition that all their transactions are cashless. Will it be possible for them to avail it?

A majority of transactions can be run through electronic systems. But is it possible to maintain a 100 percent cashless society?

Think about office maintenance, conveyance and day to day expenses, which we call petty cash. This should have been considered.

The last point is that all taxpayers, individuals as well as corporate taxpayers, must submit tax returns under a universal self-assessment method.

This is okay for individual taxpayers but not suitable for organisations at this moment as our tax administration system must become fairer. Due to this proposed change, the cost of companies in tax filing will be increased.

First the company must file a tax return under the universal self-assessment method and then must obtain a tax clearance certificate from the deputy commissioner of taxes and for this service, the company must pay fees to a tax consultant.

And again, when the taxmen will issue a notice to assess the tax, then again the company shall have to appoint a tax consultant to complete the tax assessment. This will cost both time and money.

The writer is the author of Smart Money Hacks.

Budget passes over

FROM PAGE 3

down to 6.5 percent in the next fiscal year.

Although the AL had pledged a new pay structure based on commodity prices, the finance minister did not say anything about it.

According to the proposed budget, the government will increase its dependence on borrowing from domestic banks (Tk 1,37,500 crore). This will potentially lead to a further rise in inflation.

The AL's election manifesto had listed youth employment as the second most important focus. However, increased bank borrowing by the public sector and higher interest rates may lead to slowing credit flows to the private sector, posing challenges to industrialisation.

It remains to be seen whether this approach towards industrialisation will be consistent with the ruling party's objective of creating 1.5 crore jobs in five years.

The finance minister hoped that the information technology sector will generate at least 10 lakh jobs and the country will receive $1 billion in foreign investment over the next five years.

The AL had promised to set up new industries to create more jobs. But the budget proposes to allocate Tk 2,510 crore for the industries ministry, which is Tk 514 crore less than the amount allocated in the current fiscal year.

The ruling party in its manifesto had also vowed to enforce laws to recover defaulted loans. But in reality, defaulted loans have been rising gradually, putting banks under liquidity strains.

At the end of December last year, the total defaulted loan in the banking sector stood at Tk1.45 lakh crore. The figure went up to Tk 1.82 lakh crore till March this year, the highest in the country's history.

The proposed budget states a "zero tolerance" policy against corruption, which is consistent with the AL's election manifesto. The ruling party pledged to take strict measures against accumulation of illegal wealth.

The proposed budget also seeks to reintroduce the opportunity for people to legalise undisclosed income or "black money" by paying a 15 percent tax. This proposal goes against the commitment made by the ruling party previously.

'BUDGET REALISTIC'

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader has said the proposed budget is realistic and pro-people.

"A pro-people budget has been proposed at a time when there is global crisis. This budget has been prepared taking into consideration the promises and priority sectors outlined in the party's election manifesto. A special focus will be put on controlling commodity prices," he told journalists at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

Allocation

FROM PAGE 6

But for fiscal year 2024-25, the government proposed increasing allocation for education, healthcare, and social security.

These sectors will have 24 percent of the government's budget, up from 23.3 percent of the outgoing fiscal year.

In the original budget for FY24, the allocation for education, healthcare, and social security was Tk 1,82,537 crore.

For FY25, the government recommends Tk 1,95,773.

Praising the government for reducing allocation for energy and transport sectors, Muinul Islam, former president of Bangladesh Economic Association, said the proposal for reducing allocation in these sectors was a step in the right direction.

Muinul, a former economics professor at the University of Chittagong, however, said containing inflation to 6.5 percent would be difficult.

He said if inflation is considered, the increase in allocation for health, education, and social safety net was "not that much".

Budget implementation remains a big concern, especially in the health sector.

In the original budget for FY24, health received Tk 38,052 crore, but it was revised to Tk 29,782 crore due to failures to spend the money.

Hasina

FROM PAGE 16

Modi has thanked PM Hasina for her warm wishes following his election victory.

Hasina was among the first foreign leaders to congratulate Modi, reflecting the warmth and personal rapport between the two leaders.

"India and Bangladesh share historic relations, which have seen unprecedented growth in the last decade," Modi said.

In a message shared through X, Modi said he looks forward to working together to further strengthen the people-centric partnership between Bangladesh and India.

Modi received a congratulatory telephone call from Hasina for the victory of NDA, according to the Press Information Bureau of India.

BJP, allies

FROM PAGE 16

"This is not the first time we are in NDA, so we are confident that we will get what is due to us," TDP spokesperson Jyothsna Tirunagari said.

"In our earlier terms with NDA, we had ministerial berths and also the Lok Sabha [lower house] Speaker from our party. This time we are a strong partner and share a clear vision for the country," she said.

JD(U)'s Kumar also wants support for new industrial projects in Bihar along with federal cabinet positions, one NDA source said.

Top BJP leaders were set to hold talks on ministerial portfolios with the allies yesterday, one BJP source said.

Modi is expected to meet President Droupadi Murmu today to present his claim to form the next government. Top NDA leaders are also set to meet today to discuss government formation.

Sources said Nitish Kumar plans to negotiate plum portfolios in the cabinet, including the coveted railways ministry.

BJP, sources said, is not ready to give away the Speaker's role and TDP may be offered a Deputy Speaker post. JD(U) holds the Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman post.

The Modi governments formed after the 2014 and 2019 elections had only symbolic representation of BJP allies because the saffron party had an absolute majority on its own. But this time, BJP may have to accommodate its allies in ministerial berths in proportion to seats won by each ally.

US approves sale of F-16 parts to Taiwan for $80m

REUTERS

The US State Department has approved the sale to Taiwan of F-16 fighter jet spare and repair parts for an estimated $80 million, the Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency said on Wednesday.

The sale will help "improve the security of the recipient and assist in maintaining political stability, military balance, and economic progress in the region," the Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said in a statement.

Taiwan's defense ministry thanked the United States and said the sale would boost the combat and defense needs of its air force. The ministry said the sale would be finalised in July.

"With normalised gray-zone harassments, the Chinese Communist Party attempted to squeeze our naval and air training space and response time, as well as limiting our rights of self-defense," it said in a statement.

China has repeatedly demanded the United States, Taiwan's most important arms supplier, halt the sale of weapons to the island, which Beijing claims as its own territory over Taipei's strong objection.

USA stun Pakistan

FROM PAGE 16

brilliant partnership that moved the tournament co-hosts into treble figures and seemingly in control of the run chase.

Monank was particularly impressive, hitting a classy half-century to give his side hope, putting on 68 in a crucial stand with Gous.

However, Pakistan's four-pronged pace attack hit back, removing both set batters to set up a nervy finale at the Grand Prairie Stadium.

Haris Rauf cleaned up Gous (35 from 26) to get the crucial breakthrough. And, an over later, Mohammad Amir had the excellent Patel caught behind for 50 from 38 to give Pakistan hope.

A classic display of death bowling seemed to have put Pakistan on the brink of victory despite a fine knock from Aaron Jones.

But USA banged 11 runs off the final three deliveries of the innings, with Nitish Kumar slamming the last ball for four to force a Super Over and send the home crowd delirious in Dallas.

USA posted 18 in the Super Over bowled by Pakistan pacer Mohammad Amir, who gave away eight runs in extras, before restricting Pakistan to unravel one of the biggest upsets in the history of T20 World Cup.

40 killed

FROM PAGE 16

facilities as operational bases.

The school, run by the UN Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA), may have been hit several times, said the agency's communications director, Juliette Touma.

The UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini said that Israel had carried out the strike on the school "without prior warning" to thousands of displaced sheltering there.

More than 36,654 Palestinians have been killed and 83,309 have been wounded in Israel's military offensive in Gaza since October 7, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement yesterday. Some 68 Palestinians were killed and 235 wounded in the past 24 hours, the ministry added.

CIA director William Burns met senior officials from mediators Qatar and Egypt on Wednesday in Doha to discuss the ceasefire proposal. Two Egyptian security sources said talks continued yesterday but had shown no sign of breakthrough.

PHOTO: REUTERS

A US Border Patrol agent frisks an asylum-seeking migrant before being transported after US President Joe Biden announced a sweeping border security enforcement effort, in Barrett Junction, California, US on Wednesday.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
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INVITATION FOR TENDER (OTM)

Memo No-25.36.2600.142.07.009.24-1317

1431 Bang.
Dated:------------------------------
05/06/2024 Eng.

e-tenders are invited in e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by the Executive Engineer, Azimpur PWD Division, Newmarket, Dhaka.

Tender ID No.	Brief Description	Tender Documents Publication Date & Time.	Tender Documents Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Documents Closing/Opening Date & Time
993992	Construction of Multi storied residential flat for Government Officers in Azimpur Govt. Colony Zone-A, Dhaka. (Package no. W-10/A-3: Remaining works for Construction of 1 no. 1800 sft. 20 storied building, multipurpose building, o4 nos. adult & child club house, 02 nos. service maintenance buildings including ceramic bricks, aluminum louver, fair face plaster, glass bricks, marble, granite, tempered glass door, installation of modern sanitary fittings etc.& other finishing works) FY: 2023-2024	06-Jun-2024 13:00	19-Jun-2024 17:00	20-Jun-2024 13:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd). Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Mohammad Moniruzzaman)
Executive Engineer,
Azimpur PWD Division.
Newmarket, Dhaka.

GD-957

বাংলাদেশ শিশু হাসপাতাল ও ইনস্টিটিউট

শেরে বাংলা নগর, ঢাকা -১২০৭

স্মারক নং: বাশিহাই/ইনস্টিটিউট/২০২৪/ ৩০৭ তারিখঃ ০৬/০৬/২০২৪ ইং

ডিপেস্নামা-ইন-পেডিয়াট্রিক নার্সিং কোর্সে ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি, শিক্ষাবর্ষ ২০২৩-২০২৪

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার, বাংলাদেশ নার্সিং ও মিডওয়াইফারি কাউন্সিল কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত বাংলাদেশ শিশু হাসপাতাল ও ইনস্টিটিউটে, ২০২৩-২০২৪ শিক্ষাবর্ষে ১ (এক) বছর মেয়াদী ডিপ্লোমা-ইন-পেডিয়াট্রিক নার্সিং কোর্সে ছাত্র/ছাত্রী ভর্তির জন্য নির্ধারিত ফরমে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১। ভর্তির জন্য আবেদনকারীর যোগ্যতাঃ
ক) বাংলাদেশ নার্সিং ও মিডওয়াইফারি কাউন্সিল কর্তৃক স্বীকৃত ডিপ্লোমা ইন নার্সিং সায়েন্স এন্ড মিডওয়াইফারি পাশ/বেসিক বি এস সি ইন নার্সিং পাশ।
খ) বয়সসীমা সর্বোচ্চ ৩৫ বছর। বিভাগীয় প্রার্থীদের জন্য বয়সসীমা শিথিলযোগ্য।
গ) পেডিয়াট্রিক নার্সিং এ অভিজ্ঞদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে।

২। অন্যান্য তথ্যাবলীঃ
ক) মোট আসন সংখ্যা ২০ জন (সরকারী ও বেসরকারী উভয় ধরনের প্রার্থীই আবেদন করতে পারবে। খ) সরকারী/স্বায়ত্বশাষিত/বেসরকারী চাকুরীরত প্রার্থীগণকে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে। গ) কোর্স চলাকালীন সময়ে ছাত্র/ছাত্রীদের ১০,০০০/- (দশ হাজার) টাকা মাসিক ভাতা দেয়া হবে এবং কোর্সে উত্তীর্ণরা উক্ত হাসপাতালে চাকুরীর ক্ষেত্রে অগ্রাধিকার পাবেন।

৩। আবেদন পত্র সংগ্রহ ও দাখিল করার নিয়মাবলীঃ-
ক) আবেদন পত্র সংগ্রহের জন্য হিসাব শাখা (রুম নং ১১১) হতে নির্ধারিত জমা রশিদ সংগ্রহ পূর্বক ১,০০০/-(এক হাজার) টাকা **" বাংলাদেশ শিশু হাসপাতাল ও ইনস্টিটিউট (একাডেমিক)",** বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংক, শ্যামলী শাখা, ঢাকা এর অনুকূলে প্রদান করে ইনস্টিটিউট অফিস হতে আবেদন পত্র সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। অবেদনপত্র স্বহস্তে পূরণ করতঃ নিম্নেবর্ণিত কাগজপত্রসহ সকাল ৯.০০ ঘটিকা হতে দুপুর ১.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে ইনস্টিটিউট অফিসে জমা দিতে হবে।
খ) আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখঃ ৩০/০৬/২০২৪ ইং।
গ) অসম্পূর্ন ও ত্রুটিপুর্ন আবেদনপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
ঘ) ভর্তি পরীক্ষা (লিখিত) আগামী ০৬/০৭/২০২৪ ইং, শনিবার, সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকায় বাংলাদেশ শিশু হাসপাতাল ও ইনস্টিটিউটের (৪র্থতলা) অডিটোরিয়ামে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে এবং লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণদের আগামী ০৯/০৭/২০২৪ ইং **তারিখ, মঙ্গলবার** সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকায় ৪র্থ তলায় একাডেমিক কো-অর্ডিনেটর এর কক্ষে মৌখিক পরীক্ষা অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ন প্রার্থীদের চুড়ান্ত ফলাফল ০৯/০৭/২০২৪ ইং তারিখ, দুপুর ২.৩০ ঘটিকায় বাশিহাই এর ওয়েবসাইট www.bshi.org.bd ও নোটিশ বোর্ডে প্রকাশ করা হবে।
ঙ) ভর্তি পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার ভাতা প্রদান করা হবে না।

৪। আবেদন পত্রের সাথে নিম্নবর্ণিত কাগজপত্র জমা দিতে হবেঃ-
ক) ডিপ্লোমা ইন নার্সিং সায়েন্স এন্ড মিডওয়াইফারি পরীক্ষার সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি / মার্কশীটের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি/বেসিক বি এস সি ইন নার্সিং সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি।
খ) এসএসসি/এইচএসসি পরীক্ষার মূল সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি।
গ) বাংলাদেশ নার্সিং ও মিডওয়াইফারি কাউন্সিলের রেজিস্ট্রেশন কার্ডের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি।
ঘ) সদ্যতোলা ০৩ (তিন) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের রঙিন ছবি (সত্যায়িত)।
ঙ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি।

অধ্যাপক (ডাঃ) মোঃ জাহাঙ্গীর আলম
পরিচালক
বাংলাদেশ শিশু হাসপাতাল ও ইনস্টিটিউট

GD-960

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প্রধান প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
ঢাকা-১০০০, বাংলাদেশ
ফোন: ৮৮-০২-৯৬৭৪৭৮১ (অফিস)
ফ্যাক্স: ৮৮-০২-৯৬৬৭২২২

মেমো নং : ৯২১(২) /প্রকৌঃ

তারিখ : ২৩ জ্যৈষ্ঠ /১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ
৬ / ৬ /২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

টেন্ডার নোটিশ

(সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি- OTM)

ক্রমিক নং	কাজের নাম	টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্টস বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ	টেন্ডার বক্স বন্ধের তারিখ ও সময়	টেন্ডার খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্য সংগ্রহের স্থান
ক)	ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের শারীরিক শিক্ষা কেন্দ্রের জুডো ও কারাতে কক্ষের ফ্লোর উচু করণ কাজ।	২৬/০৬/২০২৪ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত	২৭/০৬/২০২৪ দুপুরঃ ১২.০০ টা পর্যন্ত	২৭/০৬/২০২৪ দুপুরঃ ১২.৩০ মিঃ	নোটিশ বোর্ড, প্রধান প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর, ঢাঃ বিঃ।

(মোঃ আব্দুল মান্নান)
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (জোন-১)
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

GD-953

টেন্ডার নোটিশ

১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
২	সংস্থার নাম	এনার্জি ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
৩	সংগ্রাহক সত্তার নাম	পরিচালক, এনার্জি ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা-১০০০।
৪	কাজের নাম	এনার্জি ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যাল ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের গবেষণার জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় যন্ত্রপাতি ক্রয় ও সরবরাহ কাজ।
৫	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং ও তারিখ	নং-১৫০৩৯/২৪ তারিখঃ ০২/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ, ১৯ জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ
৬	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)
৭	বাজেট ও টাকার উৎস	রাজস্ব
৮	টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৩/০৬/২০২৪ সকাল ১১টা পর্যন্ত।
৯	টেন্ডার দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	২৩/০৬/২০২৪ দুপুর ১২টা পর্যন্ত।
১০	টেন্ডার খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২৩/০৬/২০২৪ দুপুর ১২.৩০মিনিট পর্যন্ত।
১১	যে সকল অফিস হতে টেন্ডার সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করা যাবে	ক) পরিচালক, এনার্জি ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
১২	যে সকল অফিসে রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বাক্সে টেন্ডার দাখিল করা যাবে	পরিচালক, এনার্জি ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
১৩	টেন্ডার খোলার দপ্তর/স্থান	পরিচালক, এনার্জি ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালর এর অফিস কক্ষ
১৪	ঠিকাদারের যোগ্যতা	This invitation for tender is open to all eligible tenderers as mention below: a) The Minimum numbers of years of general experience of the Tenderer in the Research Equipment's supply Installation works shall be 05 years. b) The minimum similar experienced in Equipment's supply works of at least 01 (one) contact of successfully completed within last 5 years with a value of at least 17 lac under University of Dhaka/govt/semi govt/autonomous organization in Bangladesh. c) The work certificate of successful completion of a similar work shall have to be issue by Director. d) The minimum amount of liquid asset that is i.e. working capital or credit lines of the tenderer shall be Tk 18.50 lac. e) A manufacturer authorization letter must be submitted. f) A manufacturer warranty guarantee certificate must be submitted. g) List of completed ongoing work with value under the PES organization within last 5 years as per past performance matrix. h) The tenderers should be submitted along with tender. i. Up-to-date income tax clearance certificate. ii. Vat registration certificate. iii. Up-to-date trade license. iv. Income tax certificate
১৫	কাজের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণী	যন্ত্রপাতি
১৬	টেন্ডার সিডিউলের মূল্য	উল্লিখিত প্রতিটি কাজের ক এর সিডিউল মূল্য ৫,৫০০/- টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) অগ্রণী ব্যাংক, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ক্যাম্পাস শাখায় একাউন্ট নং ০২০০০০০৯৮১২১৫-তে জমা দিয়ে উল্লিখিত অফিস সমূহ হতে দরপত্র দলিল সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।

১৭	লট পরিচিতি	অবস্থান	বায়নার টাকা	কার্য সম্পাদনের সময়সীমা	মন্তব্য
ক	এনার্জি ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যাল-এর ছাত্র/ছাত্রীদের গবেষণার অন্য প্রয়োজনীয় যন্ত্রপাতি জমা ও সরবরাহ কাজ	ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়	৫০,০০০/-	৪৫ দিন	পরিচালক, এনার্জি ইনস্টিটিউট-এর অনুকূলে বায়নার টাকা পে- অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট আকারে টেন্ডারের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।

১৮	টেন্ডার আহবানকারীর নাম	ড. এস এম নাসিফ শামস, সহযোগী অধ্যাপক
১৯	টেন্ডার আহবানকারীর পদবী	পরিচালক, এনার্জি ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা-১০০০।
২০	টেন্ডার আহবানকারীর বিস্তারিত যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা	পরিচালক, এনার্জি ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা-১০০০।
২১	টেন্ডার আহবানকারীর টেলিফোন নং	
২২	কোনো কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোনো টেন্ডার বা উহার অংশ বিশেষ বাতিল বা গ্রহণ করার ক্ষমতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালর কর্তৃপক্ষের সংরক্ষিত থাকবে। পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৮, টেন্ডার ফরম, সিডিউল, দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি এবং বিশেষ শর্তাবলী ইত্যাদি দরপত্রের অংশ বলিয়া বিবেচিত হবে। দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণকারী ঠিকাদারগণকে খামের উপর কাজের নাম ও তাহাদের ফার্মের নাম স্পষ্টাক্ষরে লিখিতে হবে। এই দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত যে কোনো তথ্যের জন্য পরিচালক, শক্তি ইনস্টিটিউটে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।	

ড. এস এম নাসিফ শামস
পরিচালক
এনার্জি ইনস্টিটিউট
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
তারিখঃ ০২/০৬/২০২৪

GD-962

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
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পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, রেলওয়ে পুলিশ, সৈয়দপুর

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উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

স্মারক নং-১৬৫৩/ই তারিখ-০৩/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ।

২০২৪-২৫ অর্থ সালে সৈয়দপুর রেলওয়ে জেলার পুলিশ রেশন ষ্টোরের মশুর ডাল, সয়াবিন তৈল, চিনি, জ্বালানি খড়ি, গম পেষাই, পরিবহন, লেবার সরবরাহ, পোলার চাল এবং খালি চটের ও প্লাষ্টিকের বস্তা (বড় ও ছোট) বিক্রয় এর জন্য পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট রেগুলেশন/০৮ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনী) মোতাবেক যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন প্রকৃত ঠিকাদার/ব্যবসায়ী/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়, জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ
২।	সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
৩।	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	পুলিশ সুপার, সৈয়দপুর রেলওয়ে জেলা
৪।	সংগ্রহ সত্ত্বার জেলা	সৈয়দপুর রেলওয়ে জেলা
৫।	দরপত্রের বিষয়	২০২৪-২৫ অর্থ সালের রেশন ক্রয়
৬।	দরপত্রের সূত্র নম্বর	স্মারক নং-১৬৫৩/ই তারিখ-০৩/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ
৭।	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি
৮।	বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	কোড নং- ১২২০২০১-১২০০০০৬০৯-৩২৫৪১০২-খাদ্যদ্রব্য সংগ্রহ
৯।	দরপত্র সিডিউল প্রাপ্তির সর্বশেষ তারিখ	২৭/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত
১০।	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	৩০/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ সকাল ০৯.০০ ঘটিকা হইতে ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
১১।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	৩০/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা। দরপত্র দাতা বা মনোনীত প্রতিনিধিদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি থাকে)
১২।	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী অফিস ও ঠিকানা	পুলিশ সুপার, রেলওয়ে জেলা, সৈয়দপুর
১৩।	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তির স্থান	১। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সৈয়দপুর রেলওয়ে জেলা ২। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, দিনাজপুর।
১৪।	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সৈয়দপুর রেলওয়ে জেলা।
১৫।	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সৈয়দপুর রেলওয়ে জেলা।
১৬।	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	রেশন সামগ্রী সরবরাহ কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন দরদাতা।
১৭।	দরপত্রের সহিত যে সকল কাগজপত্র জমা প্রদান করিতে হইবে	সংশিষ্ট কাজ বাস্তবায়ন সংক্রান্ত ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স, ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, হালনাগাদ আয়কর সার্টিফিকেট, ভ্যাট রেজিষ্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট, ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সার্টিফিকেট ও কাজের অভিজ্ঞতার সার্টিফিকেট

	লট নং	কাজের বিবরণ	পরিমাণ (কম/বেশি)	সিডিউলের মূল্য	দরপত্র জামানত	কাজ সমাপ্তির সময়
১৮।	১	মশুর ডাল সরবরাহ (দেশি, উন্নতমানের)	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	১,০০০/-	১,০০,০০০/-	১। মশুর ডাল, সয়াবিন তৈল ও চিনি জুলাই/২০২৪ হতে সেপ্টেম্বর/২৪ পর্যন্ত সময়ে সরবরাহ। ২। পরিবহন, জ্বালানী খড়ি, লেবার সরবরাহ, গম পেষাই,পোলার চাল ও বস্তা বিক্রয় জুলাই/২৪ হতে জুন/২৫ পর্যন্ত
	২	সয়াবিন তৈল সরবরাহ (উন্নতমানের)	ঐ	১,০০০/-	১,০০,০০০/-	
	৩	চিনি	ঐ	১,০০০/-	৫০,০০০/-	
	৪	পরিবহন	ঐ	৫০০/-	২০,০০০/-	
	৫	জ্বালানী খড়ি	ঐ	৫০০/-	১০,০০০/-	
	৬	লেবার সরবরাহ	ঐ	৫০০/-	১০,০০০/-	
	৭	গম পেষাই (রেশন ষ্টোর হতে সরবরাহকৃত গম)	ঐ	৫০০/-	৫০,০০০/-	
	৮	পোলার চাল	ঐ	৫০০/-	১০,০০০/-	
	৯	খালি চটের ও প্লাষ্টিকের বস্তা (ছোট ও বড়)	মজুদ সাপেক্ষে	৫০০/-	৫,০০০/-	

বিশেষ জ্ঞাতব্য ঃ
ক। সিডিউল ক্রয়ের সময় আবেদনের সাথে ট্রেড লাইসেন্স ও ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্সের সত্যায়িত কপি সংযুক্ত করে আবেদন করতে হবে।
খ। দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যাতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহন, বাতিল ও সমূদয় দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংক্ষন করেন।
গ। দরপত্রটি সীলমোহরকৃত খামে ঠিকাদার এবং সংগ্রহ স্বত্ত্বার নাম সম্বলিত হতে হবে।
ঘ। অন্যান্য সকল তথ্যাদি দরপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত থাকতে হবে।

০৩/০৬/২৪
(ফরহাত আহমেদ)
বিপি-৭২৯৯০২০৮০৬
(অতিঃ ডিআইজি,বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ)
পুলিশ সুপার
রেলওয়ে পুলিশ, সৈয়দপুর
ই-মেইল-srsyedpur@police.gov.bd
ফোন-০২৫৮৯৯৫৬৯২৬,ফ্যাক্স-০২৫৮৯৯৫৭৬১

GD-958

What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV AND STAR SPORTS 1,2,3
T20 World Cup
Canada vs Ireland
Live from 8:30 pm
New Zealand vs Afghanistan
Live from 5:30 pm (Saturday)

SONY SPORTS 2,3,5
French Open Semifinal
Live from 6:30 pm

Make or break for Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will begin their T20 World Cup campaign against Sri Lanka on Saturday, hoping to recapture form in what is likely the most crucial game for them in the group stage. The match is set to start at 6:30 am (Bangladesh time).

Bangladesh have South Africa, Nepal and Netherlands to tackle after the Sri Lanka fixture. However, failure to win this match will not only leave a dent in mentality going forward but also leave them with a hurdle too big to cross, given that South Africa – the group's strongest contender for the top spot – have already won their game against Sri Lanka.

Although Bangladesh have had sufficient opportunity to acclimatise with weather conditions, the wickets in question remain a wild card. Winning the toss allows teams with the big advantage of putting the opposition into bat in conditions with unknown variables.

On Wednesday, India skipper Rohit Sharma had asked Ireland to bat in New York and reaped the rewards as variable bounce was on offer.

Bangladesh went ahead with their preparations on Wednesday, hoping to tweak whatever areas they could muster before the big match against Sri Lanka. The team had been pegged back by a series defeat against co-hosts USA leading up to the World Cup, and their performance against India in the only warm-up game showed the Najmul Hossain Shanto-led team were still lagging behind in mentality necessary to thrive in a global event.

There have been criticisms back home and especially on social media platforms. A video from covering media in the USA showed ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan joking about their chances of making the second round. The pressure, coupled with the pang of not feeling supported, have also impacted Shakib ahead of a joint-record ninth appearance in the competition.

Along with form troubles, Bangladesh are suffering from injury worries. Chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu informed that injured pacer Shoriful Islam is still in recovery, with an assessment due on June 9. The speedster injured his bowling hand and is all but certain to miss Bangladesh's World Cup opener.

The importance of the game was also playing intoShoriful's prospects of participating in the World Cup. "We are carrying a pacer in Hasan Mahmud [reserve]. We are interested in getting back Shoriful, but how far we can make it into the tournament is an issue. Our performance is a matter as well since by then we will have played one game, and we can make a decision [based on result] afterwards."

On a positive note, the Tigers are hopeful of Taskin Ahmed's return from injury. "From what we can expect, given the reaction after Taskin bowled today, barring any further injury troubles, he will be able to play against Sri Lanka," Lipu informed further.

"The support staff are trying to get batters back in form. Obviously, the best possible combination will be picked since we are getting Taskin back, which will somewhat make up for the loss of Shoriful," he added.

Bangladesh will be hoping that their batters come into some form in this crucial fixture while Sri Lanka search for form, having been bundled out cheaply in their previous outing.

- Bangladesh are yet to register a win against familiar foes Sri Lanka in T20 World Cup. The Tigers lost both their encounters with the Lankans in the tournament -- by 64 runs in Johannesburg in 2007 and by five wickets in Sharjah in 2021.
- Bangladesh were bundled out for 83 runs in their 2007 T20 World Cup group encounter against Sri Lanka. This is the second-lowest collection for Bangladesh in the mega event and their lowest-ever in T20Is against Sri Lanka.
- Shakib Al Hasan, who scored 18 runs and scalped one wicket in that game against Sri Lanka in 2007, is the only survivor from that game 17 years ago.
- Bangladesh also do not boast an inspiring head-to-head record against the Lankans in T20Is, with the Tigers winning only five and losing 11 of the 16 matches so far.
- Sri Lanka skipper Wanindu Hasaranga (106 wickets in 66 matches) needs two more wickets to surpass Lasith Malinga (107 wickets in 84 games) to become his country's highest wicket-taker in T20Is.

T20 WORLD CUP CORNER

Why hasn't the World Cup fever taken over yet?

NABID YEASIN

Even on the fifth day of the ongoing T20 World Cup [Thursday], it did not seem like the ninth edition of the mega event, being held in the USA and the West Indies, was being able to hook cricket lovers.

And there might be a few reasons for it.

This edition of the T20 World Cup is unique for two reasons. First, a total of 20 teams are playing in the main phase, giving the ICC associate nations an exposure like never before. And, the other is that this is the first time that an ICC associate nation -- USA -- is co-hosting the event.

While there was this higher risk of mismatches, the most scpetcism was regarding whether cricket's attempt to tap into the broad and cash-rich market of the USA backfire in the form of the dullest cricketing event in recent memory.

Uganda, Nsubuga make history

ICC

Veteran spinner Frank Nsubuga created history in Guyana on Thursday as Uganda registered their first-ever victory at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup with a three-wicket triumph over Papua New Guinea.

In his first T20 World Cup appearance at 43 years of age, Nsubuga collected figures of 2/4 to help bowl out PNG for just 77 and the African nation held their nerve to chase down that total with 10 deliveries remaining.

The four runs conceded by Nsubuga was the fewest by any bowler in the history of the Men's T20 World Cup to have bowled their full allotment of four overs.

Slow pitches the 'theme of tournament'

AGENCIES

Marcus Stoinis, who smashed a 67 not out and then took three wickets for 19 runs to help Australia open their T20 World Cup campaign with a 39-run win over Oman in Barbados on Thursday, said that slow pitches might just go on to be the theme of the tournament.

The worn Kensington Oval pitch block that will host its fifth match in a week for Australia's clash with England may not necessarily suit either of the two teams' blistering pace attacks, according to Stoinis.

"(The pitch) wasn't a shock. I think from watching the games so far, it seems that's [slow pitches] going to be the theme of the tournament ... it just took some getting used to," Stoinis said after the Oman victory.

Read full stories on The Daily Star website

Sports see big jump in budgetary allocation

SPORTS REPORTER

The Ministry of Youth and Sports has received a higher allocation in the national budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

It was allocated Tk 2,212 crore, a 69.8 percent increase from the Tk 1,303 crore proposed in the original budget of the outgoing fiscal year. The budget was later revised to Tk 1,517 crore.

"A total of 13 projects focused on the construction and development of sports facilities are being implemented in FY2023-24. One of the notable projects is the construction of Upazila Sheikh Russel Mini Stadium," said Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali in his budget speech yesterday.

"I am proposing 20 projects in the upcoming budget for the development of youth and sports. In addition, a talent hunt scheme is ongoing under the supervision of experienced trainers in every division for developing the skill of sportspersons," he added.

Defending champion Iga Swiatek took a big step towards a third successive French Open title by dismantling teary American third seed Coco Gauff 6-2, 6-4 in the semifinal on Thursday to match her longest winning streak on clay. The world number one is just one match away from becoming the first woman to win the tournament in three straight years since Justine Henin in 2007. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

A match that everyone wants to watch: Alcaraz

AFP, *Paris*

Carlos Alcaraz saw off Stefanos Tsitsipas in straight sets on Tuesday to set up a mouthwatering French Open semifinal clash with incoming world number one Jannik Sinner on Friday.

Alcaraz will be desperate to right the wrongs of last year -- when he suffered cramps in a defeat by Novak Djokovic -- in his second successive French Open semifinal.

Alcaraz is bidding to become the youngest man in history to win Grand Slam tournaments on hard, grass and clay courts after his Wimbledon triumph and 2022 US Open title.

He will face Sinner Friday for the ninth time, with the pair's head-to-head record level at 4-4.

"It's a really difficult challenge, I'm not going to lie," said Alcaraz of Sinner, who will usurp Djokovic at the top of the rankings next week.

"It's going to be a really good challenge, I'm ready for that challenge. It's the match that everybody wants to watch."

BANGLADESH SHOW FIGHT but lose to Aussies

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh stood their ground against Australia in their second leg match of the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers, but couldn't avoid a 2-0 defeat against the superior opponents on a 'heavy' field at the Bashundhara Kings Arena in Dhaka yesterday.

The hosts put up stiff resistance throughout the match against the Socceroos, who are 160 places ahead of Bangladesh in FIFA rankings, and conceded a defeat which s more respectable compared to their 7-0 thrashing in the first leg in Melbourne.

Bangladesh managed to keep Australia at bay for 28 minutes before Ajdin Hrustic broke the deadlock with a left-footed strike. The second goal came in the 62nd minute with Kusini Yengi heading the ball home.

"I always said the result was not that important to me. The objective was to improve the performance, which we did not do in Melbourne and I think we achieved that objective," said Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera after the match.

PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

"So [we did] extremely well in defending in the whole game and there were also outstanding work in marking the players, maintaining the defense line and defending the set pieces.

"We could have played more with the ball in the first half, having a couple of combinations but we lacked a bit in confidence," said a happy Cabrera who wants his side take the positives from their valiant fight against 24th ranked side in the world.

Australia coach Graham Arnold, however, expressed his displeasure with the pitch.

"I am very proud of the players today [Thursday]. Obviously, we don't get to play in these types of conditions... The pitch was poor and it was unacceptable and it's no shock to me that six players from Bangladesh were cramping, their calf muscles and hamstrings. It's not good. I'm being very honest," Arnold said.

However, Cabrera did not agree with Arnold's assessment.

"It wasn't muddy, it was heavy, depends on how you see it. May be in the beginning it was advantageous for us because it was not easy for them [Australia] to move quickly but to me, the pitch was totally playable after the rain of two or three days.

"I understand him [Arnold] because they are used to having top-class facilities. But top-class facilities are not available everywhere in football... I think the pitch we played is very very decent for Asian matches," Cabrera said.

The defeat ends the mathematical chances of Bangladesh qualifying for the next stage of the qualifiers.

Bangladesh are at the bottom of the four-team Group I with one point in five matches, which came from a 1-1 draw at home against Lebanon.

Australia have already sealed qualification as group champions, with five wins in as many matches while Palestine are in second position with seven points. Had Bangladesh managed an upset win over Australia and won their final match against Lebanon and Palestine had lost their last two matches, Bangladesh could've made it to the next phase as group runners-up.

India football legend Sunil Chhetri played his final international game on Thursday, ending an illustrious career spanning two decades. As the India-Kuwait's fixture in FIFA World Cup qualifiers ended in a goalless draw, Chhetri leaves with 94 goals for his country, behind only Cristiano Ronaldo, Iran's retired Ali Daei, and Lionel Messi in the all-time list. PHOTO: **FACEBOOK**

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Hasina to attend Modi's swearing-in ceremony

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to leave for New Delhi tomorrow to attend her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi's swearing-in ceremony at his invitation.

PM's Speechwriter M Nazrul Islam yesterday confirmed her joining the ceremony slated for Sunday. She will return home on June 10, he added.

Modi is likely to take oath as the prime minister of India for the historic third term in a row on June 9 after his BJP-led NDA alliance won the election to Lok Sabha, the lower house of Indian parliament.

Hasina and Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe are among the foreign leaders who have been invited to Modi's oath-taking ceremony.

Earlier, Modi invited Hasina to attend the swearing-in ceremony of his government and she accepted the invitation.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 6

POST-POLLS INDIA

BJP, allies begin talks for coalition govt

Alliance members demand more funds, key cabinet positions

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *New Delhi*

Parties in Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's National Democratic Alliance (NDA) yesterday demanded more funds for their respective states and more federal cabinet positions as negotiations began to form a coalition government.

Modi is now likely to take oath as prime minister for the third straight time on Sunday evening. Sources had earlier said that the oath-taking would take place on Saturday.

Modi was named leader of the NDA on Wednesday after NDA won 293 seats in the 543-member lower house of parliament. The majority mark is 272.

However, his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lost its outright majority and found itself reliant on support from regional parties, mainly the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Janata Dal (United).

But Modi's BJP fell well short of the majority mark, making TDP leader N Chandrababu Naidu and JD(U) head Nitish Kumar, also the chief minister of the eastern state of Bihar, kingmakers in the alliance with their 16 and 12 seats respectively. BJP won 240 seats. In 2019, it won 303 seats.

TDP also won an assembly election in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh to regain power and Naidu is set to become chief minister there.

Both parties are pushing longstanding demands to grant special status to their states, according to one TDP spokesperson and five NDA sources.

The special status allows states to receive more federal development funds on simpler terms. While Bihar is India's poorest state, Andhra Pradesh lost some of its resources in 2014 when the new state of Telangana was carved out of it.

Besides special status and cabinet positions, TDP is also seeking more funds for irrigation projects in Andhra Pradesh and to complete the building of its new capital, Amaravati, said the sources.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

USA players celebrate after pulling off a historic victory in a thrilling T20 World Cup encounter against Pakistan at the Grand Prairie Stadium in Dallas today as the co-hosts beat the 2009 world champions in Super Over. In front of the home crowd, the USA posted 18 in the Super Over and restricted a rather lacklustre Pakistan to 13 for one after equalling their total of 159. PHOTO: AFP

USA stun Pakistan

AGENCIES

T20
ICC
WORLD CUP

USA produced a brilliant run-chase to take Pakistan to a Super Over and then win it in a thrilling ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 contest at the Grand Prairie Stadium in Dallas on Friday.

This was USA's first-ever win over Pakistan in a T20I.

Both teams made 159 in their regulation 20 overs, with non-Test nation the United States then setting Pakistan 19 to win in the Super Over. US pace bowler Saurabh Netravalkar held his nerve as Pakistan made 13-1 in reply.

Opener Steven Taylor departed for 12 (16) in the final over of the Powerplay, but Monank Patel and Andries Gous put Pakistan on the back foot with a

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

40 killed in Israeli strike on UN school

Say Gaza officials, 14 children, nine women among dead; mediators continue talks on ceasefire in Doha

AGENCIES

Israel hit a Gaza school yesterday in an airstrike that it said targeted and killed Hamas fighters inside, while a Hamas official said 40 people including women and children were killed as they sheltered in the UN site.

The strike took place at a sensitive moment in mediated negotiations on a ceasefire agreement entailing the release of hostages and some of the Palestinians held in Israeli jails. Hamas seeks a permanent end to the offensive. Israel says it must destroy the group first.

The United States issued a joint statement with other countries yesterday calling on Israel and Hamas to make whatever compromises were necessary to finalise a deal as the two sides gave contradictory accounts of the school attack.

Ismail Al-Thawabta, the director of the Hamas-run government media office, rejected Israel's assertion that the UN school in Nuseirat, in central Gaza, had hidden a Hamas command post.

Israel's military said its fighter jets had carried out a "precise strike" and circulated satellite photos highlighting two parts of a building where it said the fighters were based.

"We're very confident in the intelligence," military spokesperson Lt Col Peter Lerner told a briefing with reporters, accusing Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters of deliberately using UN

SEE PAGE 14 COL 8

Govt officials to come under new pension scheme

BAHARAM KHAN

Government officials recruited after July 1 next year will be incorporated in the universal pension scheme, instead of the conventional post-retirement pension benefits.

Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali announced this during his budget speech in the parliament yesterday.

"We will bring new recruits of all government institutions, who get pension benefits, under the universal pension scheme," the finance minister said.

The move comes amid protests by employees of autonomous, state-owned, and other statutory organisations against the decision to include them in the Universal Pension Scheme.

"The fresh recruits of autonomous and state-owned institutions have already been brought under this system.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

BENAZIR'S IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

Court appoints administrators to look after them

ACC now sets June 23 for quizzing him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday appointed administrators to look after some of the immovable properties of Benazir Ahmed and his family members.

The upazila nirbahi officer will look after the properties in Savar and deputy commissioners in Cox's Bazar and Madaripur.

In Gopalganj, the deputy commissioner, fisheries and agriculture officers will take charge of land and water bodies, the court said.

Judge Mohammed Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain passed the order, accepting a petition filed by ACC Deputy Director Hafizul Islam.

The court ordered the ACC to look after the former police chief's four flats in the capital's Gulshan, reports Prothom Alo.

Proceeds from the assets will be given to the state coffers.

Meanwhile, the ACC fixed June 23 for interrogating Benazir over allegations of corruption, after he did not show up for yesterday's hearing.

Asked whether Benazir requested the commission to reschedule the hearing, ACC Secretary Khorsheda Yasmin said the team

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

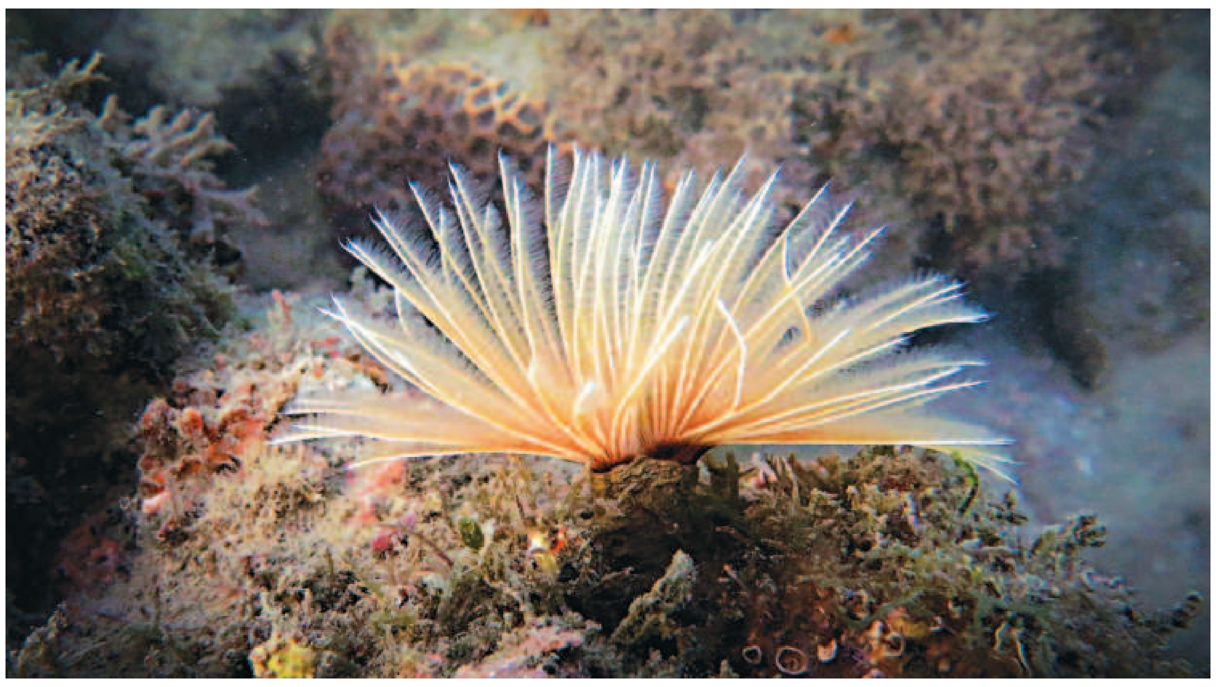

PHOTO: SHARIF SARWAR

NATURE QUEST

A feather duster worm spotted around 12 feet under the Bay of Bengal in Saint Martin's Island. These fascinating sea marine creatures, whose earliest fossils can be dated back to the early Jurassic period, are found in subtidal habitats around the world. For feeding, a feather duster worm captures planktons, algae and other microscopic organic particles using its feathers. By doing so, these animals play a vital role in maintaining marine health as it prevents the buildup of detritus or other harmful substances. Additionally, feather duster worms provide a valuable food source for other marine organisms. However, despite playing such a crucial role, they face several threats to their survival, including habitat destruction caused by human activities and water pollution.

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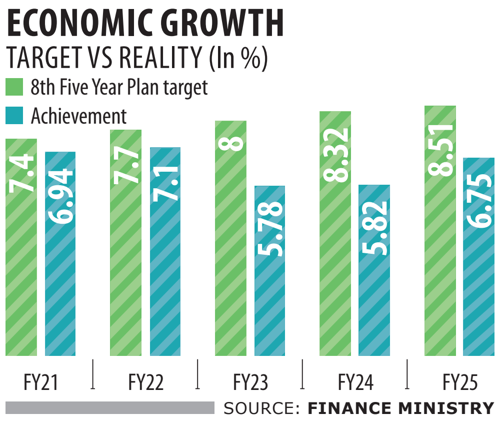
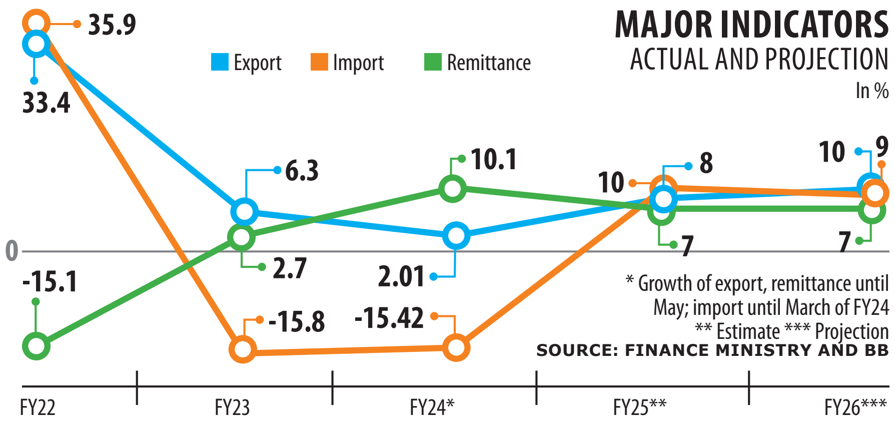
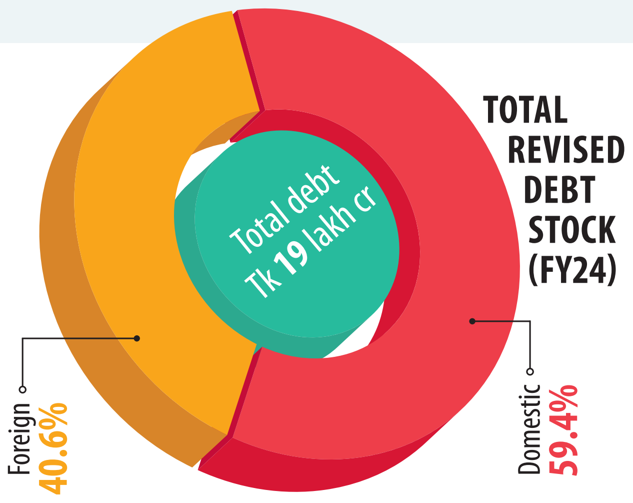
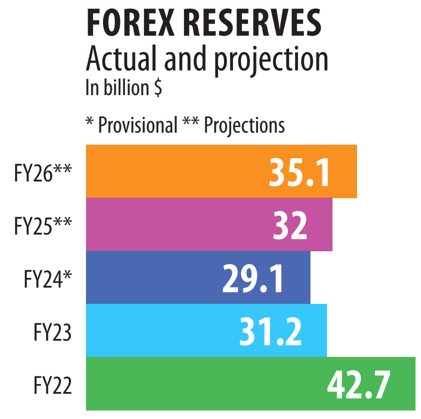


SOURCE: FINANCE MINISTRY



* Growth of export, remittance until May; import until March of FY24
** Estimate *** Projection
SOURCE: FINANCE MINISTRY AND BB





Govt measures will tame rising inflation

Says finance minister at post-budget briefing

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali yesterday expressed hope that the government would be able to curb high inflation on the back of budgetary measures and the central bank's steps.

"I would like to remind you that after we assumed power in 2009, inflation was at a high level, but we brought it under control. I want to assert that inflation will fall this time too.

"We have taken several steps to control inflation through the tax structure. For example, duties have been reduced for the import of daily necessities."

The minister was speaking at the post-budget media briefing at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka.

Bangladesh has been seeing more than 9 percent inflation for the past two years. Though many countries have successfully brought it down, Bangladesh is struggling to contain it owing to a lack of adequate measures at the right time.

Mahmood Ali tried to allay fears that higher bank borrowing, targeted for the upcoming fiscal year, will stoke inflation.

"There is nothing to worry about," he said, adding that the government did not go for a bigger budget with an aim to rein in inflation.

"Since controlling inflation is our top priority now, contractionary policy remains the focus for a while. However, we will keep an eye to ensure our growth does not suffer too much from this."

In the budget speech, the finance minister said the goal is to increase government spending gradually in the second half of 2024-25, and this will be possible if the revenue collection increases.

Md Khairuzzaman Mozumder, secretary of the finance division, said there is distortion in the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

WHITENING BLACK MONEY

The scope for whitening black money is a very sad step, which is not acceptable legally and morally.

Mustafizur Rahman,
a distinguished fellow of CPD

There has been a demand from the business community and the public for the legalisation of undeclared money.

Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem,
chairman of NBR

No concrete steps to address inflation, low reserves: CPD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The proposed national budget for fiscal 2024-25 lacks concrete measures for addressing the current economic concerns, such as runaway inflation and depleting foreign exchange reserves, the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) said yesterday.

Besides, the government will not be able to reach its projections on reducing the inflation rate and increasing economic growth and investment, the think-tank said.

The CPD made these observations in its analysis of the government's proposed budgetary measures for the upcoming fiscal year at a media briefing at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka.

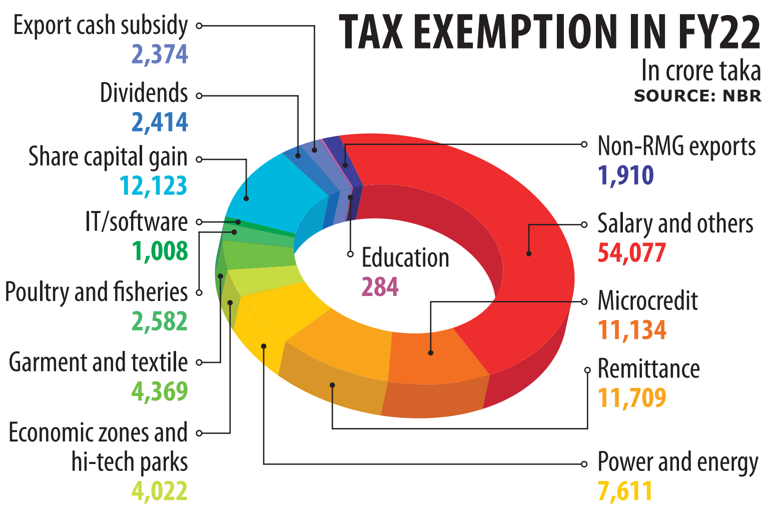
Overall, this is an ordinary budget during an extraordinary time.

Fahmida Khatun
Executive Director, CPD

Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the CPD, said the government's target of bringing

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Tax exemption in FY25 rises to Tk 163,000cr



SOURCE: NBR

SUKANTA HALDER *and*
MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

Tax exemptions provided by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) are estimated to rise to Tk 163,000 crore in fiscal 2024-25 as the tax administration looks to ease the pressure on individuals and facilitate higher economic growth.

If the amount of exemption, also termed direct tax expenditure, were added to the total tax collection, the tax-GDP ratio would have increased. Then it would have cut the state's dependence on borrowing to finance expenses.

Direct tax expenditure is a form of tax subsidythat includes rebates, discounts, exemptions and reduced rates of taxation while excluding untaxable income when calculated.

The estimated tax expenditure for FY25 is 11 percent higher from roughly Tk 147,000 crore in 2023-24, which accounted for 2.91 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).

This is the second year the NBR has provided an estimated tax expenditure as part of its exercise to measure the volume of revenue forgone to promote industrialisation, create jobs and foster economic growth.

The tax authority took the initiative after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) asked Bangladesh to calculate its revenue expenditure as a part of the conditions for its $4.7 billion loan.

The IMF also advised rationalisation of tax exemptions targeting Bangladesh's graduation from the list of least-developed countries (LDCs) in November 2026.

> **The estimated tax expenditure for FY25 is 11 percent higher from roughly Tk 147,000 crore in 2023-24, which accounted for 2.91 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).**

Economists have also been recommending the government estimate the amount of tax and duty benefits given to various sectors and assess the impact of the tax waiver.

In its first attempt, the NBR estimated the amount of income, direct tax expenditure or revenue forgone stood at Tk 125,813 crore in 2020-21.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

PM defends scope for money whitening

UNB, *Dhaka*

Supporting the budgetary provision for legalising black money, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said black money should be brought into the legal channel first.

"The money should be brought into an appropriate place [banking channel] first with payment of a nominal amount [tax]. Then they [black money holders] will have to pay tax regularly.... If you want to catch fish, you have to use bait," she said.

The premier was addressing a discussion, organised by Awami League at its Dhaka district office in the capital's Tejgaon, marking the historic Six-Point Day.

Hasina, also the AL president, said many raised questions regarding the budgetary provision for legalising black money and argued that it would discourage those who pay taxes legally.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

IMPLEMENTING BUDGET FOR 2024-25

It'll be challenging

Says MCCI; FICCI hails comprehensive fiscal plan in proposed budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Implementation of the new budget will be highly challenging in the current context of the Bangladesh economy, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) said in a post-budget reaction yesterday.

"MCCI has consistently recommended significant structural reforms in tax administration to enhance effective revenue collection. In the present framework, a considerable number of qualified entities with high income remain outside the scope of taxation.

"On the other hand, there is a growing imposition of tax burden on individuals and businesses who fulfill their tax obligations regularly. MCCI strongly emphasises the need for a proper resolution of the matter," said MCCI President Kamran T Rahman.

According to him, the final budget deficit is likely to widen because of ongoing tax reform prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Under the IMF loan conditions, the tax-GDP ratio is expected to rise by 0.5 percent to 8.8 percent, potentially increasing the tax burden on taxpayers, he added.

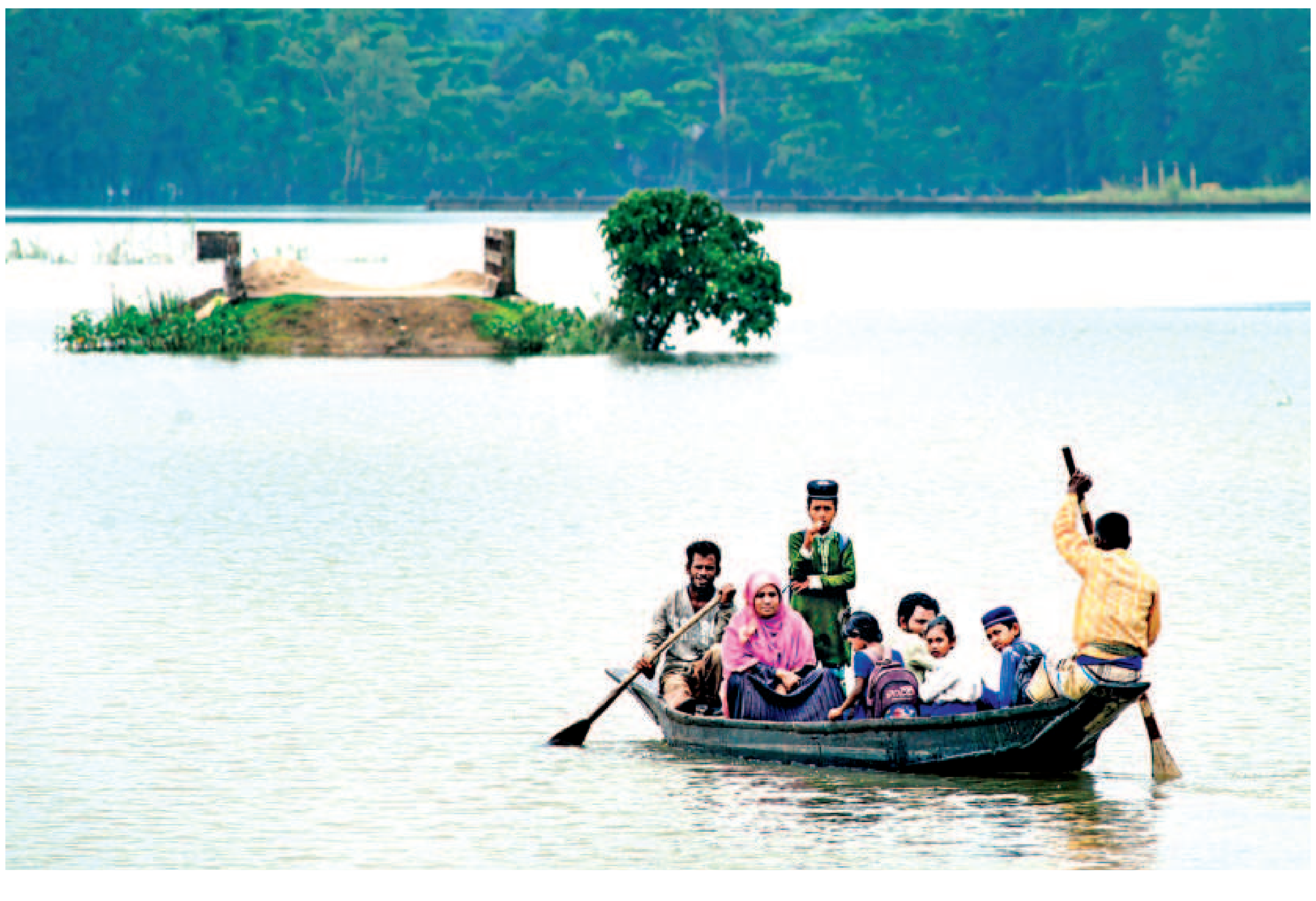
He also expressed concerns over the potential impact of growing inflation on future business expansion.

However, he hailed the government's decision to reduce the corporate tax rate by 2.5 percentage points for unlisted companies and one-person companies.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has lauded the government's efforts in crafting a comprehensive fiscal plan in the proposed budget.

The budget will foster a conducive environment for business growth, it said in a press release yesterday.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Some students have to go home by a boat due to flooding in Baishtila area of Sylhet Sadar upazila. Flash flood triggered by heavy rains and onrush of water from upstream inundated the area about a week ago. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: **SHEIKH NASIR**

Eid-ul-Azha on June 17

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The holy Eid-ul-Azha, the second biggest religious festival of the Muslim community, will be celebrated across the country on June 17.

The National Moon Sighting Committee announced the date at a meeting held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the capital after the moon of the holy month Zilhaj was sighted yesterday.

As the moon was sighted, the holy Zilhaj month will begin today, according to a press release of the Islamic Foundation.

The Eid-ul-Azha is celebrated on the 10th of Zilhaj month of the Hijri calendar as Hazrat Ibrahim (AS), on this day, some 4,500 years ago, offered to sacrifice his beloved son Hazrat Ismail (AS) who willingly submitted to the will of his father to please Allah.

MY DHAKA

PHOTO: **ALLIANCE FRANCAISE DE DHAKA**

CAFÉ LA VÉRANDA

A Parisian feel in the city

RBR

Tiny round tables, wrought iron chairs with red seaters, a grand piano on lend from Notre Dame College, a tiny reading corner, a food counter, and the air that has a hint of freshly brewed coffee or tea make this eatery -- Café la Véranda -- inviting. Tucked inside the Alliance Française de Dhaka in Dhanmondi, this neat, with no razzmatazz décor, café is open for all.

"Alliance Francaise de Dhaka was established in 1959 to promote French language and culture in Bangladesh. Since then, it has been successfully fostering cultural exploration and intercultural dialogue, and empowering individuals to expand their perspectives," says Md Mamun Ar Rashid, programme officer, Alliance Française de Dhaka.

Art exhibitions, French film screenings, lectures, and concerts are regularly organised to promote French culture and at the same time encourage the richness of Bengali culture. The lively café is open to all sorts of cultural events like live music sessions, instrument recitals, jazz nights, and exhibitions. It is not exactly an open-air, French café beside a cobbled lane, but as the background piano or violin plays, it lends the place a French vibe.

Their social calendar is full of happening events in Dhaka. Moreover, you can also book the space for musical events, exhibitions, and such.

Café la Véranda has an inviting milieu to it, which puts visitors in a relaxed mood. One can just sit by themselves for hours, reading a newspaper with a cup of handmade coffee, and contemplate whatever is on their mind. They can have animated conversations with friends over cups of tea.

Here, students come to work on their projects, artists come to get inspired by like-minded fellows, and intellectuals ruminate on philosophical aspects of life and living, politics, and literature. Celebrated professors of Dhaka University are frequent visitors.

Apart from visiting the café to pass time, its refreshments are something to take note of.

Arshad Ali, cash in-charge of Café la Véranda, says a special French patisserie caters for their food like canelé -- a pastry-flavoured, tender custard centre with a dark thick caramelised crust. It tastes divine with hot tea or their handmade coffee.

"I was taught to make coffee by one of our directors and customers prefer that over filtered coffee. Paris-brest, a choux pastry with praline flavoured cream, profiteroles, quiche Lorraine, our menu is selected and we are always sold out," Ali says.

So, if you are in the mood for some downtime, this is the place you should be. Despite no posh décor and a celebrated chef's menu, Café la Véranda place gives you quietness and space to reflect upon yourself. And that is precious!

16 sued over murder of BCL man in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Brahmanbaria*

Sixteen people, including a Chhatra League leader, have been sued over the murder of a BCL activist, who was shot dead in broad daylight in Brahmanbaria during the fourth phase of the upazila polls on Wednesday.

The victim's father filed the case against district unit BCL Vice President Hasan Al Farabi Joy, and 10-15 unidentified others with Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station Thursday night.

Ayesh Rahman Izaz, 22, a second-year honours student of botany at Brahmanbaria Government College, was allegedly shot by Hasan Al Farabi in the district town's College Para Hostel area.

This newspaper has seen a video showing Hasan hiding his gun and fleeing the scene after the shooting.

No arrests were made till the writing of this report at 9:00pm yesterday, according to Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Aslam Hossain.

Woman found dead at home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

An elderly woman was found dead at her home in Birganj upazila, Dinajpur, yesterday.

Police recovered the body of Rezina Begum, 75, wife of Md Shabdul Islam of Dhangaon village. Her throat had been slit.

Md Moinul Islam, inspector (investigation) of Birganj Police Station, said they are currently without leads but confirmed that it was a planned murder.

Her husband discovered the body in her separate room in the morning.

Informed, police recovered her body and sent it to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital in Dinajpur for an autopsy.

15 hurt in AL factional clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

At least 15 people were injured in a clash between two groups of Awami League in Chattogram's Anwara upazila yesterday.

According to locals, one of the groups is loyal to Deputy Minister for Finance Wasika Ayesha Khan and the other is a supporter of former Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury.

Of the injured, Anwara upazila unit AL president MA Mannan was admitted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

Witnesses said the clash ensued when both groups brought out separate processions in front of Boirag Community Centre around 4:30pm welcoming the national budget for the fiscal year 2024-2025.

PM defends

FROM PAGE 1

"Prices of different products have gone up. Anyone who owns a piece of one katha land is a millionaire [kotipoti] now. But nobody sells land at government-fixed rates. People get some additional money from the sale of land at higher prices. They keep the extra money out of the banking channel," she added.

The PM said the size of the former BNP government's last national budget was Tk 62,000 crore and the figure went up to Tk 68,000 crore during the rule of the caretaker government (in 2008). However, the AL government has been able to place a budget of Tk 797,000 crore in parliament this time, she added.

"In the proposed budget [for 20024-25 fiscal year], we have attached the highest priority to education, health, agriculture, local industries and social safety to ensure the basic rights of the people," Hasina said.

Talking about the high inflation worldwide, the AL chief said people from the limited-income groups are suffering due to inflation. "But we have introduced family cards for them so that they can purchase some essentials, including rice, pulse and edible oil, at fair prices. We are providing food to the extreme poor."

Besides, the government is providing financial assistance to the people under some 150 social safety net programmes and providing free textbooks to school students and some 30 types of free medicines from the community clinics to the people.

"The prices of commodities usually go up during the monsoon season. Keeping this in mind, we will start the sale of commodities using family cards."

Terming the control of inflation the biggest challenge, Hasina said production and supply of food must be enhanced.

About the budget deficit, the PM said the budget deficit is now 4.6 percent. In many countries, including the developed nations, the figure is higher than this, she added.

She reiterated her call for the people to cultivate every piece of land to boost food production in the country.

About the historic six-point demand, Hasina said it was the "Magna Carta" for the Bangalee nation, which ultimately brought the country's independence.

Drawing a comparison of deprivation between the then East Pakistan and West Pakistan, the premier said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had strongly protested the long-running deprivation.

She highlighted how the Father of the Nation carried out campaigns across the country to make the six-point demand popular among the people.

The AL chief asked her party leaders and activists to stand by the people of the country and work for them.

On June 7, 1966, Bangabandhu launched a massive movement against the misrule of the Pakistanis on the basis of the six-point demand.

Govt measures will tame rising inflation

FROM PAGE 1

supply chain of essentials and the government is trying to address it.

"The policy rate has been increased to 8.5 percent, and it will take a while to see its impact."

BLACK MONEY DOMINATES BRIEFING

According to the new provision, no authority can raise any question if taxpayers, both individuals and companies, pay tax at fixed rates for immovable properties such as flats and land and 15 percent tax on other assets, including cash and savings instruments.

Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem, chairman of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), defended the amnesty, saying there has been demand from the business community and the public to allow the scope for legalising undeclared money.

He said companies are finding it difficult to come up with an explanation about the source of income or assets when it comes to compliance with the document verification system, a piece of software that aims to prevent unruly firms from submitting falsified or multiple audited financial statements to the NBR.

In reply to a query from a journalist, Abu Hena said there is no scope for Benazir Ahmed, a former inspector general of police, to whiten his alleged ill-gotten money and assets since he is facing an investigation.

Mashiur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the prime minister, said, "The ACC (Anti-Corruption Commission) is probing the matter. Steps will be taken as per the laws."

Rahmatul Muneem said the NBR does not want to see zero duty on anything.

Responding to the capital gains tax imposed on investors, he said it can't be said the tax cuts alone can revitalise the stock market.

"Various tax cuts had been in place for the stock market for a long time, but the market has not surged proportionately. This means the market faces other challenges.

"We are trying to end tax exemptions gradually in all sectors. It has already been done in many areas."

Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury said food inflation rate in Bangladesh is similar to that of many other countries.

RESERVES, SAFETY NET AND NPLS

The government has projected that the foreign currency reserves would go up to $29.1 billion at the end of the current fiscal year and $32 billion at the end of FY25.

On Tuesday, it stood at $18.67 billion if calculated in line with the International Monetary Fund's manual.

When asked how the reserves would climb by $13 billion in the span of a year, Waseqa Ayesha Khan, state minister for finance, replied that the target would be attained riding on the crawling peg as well as the offshore banking operations, which will help attract foreign deposits.

Ahasanul Islam Titu, state minister for commerce, said the main challenge for the budget is to contain high inflation.

In order to support the poor and low-income groups, assistance is being given and the size of social safety net programmes will expand in the future, he said.

Mashiur said the current level of non-performing loans (NPLs) has not accumulated in a single day. Rather, they have piled up over the years.

On Thursday, Bangladesh Bank reported that the NPLs amounted to Tk 182,295 crore as of March.

"Our target is to bring down NPLs. There are provisions to set aside funds to cover NPLs. We will ensure compliance," the adviser said.

Questions were asked whether tax justice is ensured when a lawmaker is allowed to import cars by paying 25 percent tax while common people must pay up to 600 percent tax to import a car.

Mashiur said lawmakers were first allowed to import cars duty-free in 1988 during the regime of Hussain Muhammad Ershad.

"When a provision is introduced, it is difficult to change it," he said.

Md Tazul Islam, minister for local government division, and Abdur Rouf Talukder, governor of the central bank, were also present.

Tax exemption in FY25 rises

FROM PAGE 1

In the following year, the expenditure stood at Tk 115,616 crore, out of which Tk 71,954 crore was given to companies and Tk 43,662 crore to individual taxpayers. The sum of exemptions given in 2021-22 through VAT has been estimated at Tk 129,570 crore.

"This tax subsidy amount is very high," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute (PRI) of Bangladesh.

"To reduce the tax subsidies, special attention from the government is needed."

However, the economist acknowledged, tax subsidies have made a positive impact on overall economic activities. "For instance, it has helped the domestic electronics sector expand fast."

Mansur said if the NBR could collect the exempted revenue, it would help the government cut the revenue deficit.

"So, considering the reality, the government will have to allow exemptions in some special cases."

On the other hand, everything should be brought under taxation except for some essential commodities, such as rice, pulses and wheat, he added.

Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, chairman of the Research and Policy Integration for Development Bangladesh, a think-tank, called for tax rationalisation.

"Tax benefits such as subsidies and exemptions shouldn't be set in general. It should be set on a priority basis."

The tariff rate in Bangladesh is one of the highest in the world and if this persists, the country will not be able to sign trade agreements after its LDC graduation.

Towfiqul Islam Khan, a senior research fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said tax exemptions are given without any sunset clause. As such, many sectors have been enjoying these facilities for decades.

"This is a big problem."

Out of the recipients of tax exemptions, almost half -- 47 percent -- went to salaries and other sectors.

The microcredit, remittance, and capital gain sectors each received 10 percent of the total tax expenditure in FY22.

"Hence, the government's ability to extend such strategic support to other sectors is curtailed. It is critical to analyse the impact of such facilities," Towfiqul said.

As policy decisions are heavily influenced by vested groups, these decisions are often not taken in an objective manner, he added.

The next highest recipients include the power and energy sector at 7 percent, the garment sector at 4 percent, and economic zones and hi-tech parks at 3 percent.

"Although tax exemptions have accelerated investment and employment, the tax base is shrinking to a large extent," Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali said in his budget speech on Thursday.

In this context, there is no alternative to increasing the tax-GDP ratio to sustain the country's ongoing development.

"Tax exemption is one of the major obstacles to improving the tax-GDP ratio. We should not issue special orders for exemptions unless there is an extraordinary situation. This will bring transparency in revenue administration and help manage the budget deficit," he added.

As a part of the move, the finance minister has proposed a tax on capital gains exceeding Tk 50 lakh.

No concrete steps

FROM PAGE 1

down inflation to 6.5 percent while raising GDP growth to 6.75 percent is overambitious.

"These projections were made without taking into account the current realities. So, many of the budgetary targets will not be achieved," she added.

More importantly, due to the government's inability to acknowledge the nature of the ongoing economic challenges, the proposed budgetary measures are weak and inadequate, Fahmida said.

"Overall, this is an ordinary budget during an extraordinary time," she said.

Against this backdrop, she highlighted the skyrocketing prices of essentials, continuous devaluation of the taka, stagnant private investment, slowdown in economic growth, massive erosion of forex reserves, heavy government borrowing from the banking sector and escalating non-performing loans as the key macroeconomic challenges.

The government is aiming for a gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 6.75 percent in fiscal 2024-25, which is much higher than the provisional estimate of 5.8 percent for the current fiscal year.

In order to achieve this growth, the government has targeted to increase the private investment-to-GDP ratio to 27.3 percent in fiscal 2024-25 from 23.5 percent in fiscal 2023-24.

Raising the ratio will require additional private investment of Tk 343,544 crore, which is almost impossible to attain given the existing contractionary monetary policy.

Fahmida also said it remains unclear how the government will achieve its goals to strengthen the local currency to Tk 114 per US dollar and boost the country's forex reserve to $32 billion. With the exchange rates now almost fully market-driven, each US dollar currently costs Tk 117.9.

Prof Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the CPD, said the tax-free income slab should have been raised as people's purchasing power has been squeezed by higher inflation for the past two years.

The budget plans go against the spirit of the election manifesto of the ruling Awami League, which said it would show zero tolerance against loan defaulters and tax evaders, he said.

However, the government in the proposed budget has allowed people to legalise their undisclosed income by paying a small amount of tax.

"This is something that is discouraging honest taxpayers. It's a very sad step, which is not acceptable legally or morally," Rahman said.

He added that the CPD believes the policy will have little effect as the syndicate of black money holders does not even want to pay the proposed 15 percent tax.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the CPD, said the private sector is facing a tough situation due to a drop in credit flow amid the contractionary monetary policy, but the government has not brought down its own spending.

"When will we see the government cut its spending?" he questioned.

The government aims to raise more funds through value-added tax and hike electricity prices four times a year, which will ultimately fuel inflation further, Moazzem added.

Though the government has reduced source tax on some essential items, he expressed doubt whether consumers would be able to reap the benefits.

"The benefit will go to the businessmen who control the supply of the goods. So, it will not contribute to a decline in prices," he said.

Without correcting the supply system and market management, the price level will not come down, Moazzem added.

Towfiqul Islam Khan, senior research fellow of the CPD, also spoke at the event.

Modi to take oath

FROM PAGE 12

the support of regional parties to form the government, a shift that initially spooked markets and worries analysts about policy certainty and fiscal discipline.

"It is my good fortune that all of you from NDA have chosen me to lead," Modi said earlier yesterday after NDA lawmakers voted for him to head their coalition.

"No alliance has ever been as successful as the NDA," he said, after lawmakers and senior leaders thumped tables and applauded, with some standing and chanting "Modi, Modi!" in the central hall of the old parliament building.

"We have won the majority... but to run the country it is unanimity that is crucial...we will strive for unanimity," he said, in a sign of the change in style coalition government may force on a leader used to ruling with a strong hand.

The new government would, among others, focus on raising savings of the middle class and improve the quality of their lives as the "middle class is the driving force of the country", Modi added.

Key NDA leaders - whose support has wavered in the past as they hopped in and out of alliances - praised Modi and expressed confidence in his leadership, reports Reuters.

"I am confident that whatever is left he will now complete it. We will be with him at every step," said Nitish Kumar, chief minister of the eastern state of Bihar whose Janata Dal (United) party is the third largest in the NDA with 12 lawmakers.

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Chief justice pays homage to Bangabandhu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, alongside his Nepalese counterpart Bishowambhar Pd Srestha and Bhutan High Court's Justice Lobzang Rinzin Yargay, paid homage to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at his grave in Gopalganj's Tungipara yesterday.

They also offered prayers for the martyrs of the August 15, 1975 massacre, SC sources said.

Justice Bishowambhar and Justice Lobzang arrived in Bangladesh on Thursday at the invitation of Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan to attend the two-day "International Conference on Judiciary Across the Borders" in Dhaka, which began yesterday.

They held a closed-door meeting with the judges of Bangladesh Supreme Court at its Judges' Lounge on the first day of the conference.

A man looks at brand new rickshaw-vans put on display for sale. Every Thursday, these battery-run three-wheelers are sold in Khulna's Dumuria Shahpur area. Depending on size and quality, they are sold for Tk 40,000 to Tk 70,000 each.

PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

'The country needed him now'

Say speakers on Serajul Alam Khan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Serajul Alam Khan

In the times of criminalised politics, the leadership of Serajul Alam Khan was very much needed, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

Serajul Alam Khan Foundation and Research Institute organised the event marking his first death anniversary at Jatiya Press Club.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) President Hasanul Haq Inu highlighted Serajul Alam Khan's pivotal role in advancing the six-point demand.

"He and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were like a single soul dwelling in two bodies. He worked as a field hero to implement Bangabandhu's skillful decisions," he said.

Supreme Court lawyer and rights activist ZI Khan Panna said the Liberation War of Bangladesh and Serajul are inseparable.

"His [Serajul] contribution to the history of Bangladesh's Liberation War could not be erased despite repeated attempts. Even in the final days of his life, he wanted to see unity among people. However, in today's Bangladesh, those who earn in dishonest ways are being encouraged," he said.

Khalekuzzaman, adviser of the Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, said Serajul will be remembered for his uncompromising political approach.

Shusashoner Jonno Nagorik Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar said Bangladesh would not have been liberated so quickly if it weren't for people like Serajul Alam Khan.

Mahbub Ullah, economist and former Dhaka University professor, expressed concerns about capitalism's criminalised form in Bangladesh, stating that overcoming it will require even more effort than in the seventies and eighties.

He said the absence of Serajul has left a void in this struggle.

Journalist Abu Saeed Khan, president of the foundation, presided over the meeting while writer and researcher Shamsuddin Peyara read an article titled "Freedom Struggle and Serajul Alam Khan".

Nayeemul

FROM PAGE 5

Ministry notification issued on Thursday.

The notification mentioned that Nayeemul will remain in office for the duration of the prime minister's term or subject to her satisfaction from the date of his joining.

The post remained vacant since the demise of former press secretary, veteran journalist Ihsanul Karim Helal. He passed away on March 10.

Nayeemul was the founding editor of the daily Amader Shomay in 2003. He has been frequently seen on TV talk shows since 2007.

Lightning kills two in Natore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Natore*

Two people were killed by lightning strikes in Natore yesterday.

In Naldanga upazila, Md Kamrul Hossain, 35, died when thunderbolts struck him while he was fishing in the Barnai river at Komarpur around 1:30pm, said Brahmapur Union Parishad Chairman SM Ashrafuzzaman Mithu.

In Gurudaspur upazila, a woman named Abera Bagem, 40, was killed by lightning in the municipality area around 2:00pm. The incident happened while the mother of two children was taking her ducks back home from a nearby pond.

Expat dies in bike accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Munshiganj*

A man was killed when the motorbike he was riding got sandwiched between two trucks in Sreenagar of Munshiganj yesterday.

Another rider was injured in the accident, which occurred on the Dhaka-Dohar road at Baribarkhola in Baghra.

Mizanur Rahman, 40, an expatriate, came home on leave a month ago, said Baghra police camp in-charge Sekander Hossain. He was supposed to go back to Switzerland today.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 8

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-45	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-50	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

POST-POLLS VIOLENCE

Seven hurt in rivals' attack in Sunamganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

At least seven people, including a defeated chairman candidate of the Madhyanagar Upazila Parishad election in Sunamganj, were allegedly injured in an attack by their rivals yesterday.

The election for the upazila parishad was held on Wednesday. Abdur Razzak Bhuiyan was elected as chairman, defeating his rival candidate Saidur Rahman.

Yesterday afternoon, Saidur was talking to his supporters near his residence at Datiapara village when over 50 followers of Razzak attacked them with sticks and sharp weapons, alleged Saidur. "At least seven people, including me and my son, were injured," he claimed.

Saidur alleged that Razzak's nephew, Azim Mahmud, led the attack.

Both Razzak and Azim denied the allegation, saying that Saidur's supporters had attacked them earlier.

Five injured in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

At least five people were injured in post-election violence in Basail upazila, Tangail, on Thursday night.

Dilip Chandra Sarkar, Nani Gopal Sarkar, Minti Rani Sarkar, Basanti Rani Sarkar, and Suryamani Rani Sarkar were injured in the incident occurred at Nakachim Purbapara, said locals.

Dilip filed a complaint with Basail Police Station that night.

Around 12 to 15 supporters of Kazi Shahidul Islam, a defeated candidate in the recently held upazila election, allegedly attacked Dilip's house with weapons that night.

Kazi Alid Islam, the winning candidate, demanded necessary actions.

Shahidul Islam could not be contacted as his phone was found switched off.

Basail Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Mazharul Amin said they are trying to arrest the culprits.

Empower indigenous

FROM PAGE 5

Rezwana Karim Snigdha, an associate professor at Jahangirnagar University, highlighted the silence surrounding violence against indigenous women within their communities, leading to social and legal discrimination.

Shahnaz Sumi, director of Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, said the women's movement and the indigenous women's movement share the same foundation.

"But indigenous women experience discrimination on multiple levels -- as women, as indigenous individuals, and specifically as indigenous women."

Maria Mrong, convener of BIWN, said awareness has increased in both indigenous and broader women's communities.

"If we become well-educated, we can achieve even more," she added.

The speakers advocated for constitutional recognition for people living in the CHT and the full implementation of the peace accord.

Gourango Patro, vice-chairperson of Kapaeeng Foundation, and Rekha Saha, legal aid secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, also spoke.

Realistic

FROM PAGE 5

He suggested that the government should allocate special funds in the budget for cash transfers to those affected by the recent cyclone.

More innovative strategies in the health budget, alongside an increase in its allocation, could have reduced the burden of health expenditure on people during this period of uncontrolled inflation, he said.

He also urged the government to increase the allocation for the agriculture sector, as it increased to only 3.59 percent from the existing 3.5 percent.

Atiur also suggested prioritising adding new taxpayers rather than burdening those already paying taxes. For this, the entire revenue collection structure needs to be overhauled, including the capacity of the revenue board and digitisation, he said.

Meanwhile, he remarked that the proposal of a 15 percent tax on black money against the 30 percent tax on the highest income through legitimate means is unacceptable.

Finally, at the end of the day, the proposed budget is realistic and timely, he observed.

However, since many cuts have to be made, implementing this tight budget will require more skill and dedication than ever before, he added.

Invitation to submit proposals for two Request for Proposals (RFPs) issued by UNICEF Bangladesh

RFP No. LRPS-2024-9190755: Technical Partnership for promoting health, nutrition and wellbeing including HPV Vaccination for the most vulnerable adolescent girls.

UNICEF Bangladesh is inviting interested companies with a strong track record and professional credibility of providing the above-required services under one contract. To receive the detailed scope of work and procedure to submit the bid response, please email to **supplybangladesh@unicef.org**

The pre-bid meeting schedule and bid submissions deadlines are mentioned in the respective bid document.

Please note UNICEF does not charge any fee at any stage of the solicitation process.

www.unicef.org/bangladesh

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UDDIPAN

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

UDDIPAN is a Bangladeshi national and non-profit development organization working since 1984. It is registered with MRA. UDDIPAN is inviting applications from the eligible candidates (Men & Women) for immediate appointment for below position.

Director- Field Operation and Management

Vacancy: 01

Job Responsibilities:

- Develop and implement program strategies that align with the organization's mission and goals.
- Oversee the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs to ensure effectiveness and impact.
- Manage program budgets and resources effectively to maximize outcomes.
- Build and maintain partnerships with stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and community organizations.
- Lead a team of program managers and coordinators to achieve program objectives.
- Monitor and report on program performance, including tracking key metrics and outcomes.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in Development Studies, Social Sciences, Business Administration, or related field; advanced degree preferred.
- Minimum of 12 years of experience in program management, with at least 5 years in a leadership role.
- Proven track record of designing and implementing successful development programs, preferably in the financial inclusion or microcredit sector.
- Strong understanding of development principles, including poverty alleviation, gender equality, and social empowerment.
- Excellent leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to think strategically and drive innovation in program design and implementation.
- Experience working in Bangladesh or similar contexts is highly desirable.

Director- Human Resource Management & Development Division

Vacancy: 01

Job Responsibilities:

- Develop and implement HR strategies aligned with the organization's mission and objectives.
- Oversee recruitment, retention, and talent management processes to ensure a diverse and skilled workforce.
- Design and administer compensation and benefits programs that attract and retain top talent.
- Provide leadership in fostering a positive organizational culture and employee engagement.
- Ensure compliance with labor laws and regulations.
- Lead performance management and professional development initiatives.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in Human Resources, Business Administration, or related field; advanced degree preferred.
- Minimum of 12 years of progressive experience in HR management, with at least 5 years in a senior leadership role.
- Strong understanding of HR best practices, employment law, and industry trends.
- Excellent communication, interpersonal, and negotiation skills.
- Proven ability to build and maintain effective working relationships at all levels of the organization.
- Strategic thinker with the ability to translate HR initiatives into business outcomes.
- Experience working in the financial or microcredit sector is a plus.

For the both position, compensation is negotiable based on the candidate's experience and the organization's resources.

Consult website for further/details information: **www.uddipan.org/career**

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SGFL
Sylhet Gas Fields Limited
(A Company of Petrobangla)

গ্যাস জাতির সম্পদ। এর অপচয় রোধ করে জাতির দায়িত্ব পালন করুন।

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

Ref. no. SGFL/MSTE/23-24/FP-14

Date: 06-06-2024

<table>
<tr><td>1.</td><td>Ministry/Division</td><td>:</td><td>Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources/Energy & Mineral Resources Division.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.</td><td>Agency</td><td>:</td><td>Sylhet Gas Fields Limited (A company of Petrobangla).</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.</td><td>Procuring entity name</td><td>:</td><td>Sylhet Gas Fields Limited, (SGFL).</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.</td><td>Procuring entity district</td><td>:</td><td>Sylhet.</td></tr>
<tr><td>5.</td><td>Invitation ref. no.</td><td>:</td><td>SGFL/MSTE/23-24/FP-14 dated 06-06-2024</td></tr>
<tr><td>6.</td><td>Invitation for</td><td>:</td><td>Tender for Procurement of Spare parts for Gas Compressor.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">KEY INFORMATION</td></tr>
<tr><td>7.</td><td>Procurement method</td><td>:</td><td>Open tender method (OTM), Single stage one envelope system.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">FUNDING INFORMATION</td></tr>
<tr><td>8.</td><td>Budget and source of funds</td><td>:</td><td>Own source of Sylhet Gas Fields Limited.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">PARTICULAR INFORMATION</td></tr>
<tr><td>9.</td><td>Project name</td><td>:</td><td>N/A.</td></tr>
<tr><td>10.</td><td>Tender publication date</td><td>:</td><td>N/A.</td></tr>
<tr><td>11.</td><td>Tender last selling date</td><td>:</td><td>29-07-2024</td></tr>
<tr><td>12.</td><td>Place of tender selling</td><td></td><td>Sylhet Gas Fields Limited, Dhaka Liaison Office,
Petrobangla (13th Floor), 3, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215.</td></tr>
<tr><td>13.</td><td>Date & time of selling of tender document.</td><td>:</td><td>The tender document will be available for sale from 11-06-2024 to 29-07-2024 during office hours on all working days.</td></tr>
<tr><td>14.</td><td>Tender closing date & time</td><td>:</td><td>30-07-2024 and 12-00 hrs (BST).</td></tr>
<tr><td>15.</td><td>Tender opening date & time</td><td>:</td><td>30-07-2024 and 12-15 hrs (BST).</td></tr>
<tr><td>16.</td><td>Place of tender receiving & opening</td><td>:</td><td>Sylhet Gas Fields Limited, Procurement Department,
P.O. Chiknagool, Sylhet, Bangladesh.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">INFORMATION FOR TENDERER</td></tr>
<tr><td>17.</td><td>Eligibility of Tenderer</td><td>:</td><td>Bonafide manufacturers/suppliers or their authorized agents of all countries except the country/countries having no diplomatic relation with Bangladesh.</td></tr>
<tr><td>18.</td><td>Brief description of Goods</td><td>:</td><td>Procurement of Spare parts for Gas Compressor.</td></tr>
<tr><td>19.</td><td>Price of tender document</td><td>:</td><td>Taka 5,000.00 (non-refundable).</td></tr>
<tr><td>20.</td><td>Special Instruction:</td><td>a)</td><td>If it is not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstance (Strike, Holiday, Lockdown etc.) the same will be received/ opened on the next working day at the same time and Venue.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>b)</td><td>Tender must remain valid for 120 (one hundred twenty) days from the date of opening of the tender.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>c)</td><td>Tenderer shall furnish with the Tender an acceptable Tender Security in the form of Demand Draft or Pay Order or Bank guarantee (as per format provided in the Tender Document) issued by a scheduled bank in Bangladesh or by any scheduled foreign bank operating in Bangladesh or by any reputed foreign bank duly endorsed with full obligation and liability by a scheduled bank of Bangladesh in the amount as under:<table><tr><th>Description of Goods</th><th>Tender security amount</th></tr><tr><td>Procurement of Spare parts for Gas Compressor</td><td>Taka 5,00,000.00 or USD 4,350.00</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>d)</td><td>The Tender Security must remain valid for 148 (one hundred forty eight) days from the date of opening of the tender.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>e)</td><td>The scope of supply, terms of supply and information require to be furnished by the Tenderers, etc. are included in the tender document.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>f)</td><td>Tender(s) submitted after the deadline for receiving of tender(s) will be rejected and returned unopened to the Tenderer.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>g)</td><td>The Tender must not be submitted by Fax or E-mail.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>h)</td><td>This tender notice will also be available at SGFL Website: www.sgfl.org.bd, Petrobangla Website: www.petrobangla.org.bd and CPTU Website: www.cptu.gov.bd.</td></tr>
<tr><td>21.</td><td>Name of Official inviting tender</td><td></td><td>Tarak Ahmed.</td></tr>
<tr><td>22.</td><td>Designation of Official inviting tender</td><td></td><td>Deputy General Manager (Procurement)
Telephone no. 880-2996641630, E-mail: dgmpr@sgfl.org.bd</td></tr>
<tr><td>23.</td><td>Address of Official inviting tender</td><td></td><td>Sylhet Gas Fields Ltd, P.O. Chiknagool, Sylhet, Bangladesh.</td></tr>
<tr><td>24.</td><td colspan="3">Sylhet Gas Fields Limited reserves the right to reject any or all tender or annul the tendering process at any stage prior to award of contract without assigning any reason whatsoever and without incurring any liability to the affected Tenderer(s).</td></tr>
</table>

Deputy General Manager (Procurement)

GD-959

Need combined effort to protect environment

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government alone cannot protect the country's environment, and a combined effort is needed in this regard, said speakers at an event on Thursday.

Eighteen green organisations -- including Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, Association for Land Reform and Development, and Nagorik Uddyog -- organised the seminar at the Department of Environment auditorium in the capital.

Lawmaker Amatul Kibria Keya Chowdhury said political and administrative leaders are responsible for environmental destruction, not the poor.

> **Political and administrative leaders are responsible for environmental destruction, not the poor.**
>
> LAWMAKER AMATUL KIBRIA KEYA CHOWDHURY

Amatul emphasised the need for proper planning in haor development to prevent floods and called for accountability among officials.

Lawmaker Tanvir Shakil Joy said raising awareness among the people is important. He also called for an increased national budget for environmental protection.

DoE Director General Abdul Hamid said environmental impact assessments for sand mining leases would be conducted in the future, along with plans to amend the Environment Act to ensure stricter regulations.

Bapa Vice President Iqbal Habib said, "Rajuk's role should be to protect the capital's land, but often the authorities act like developers."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina places a wreath at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi in Dhaka yesterday, marking the historic Six-point Day. PHOTO: **PID**

Empower indigenous women: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Representation of indigenous women in parliament and local government bodies is vital to protect their rights, said speakers at an event yesterday.

The remarks were made at the fifth national indigenous women conference, "Strengthen the United Movement to Establish the Rights of Indigenous Women," organised by the Bangladesh Indigenous Women Network in the capital's CBCB center on Asad Avenue.

Data presented at the conference revealed that between 2007 and 2022, 747 indigenous women and girls were victims of physical and sexual abuse, yet they did not receive fair trials.

> **Indigenous women experience discrimination on multiple levels -- as women, as indigenous individuals and specifically as indigenous women.**
>
> **SHAHNAZ SUMI**
> Director of Nari Progati Sangha

Khushi Kabir, social activist and coordinator of Nijera Kori, pointed out that despite Bangladesh emerging as a secular country after its independence, oppression against indigenous communities persisted.

"There should be special arrangements for these marginalised communities so that they too can move forward along with others," she added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Nayeemul appointed PM's press secretary

STAR REPORT

The government has appointed senior journalist Nayeemul Islam Khan as the new press secretary to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

He has been appointed to the post on contractual basis with the status of a secretary, according to a Public Administration

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

BUDGET 2024-25

Realistic and cautionary

Says ex-BB governor Atiur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The proposed budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year has been realistic and cautionary, as the government increased the budget by only 4.6 percent from the outgoing fiscal year, said Atiur Rahman, former governor of Bangladesh Bank.

"The social sectors have not been exempted to the level intended from the overall budget cuts. Allocations for social security programmes could have been more generous to adjust for inflation," he said during a press briefing on the budget at Unnayan Shamannay's office yesterday.

Atiur, also its chairperson, said the ongoing economic challenges will not make it easy to reduce inflation to 6.5 percent from nearly 10 percent. "If the inflation rate can be reduced to the targeted level, it will relieve people from its pressure," he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

It's to promote black money

Says Fakhrul

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said termed proposed national budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 black money-friendly, saying it will further widen scope for corruption in the country.

"This budget is for promoting black money. This is also the budget of how black money can be whitened, corruption can be expanded, and money can be made [illegally]," he said.

Speaking at a seminar, he said the budget was not formulated for people's welfare.

"There is no need to talk about the budget. You see the cartoon on the front page of The Daily Star, where a huge elephant is sitting on top of many ordinary farmers, workers, hardworking people... This brilliant cartoon has depicted a clear picture of the budget," he said.

Fakhrul said the government has allocated a huge amount of money for unproductive sectors for creating more scopes to plunder public money.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

High price of cattle irks buyers

HELEMUL ALAM

Despite the government's announcement of a surplus of sacrificial animals this year, their prices remain high so far, compared to the same time last year.

Traders at Gabtoli cattle market attribute this to the increased cost of cattle feed, transportation, and staff salaries.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdur Rahman has recently said the number of available sacrificial animals this year is 1.29 crore. This is at least 22.8 lakh more than the demand and 4,44,034 more than last year.

This includes around 52 lakh cows, 1.60 lakh buffaloes, 68 lakh goats, 767,743 sheep, and 1,850 other sacrificial animals.

Md Dhoni Mandal, a cattle trader, said, "A mid-sized bull is selling for Tk 10 to 20 thousand higher than last year. Customer numbers have dropped. Last year, I sold around a hundred bulls a few weeks before Eid. The number has dropped to 10 this year."

Sabeton, Mondol's wife who helps in raising the bulls, said local farmers will suffer if the government doesn't stop cattle smuggling from India.

Monzu Bepari of Manikganj said, "I sold around 250 bulls 15 days before Eid-ul-Azha last year. So far I sold only 100 this year."

Md Santu Bepary, who brought four bulls to Gabtoli and plans to bring around 100 more on Wednesday, said sacrificial animals are available in local markets, but prices remain high. "We have to pay an extra Tk 10,000 to Tk 15,000 for a mid-sized bull outside Dhaka."

Regarding the low sales at Gabtoli market, Md Jahangir, a cattle food seller, said many people buy bulls directly from farms well before Eid-ul-Azha, leading to fewer customers at this permanent cattle market.

Doly Akhter from Dholaipar, who went to Gabtoli cattle market 10 days before Eid to buy a bull for her son Ibrahim, said prices of bulls, buffaloes, and goats are higher this year. "I couldn't buy it, it's beyond my reach," she added.

Five other buyers echoed her.

Amzad Hossain, a Gabtoli trader who bought 28 buffaloes, said small buffaloes are costing Tk 2 lakh this year, which is Tk 20,000 more than last year. Meanwhile, large buffaloes cost Tk 8 lakh.

Md Babul, a trader, said mid and small sized goats were Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,200 costlier than last year, with a 13kg goat selling for Tk 1,300 and a 45kg goat for Tk 50,000.

Besides, two camels were brought to the market, and their prices are also very high. Trader Amzad Hossain, who brought them from Pakistan, is asking for Tk 26 lakh for each camel, noting that if there were no restrictions on bringing them from India and raising them locally, prices would not be so high.

Sixteen cattle markets have been set up in two city corporation areas in Dhaka this year.

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DEFAMATION CASE

India court grants bail to Rahul Gandhi

AFP, *Bengaluru*

An Indian court yesterday granted bail to opposition leader Rahul Gandhi in the latest of several defamation cases brought against him for accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi or his party of corruption.

Gandhi, 53, has faced numerous legal cases brought by members of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and was last year briefly disqualified from parliament after a criminal libel conviction.

He is one of several top opposition leaders to face criminal proceedings in cases they claim are politically driven by Modi's government.

The latest case stems from advertisements published by Gandhi's Congress party accusing the BJP of corruptly taking commissions from infrastructure projects in southern Karnataka state.

Gandhi, 53, has not spent any time in custody over the charge. He was granted bail in a five-minute procedural hearing held to determine if he should remain at liberty, Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala confirmed to AFP.

Two other senior Congress figures in Karnataka state had already been bailed last week, neither of whom were in custody beforehand.

Gandhi was sentenced to two years imprisonment last year in 2023 in a separate case in Gujarat but was not jailed after appealing with India's top court.

The sentence did however force his brief disqualification from parliament until the Supreme Court suspended his conviction.

Yesterday's case came days after Modi and the BJP won nationwide elections, albeit with a reduced majority forcing them to rely on coalition partners to govern.

Critics have accused Modi and his party of using the justice system to target political rivals.

Asylum-seeking migrants line up to be transported at a staging area, after US President Joe Biden announced a sweeping border security enforcement effort, in Jacumba Hot Springs, California, US on Thursday.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Rural vote fall cost Modi a decisive polls win

Show voter analysis as discontent grows in India's countryside over lack of jobs, high inflation

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party lost a third of its rural parliamentary constituencies in last month's election, a voter analysis shows, reflecting discontent in the countryside over lack of jobs and high inflation.

The Bharatiya Janata Party's poor showing in the vast heartland cost the ruling party its majority in parliament, forcing Modi to depend on regional allies to muster the simple majority required to govern the world's most populous country.

The BJP, which held 201 rural constituencies in the 543-member parliament, retained only 126 of them in the mammoth election, the analysis showed.

The seats do not include those in the regions of Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, as a reorientation of constituencies there meant there is no direct comparison with data from the prior election.

Rahul Verma, a political expert at the New Delhi-based Centre For Policy Research, said Modi's party especially lost ground in the big heartland states of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, which have trailed more prosperous southern and western parts of India in the pace of economic development.

"The rural distress would have played a factor," he said. Under Modi, India has become one of the world's fastest-growing economies, but there are too few jobs for the millions entering the workforce each year and growth has been uneven.

Families in rural India, home to 60 percent of its 1.4 billion people, have seen incomes halve as they struggle to keep up with rising costs and fewer jobs.

S African parties cool towards ANC's coalition plan

AFP, *Johannesburg*

Plans by South Africa's ANC to form a government of national unity after last week's general election met a cool reception yesterday, with some potential partners reserving judgement or appearing hostile to the idea.

President Cyril Ramaphosa's African National Congress won 40 percent of the vote -- its lowest score ever -- and for the first time since the advent of democracy in 1994 it needs the backing of other groups to govern. The new parliament is to meet in about 10 days and one of its first tasks will be to elect a president to form a new government.

After marathon ANC talks on Thursday, Ramaphosa said the party had decided to try to band together with a broad group of opposition parties, ranging from the far right to the hard left.

But Julius Malema, leader of the radical leftist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), seemed unwilling to join hands with rivals holding radically different political views.

"We can't share power with the enemy," Malema wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Hajj pilgrimage to start June 14: KSA

AFP, *Riyadh*

Saudi Arabia said the hajj will start on June 14 after astronomical observatories spotted the crescent moon Thursday evening, signalling the beginning of the month in which the annual pilgrimage falls.

The Supreme Court determined that Dhu al-Hijjah, the 12th and final month of the Islamic calendar, begins today, the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said.

The hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam and must be undertaken at least once by all Muslims with the means.

It involves a series of rituals completed over at least four days in Makkah and its surroundings in the west of Saudi Arabia.

The high point comes on the second day, when pilgrims gather for prayers on Mount Arafat, where the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) delivered his final sermon.

That will occur on June 15 this year, and the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha will fall on June 16, SPA said.

Saudi Arabia is home to the holiest shrines in Islam at Makkah and Medina.

USA stun cricket world, curious fans

FROM PAGE 12

was heralded across the cricketing world, few but the hardcore fans of what is a very niche sport in the USA, witnessed it.

The tournament is being co-hosted by the USA with the game played in a converted minor-league baseball park in the Grand Prairie suburb of Dallas, Texas which holds just 7,000 spectators.

The game wasn't even broadcast on American television but was instead only shown on the cricket-specialist Willow TV subscription channel and streaming service.

But online and in social media, American sports fans quickly became aware of their team's achievement.

NPR public radio tried to put the win into context for those not familiar with the sport.

"Team USA just beat Pakistan in Super Over, the baseball equivalent is extra innings," they reported.

"Just to put this into an American sports context, Pakistan losing to the US is like the Boston Red Sox losing to the Durham Bulls," they added, referring to the minor league baseball team from North Carolina.

Outside of the USA though there was no need for analogies.

The UK's Times called it "one of the biggest upsets in cricket history" while Australia's Daily Telegraph said the Americans had "stunned world cricket".

It will all be music to the ears of the game's governing body, the ICC, who chose the USA as co-host for this tournament, alongside the West Indies, to help efforts to popularise the T20 format in the USA.

As well as Texas, Florida and New York are also holding games in the group stage before the Caribbean takes sole ownership of the later rounds.

The sport has a curious history in North America -- the first ever international match featured the USA against Canada in 1844 but the lingering influence of the colonial-era game faded as baseball gained prominence.

The Americans have never featured in either the T20 World Cup or the ODI version and not even they would have expected such a start to the tournament with the Pakistan win coming after a thrilling victory over Canada on Saturday.

The USA team, coached by Australian Stuart Law, has a strong Indian influence and is made up of immigrants who have played the bulk of their cricket in the country, along with some players who switched allegiance from other nations after meeting qualification criteria, such as ex-New Zealand all-rounder Corey Anderson.

The game has been growing at grassroots level with thriving local leagues in all three of the states which are hosting games plus in North Carolina and California.

Last year saw the launch of the domestic competition, Major League Cricket, which has begun to attract top international players and investment from Indian cricket sources.

The ICC have played down talk of 'converting' sceptical mainstream American sports fans as a goal for this tournament but the win is bound to raise their hopes.

"Now that's the way to grow the game in the States," tweeted former England captain Michael Vaughan after the match.

Joe Lynn, the curator of the United States Cricket Museum at Haverford College, near Philadelphia, said the wins were "the perfect start" for what he sees as a comeback for the game.

"Perhaps it's always been a misnomer to say cricket died in the US at the hands of baseball, but I think it's been in hibernation more than anything else. With Major League Cricket and this World Cup it is a reawakening of sorts," he told the BBC.

USA captain Monank Patel, whose crucial 50 from 38 balls earned him the man-of-the-match award, said he was sure the victory would be a game-changer for the sport.

"Of course, beating Pakistan in a World Cup is going to open many doors for us," he said.

"Obviously hosting the World Cup in the USA and performing here as a team, it helps us to grow cricket in the USA...and playing against Pakistan for the first time in the World Cup and beating them - it was an unbelievable performance from our side," he said.

It'll be challenging

FROM PAGE 1

"With a keen focus on containing inflation, reducing aggregate demand, and nurturing the supply side of the market, this budget lays a strong foundation for stabilising the economy," said FICCI President Mohammad Zaved Akhtar.

He said the budget outlines several measures to control inflation and stabilise the economy, including tightening monetary policy by raising interest rates to 8.5 percent.

The standing lending facility (SLF) and standing deposit facility (SDF) rates have been set at 10 percent and 7 percent, respectively, to curb inflation by reducing money supply and encouraging savings, he added.

Additionally, substantial investments aim to boost agricultural productivity by 20 percent and industrial output by 15 percent through technological advancements and infrastructural improvements, he said.

"This is expected to balance demand and supply, thereby stabilising the economy. The proposal to reduce the corporate tax rate for companies, which are not listed on the stock market, from 27.5 percent to 25 percent, is commendable," he said.

However, Akhtar said the budget lacks allocation or specific directions for the automation of tax, VAT, and customs administration to increase efficiency and simplify the tax collection process.

The absence of such reforms means the complexities related to VAT credit and potential financial strain on businesses will persist, the FICCI president said.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) welcomed the introduction of prospective rate of tax, reduction of tax rate for private companies and one-person companies and reduction of source tax on daily essentials.

In a statement, the ICAB said despite the Russia-Ukraine war, high inflation, rising commodity prices, dollar crisis, slowdown in business investment and employment, and other global uncertainties, the government has taken a challenge of implementing development budget of Tk 265,000 crore, which is a very encouraging step to move forward to a developing economy.

Dazzling new blue

FROM PAGE 12

It has a triangular head featuring large eyes and a triangular mandible with five teeth. The species, named after its distinct blue colour – "neela" in most Indian languages – has been described in a new study, published in the journal ZooKeys.

"While exploring a tree hole about 10ft up in a steep cattle track in the remote Yinku village one evening, something sparkled in the twilight," researchers from the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) in Bengaluru said.

Jubo League activist

FROM PAGE 12

parishad went to polls on Wednesday.

A programme was organisedon Thursday night to celebrate Touhid's victory. Ali was returning home around 3:00am after attending the event. When he reached his village, the assailants opened fire on him and fled, said Abdur Razzak, officer-in-charge of Jashore Kotwali Police Station, quoting locals.

Locals took him to Jashore General Hospital where doctors declared him dead, the OC added.

Contacted, Dr Suzayet Hossain said Ali was brought dead to the hospital and two bullet marks were found in his body -- one in his head and another in a leg.

Ali was an activist of Jubo League, the youth wing of the ruling Awami League, said Rantu Chakladar, member secretary of the convening committee of Jashore Jubo League.

Police are investigating the incident and additional law enforcers have been deployed in the area to fend off further untoward incidents, said Belal Hossain, additional superintendent of Jashore police.

Israeli forces batter central

FROM PAGE 12

that have taken control along Rafah's border line made several raids into the centre and west of the city, wounding several civilians who had been trapped inside their homes and were taken by surprise.

Some residents said tanks were newly present in Al-Izba, an area of far southwest Rafah close to the Mediterranean coast.

"I think the occupation forces are trying to reach the beach area of Rafah. The raids and the bombing overnight were tactical, they entered under heavy fire and then retreated," one Palestinian resident told Reuters via a chat app.

Later yesterday, an Israeli air strike on a house in the southern city of Khan Younis, north of Rafah, killed six people and wounded several, including children, medics said.

Israeli forces were also operating inside the Al-Bureij camp in the central Gaza Strip, while subjecting the al-Maghazi and al-Nuseirat and the adjacent city of Deir al-Balah under heavy aerial and tank bombardment, Palestinian medics reported.

Hamas said their fighters carried out attacks on Israeli forces in several central and southern areas.

More than 36,731 Palestinians have been killed and 83,309 have been wounded in Israel's military offensive in Gaza since October 7, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement yesterday. Some 77 Palestinians were killed and 235 wounded in the past 24 hours, the ministry added.

Cut in agri subsidy

FROM PAGE 12

As Bangladesh's domestic food grain production has not increased significantly, the country is heavily reliant on imports.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, Bangladesh imported around 12.5 million tonnes of food products in 2021.

The dependency on food imports increased from 9.3 percent of total food demand in 2010 to 11.2 percent in 2022.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Sadar, Rangpur.
www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.02.8549.000.07.001.24- 470

Date : 06-06-2024

Invitation for Tender (Works)

e-Tender Notice No.15/2023-2024

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following works, details are given below.

Sl No	Tender ID No	Package No	Description of works	Tender last selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing/ Opening (Date & Time)
1.	996546 (NOTM)	e-Tender/PEDP4/RNP/SAD/ 2023-2024/W14.1415	Major Repair of 1) DEODOBA DANGIRPAR 2) RADHA BALLOVE 3) SATGARA AZIMUDDIN GPS & 4) DHAP GPS under Sadar Upazila, Dist.: Rangpur.	24 June 2024 (16.00)	25 June 2024 (13.00)
2.	996547 (NOTM)	e-Tender/PEDP4/RNP/SAD/ 2023-2024/W14.1416	Major Repair of 1) JAFORGONJ 2) POSSIM JAGADISHPUR BATTALA 3) BAKSHA GPS & 4) ARAZIMON KHAMAR (KAIDAHARA) under Sadar Upazila, Dist.: Rangpur.	24 June 2024 (16.00)	25 June 2024 (13.00)

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no ofline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (**http://www.eprocure.gov.bd**) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to **24 June 2024 at 16.00**

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (**helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd**) of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh.

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GD-965

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

An uninspiring budget proposal

It fails to commit to reforms and address people's sufferings

Despite having a few positive features, the proposed budget from FY2024-25 fails to recognise the immediate needs and medium-term challenges facing the economy. There are three key problems that the budget somewhat correctly identifies: runaway inflation, dwindling foreign exchange reserves, and increasing debt burden. However, the strategies for curbing inflation and providing relief to the poor and fixed-income groups are grossly insufficient. For starters, duties have been reduced on only a few essential items, and the government's poor track record does not give a lot of hope as to whether this will ultimately result in lower prices for consumers. Moreover, the government's target to reduce inflation to 6.5 percent appears overly ambitious in light of the fact that average inflation has remained above nine percent for two consecutive years. Most importantly, the budget does not provide any detailed roadmap on how to change that.

The government has correctly decided to slow down on expenditure, and the budget deficit has been set at 4.6 percent, the lowest in 10 years—indicative of a contractionary fiscal policy supplementing the contractionary monetary policy of the central bank. But it has failed to recognise where to prioritise its spending. Allocation for the social safety net programmes, for example, saw a small increase from Tk 1,26,272 crore in FY2023-24 to Tk 1,36,026 crore. Not only is this amount insufficient, but it's also misleading as the proportion of the social safety net programmes as a percentage of the GDP actually dipped from the outgoing fiscal year's 2.55 percent to 2.43 percent proposed in the new budget. And if government employee pensions and interest payment for savings certificates are discounted, the share further drops to 1.62 percent of the GDP. Similarly, allocations for education and health also remain grossly below what's needed to develop our human capital.

Keeping the tax-free income threshold unchanged when prices have skyrocketed is disappointing. The government should have sought to acquire more revenue through tax reforms instead, and by bringing tax evaders under the tax net. Instead, it has focused on increasing revenue collection via indirect taxes, which will disproportionately affect lower-income groups, increasing inequality. The government's immoral decision to allow corrupt individuals a scope to whiten black money by paying a low flat rate of 15 percent is another point of contention. Add to that the absence of any mention of how it plans to bring down the non-performing loans, and it seems that the Awami League government has performed a complete U-turn on its so-called policy of "zero tolerance" against corruption.

In fact, the overall budget speech delivered by the finance minister was disappointing on the structural reform front in light of the expectations from this being the first post-election budget. The government, it seems, has again opted not to rattle any cages by undertaking politically challenging initiatives that are critical to strengthening our economic pillars. So, the mantra seems to be to recognise the challenges, promise changes, but commit very little to actually achieve them.

A future without farmland?

Govt needs to act now to address soil degradation

We are alarmed that around 270 square kilometres of land in the country—roughly the size of Dhaka city—is losing fertility every year, posing a serious threat to the nation's food security. A recent study by the Soil Resource Development Institute (SRDI) found that 76.2 percent of the land in Bangladesh suffers from moderate to very severe soil degradation. This translates to a staggering 1.124 crore hectares of degraded land, an increase from the 1.07 crore hectares estimated in 2000.

The reasons behind soil degradation in Bangladesh are complex and interconnected. To begin with, there is the overuse of chemical fertilisers, which boosts crop yields in the short term, but their long-term use depletes essential soil nutrients and organic matter. In the coastal areas, rising salinity levels due to climate change and shrimp farming have further disrupted the natural balance of salts in the soil, making it unsuitable to grow most crops. Industrial pollution from factories, deforestation and the improper disposal of electronic and medical waste are additional factors accelerating soil degradation. Trees play a vital role in maintaining soil health by preventing erosion and regulating water flow, so when forests are cleared, the soil becomes more vulnerable to erosion and degradation.

Degradation of soil fertility reduces crop yields, diminishes the nutritional value of crops, and increases vulnerability to droughts and floods. This not only impacts food security, but also harms the environment and livelihoods of millions of Bangladeshis. Unless immediate action is taken, our country could face a future with no cultivable land within the next 63 years, according to experts. This is no doubt a frightening prospect for a nation of 17 crore people who are still heavily reliant on agriculture.

But is the government aware of the severity of the issue? It needs to play an urgent role in reversing soil degradation by phasing out profitable but harmful industries, such as tobacco and shrimp farming, which are causing irreparable damage to scarce agricultural land. It should invest in research and development of sustainable agricultural technologies and encourage farmers to adopt green agricultural practices—such as crop rotation, cover cropping, and composting—to improve soil health and fertility. Finally, the government must implement strict policies to limit industrial pollution and harmful waste disposal practices, and put an end to our destructive spree of deforestation around the country.

Our love-hate relationship with university rankings

BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza
is a professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

We love university rankings, especially when our names grace the list. Without this recognition, we'd easily find 10 reasons to criticise the process. The prestigious QS World University Rankings (WUR) 2025 naming Dhaka University as the most improved university in the country makes us revisit our love-hate stance.

Recently, Dhaka University, over 100 years old, achieved its best-ever position in the QS world rankings, landing in the 554th position among 1,500 shortlisted universities. To be eligible for QS WUR, an institution needs at least 100 papers indexed by Scopus and published over five years. This predominantly anglophone ranking landscape overlooks non-English and non-indexed journals, often favouring science or quantitative subjects over humanities and social sciences.

As Bangladesh's first fully fledged university, DU has significantly contributed to forming a middle class and laying the foundation for civil bureaucracy and political leadership. Ranking agencies will not test DU for its prestige and exclusivity. It will rather use a distinct methodology that often disregards the university's heritage, legacy, and social impact. To be ranked among the best global universities, we must meet a different set of data-driven expectations. It is a different ball game.

For example, the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) prioritises universities with Nobel laureates, field medallists, highly cited researchers, or papers in nature or science, resembling the fabled stork inviting tigers to eat from narrow jars. This elitist system can perpetuate societal inequities, countering higher education's goal of eradicating inequalities for a just world. This idea of sustainability has been included in QS WUR as well as Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

For evaluation, QS uses specific criteria and weighted factors. This year, DU and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) have moved up from their previous bands of 691-700 and 801-850, respectively, while North South University (NSU) has slipped from its previous year's 851-900 rank. The improvement in top universities' performances suggests strategic interventions by our premier institutions.

Previously, many public officials and university leaders have publicly criticised rankings, arguing that data-driven quality measurement is flawed. Can we quantify quality, particularly in light of rumours that many ranking actors manipulate data to achieve high scores? A huge scandal erupted in 2021 when Columbia University faced accusations of data fabrication. Many universities do this because ranking is one way to attract better students. To join the elite group of top academic institutions, one requires substantial subscription fees, visibility efforts, and costs for international collaboration. Competing with resource-heavy institutions is challenging for a state-funded university like DU that charges minimal tuition.

VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

QS WUR's unique data collection emphasises internationalisation (45 percent). Achieving global academic perceptions requires higher budgets, which many faculty members lack. Going to international conferences and forums are expensive affairs. Then, there are the heavy processing fees for research publications in indexed journals, sometimes up to $5,000 per paper. Meeting QS's criteria necessitates a minimum of 100 such publications annually. Our academic perceptions depend a lot on what we present and write on international platforms.

Both DU and BUET perform relatively well in terms of employability and employer perceptions. NSU, being newer, has progress to make in terms of employer outcomes. BUET's employer reputation score is concerning, showing a disconnect between students' studies and their eventual employment. For example, a customs or police officer with a mechanical engineering degree is unlikely to impress the rankers evaluating employer outcomes.

DU's international research network benefits from nearly 500 MoUs worldwide, but it faces challenges in enhancing student and faculty mobility. Three ministries currently vet international student applications before consideration. The bureaucratic red tape is one of the main deterrents for foreign students. To create a mobility window, our curricula need an international outlook, facilitating credit transfers and dual degrees. This cannot be done without government-level interventions. We need to view international students as a potential revenue source and come up with a comprehensive branding strategy like those in Malaysia and India. Even in the 1980s, Bangladesh was a destination for higher education. We need to regain that status by updating our facilities like dormitories and social security. The inclusion of sustainability as a ranking category is another case in point. Our infrastructure, policies, curricula, and extracurricular activities must demonstrate our commitment to sustainability and inclusivity to perform better in this category.

As the director of DU's international affairs office, I know how difficult it is to attract international students and faculty. Some MoUs have allowed us to host about 15 foreign faculty members, largely thanks to our partners' contributions. This earned DU a score of 1.6 out of 5. BUET scored zero, while NSU, with generous incentives for foreign faculty and dual nationals, outperformed its local rivals with a score of 7.9. BUET's international research network is far from satisfactory. Given the number of brain-drained NRB scholars that BUET has, one hopes to see better results in the future.

Academic reputation, crucial in rankings, has become a PR and networking activity, requiring our scholars to participate in international forums and conferences. Limited budgets often prevent faculty from travelling abroad or paying conference fees. Researchers face hefty processing fees for publication in indexed journals, which is necessary for QS consideration. If the government is sincere about university ranking, it must allocate dedicated research funds with specified desired outcomes.

In the age of globalisation, we cannot ignore the pull of ranking. We need to incentivise the local institutions so that they can improve their global footprints. Then again, we should not bifurcate the higher education system by promoting a segment of elite institutions. Real changes will come once we find the right balance between our primary, secondary, and tertiary systems. An improved higher education system will have a trickle-down effect on the other two. The sooner the stakeholders realise the importance of shaping our higher education system in alignment with the global system, the better it is for all of us.

WORLD OCEAN DAY

Navigating the blue frontier

Md Rony Golder
is a PhD student at the School of Earth and Planetary Sciences in Curtin University, Australia.

MD RONY GOLDER

The ocean, a vast expanse of blue mystery, has long been a source of sustenance, wonder, and intrigue. As we observe World Ocean Day today, it is imperative to reflect on the relationship between humanity and the sea, particularly for maritime nations like Bangladesh, whose destiny is inextricably linked to the marine waters that surround it.

Cradled by the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh boasts a maritime area almost as vast as its terrestrial territory. This marine space is not just a buffer against the elements, but a treasure trove of resources that, if harnessed sustainably, could propel the nation into a future of prosperity and stability. However, an issue persists: how can Bangladesh navigate the complex waters of marine resource management to ensure a balance between economic growth and environmental preservation?

The answer lies in the adoption of marine spatial planning (MSP), a strategic approach that goes beyond traditional resource management. MSP is not merely a tool for allocation; rather, it is a vision for harmony between human activities and the marine ecosystem. It is a process that calls for stakeholders—fishermen, policymakers, scientists, and conservationists—to come together in crafting a blueprint for the ocean's future.

At its core, MSP is about understanding the spatial distribution of marine resources and the myriad interactions that occur within the marine environment. It is about making informed decisions that account for the cumulative impacts of human activities, ensuring that the ocean's health is not compromised for short-term gains.

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO describes MSP as a "public process of analysing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives that have been specified through a political process." This definition underscores the multifaceted nature of MSP, highlighting its role as a mediator between competing interests and its potential to foster sustainable development.

A central debate in the realm of MSP revolves around its primary focus. Should MSP prioritise the extraction of marine resources, or should it champion the cause of environmental protection? This contradiction, however, is a false one. The true purpose of MSP is to find a middle path—a path that allows for the responsible use of marine resources while safeguarding the marine environment for future generations.

Expert researchers have weighed in on this debate, offering insights into the purpose of MSP. It is a decision-making framework that aids planners and policymakers in optimising the use and management of the sea, and is also a means to implement ecosystem-based management, helping countries identify areas for biodiversity conservation and sustainable economic development. MSP equips policymakers with the necessary information for strategic planning of current and future resource use. It seeks to balance the objectives of nature conservation and resource utilisation in a manner that is sustainable and equitable.

For Bangladesh, the implementation of MSP is both a challenge and an opportunity. This is because the MSP implementation process in any country depends on certain necessities, such as adequate legal and policy adoption and application; coordination and integration of complex political and economic elements including national, regional, and global institutions; improving mechanisms to avoid and resolve marine environmental conflicts; preventing and reducing environmental degradation; strengthening and developing marine environmental laws and compliance; and above all, ensuring community participation.

Bangladesh has successfully delineated its maritime boundaries through two landmark legal victories against India and Myanmar, laying the groundwork for MSP. However, the journey ahead remains challenging. The lack of an integrated legal and policy framework is a significant hurdle. Existing plans and laws are fragmented, spread across various sectors and departments without a cohesive strategy. This fragmentation hinders the effective management of marine resources and the adoption of a holistic approach to MSP.

Coordination and integration are also lacking. No single policy or law has succeeded in uniting all relevant departments under a common MSP agenda. The result is a patchwork of sector-specific plans that fail to address the interconnectedness of marine issues.

Information and data on marine resources are scarce. Without robust marine research and data collection, MSP cannot be effectively implemented. The limited scope of existing marine research institutions and their activities underscores the need for a concerted effort to gather comprehensive data on the Bay of Bengal's resources.

As Bangladesh strides forward to become a developing country, sustainable resource management has become even more imperative. The spectre of overfishing, species extinction, and habitat destruction underscores the urgency of implementing MSP.

The government's Blue Economy Cell has taken commendable steps in coordinating stakeholder efforts towards sustainable marine development. Yet, there is a pressing need for regular stakeholder meetings to identify conflicts, analyse disputes, and foster involvement in the MSP process.

In the global context, developed nations have already embarked on significant maritime plans, reaping the benefits of the sea's bounty. Bangladesh must follow suit, leveraging MSP as a tool for sustainable marine governance.

On this World Ocean Day, let us embrace marine spatial planning as the guiding principle for Bangladesh's maritime future. With MSP, we can chart a course that ensures the sustainable use of marine resources, the conservation of the marine environment, and the fulfilment of the country's social and economic needs.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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Advertisement: 01711623910
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LET'S TALK BUDGET

The proposal for the annual budget of FY2024-25 was tabled at parliament on Thursday. This budget came at a time when our economy is struggling with a myriad challenges, including persistant inflation and a growing debt burden. Does the new budget address these macroeconomic concerns?
Four experts share their analyses with The Daily Star

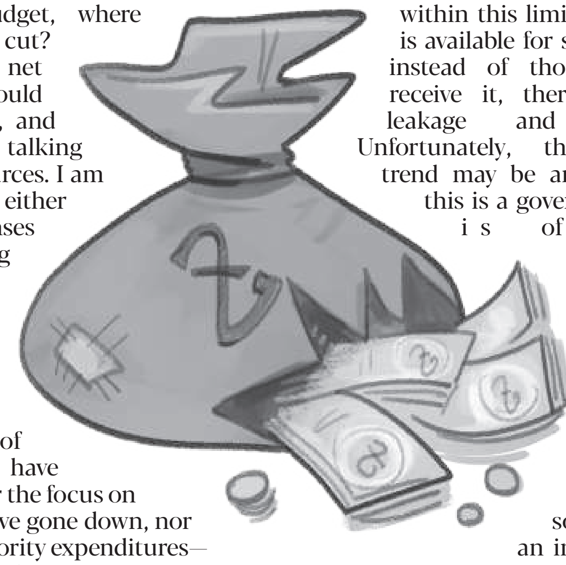
Don't shrink social safety net even during austerity

Hossain Zillur Rahman
is an economist and political sociologist, and executive chairman of Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC).

HOSSAIN ZILLUR RAHMAN

Once again, there is an issue about the accuracy of the social safety net portfolio accounting. Here, items like civil servants' pensions have been included, which inflate the social protection portfolio more than what it actually is. This misleading accounting problem should be resolved.

Second, we are in a tight budget environment, in which the distributional issue is very important. Who should receive the load of the tight budget? The general people, or those who can bear the load more? Or should efficiency improvement be the goal, which means reducing the allocation from inefficient or relatively less prioritised expenditure items so that we can allocate more for the general population?



When I am deciding to reduce the budget, where shall I make the cut? Social safety net allocation should not be reduced, and here I am not talking about new resources. I am talking about either cutting expenses or making insignificant expansion. Where would that amount come from? Even in this period of austerity, we have seen that neither the focus on megaprojects have gone down, nor have the non-priority expenditures—such as cars for district commissioners—been curtailed.

So, in the decision about on whom the austerity burden should be imposed, if the size of the social safety net allocation does not increase, or decreases, it is saying that the government is either inattentive or going against the interest of the general people.

Third, a review of the social safety net portfolio is necessary. Not just taking out pension, there are many items that can be re-prioritised with the idea that there are two large missing groups in the current portfolio. One of them is the urban poor, who are inadequately addressed. The other is marginal and excluded population groups. I call them poverty's third frontier because they are like an excluded group within the extreme poor, like tea workers, fishermen, municipal workers, etc. There is an opportunity to increase the allocation for this group. So, when the budget is tight, you can make sure that distributional efficiency is ensured for the people, which does not seem to be happening here. The other thing you can do is ensure efficiency in the reforms. That way, the urgent groups who are left out can get the allocation.

Then there is mistargeting. Even within this limited amount that is available for social protection, instead of those who should receive it, there is significant leakage and mistargeting. Unfortunately, the mistargeting trend may be an upward trend; this is a governance issue and is of great concern. In recent times, due to governance shortfall, this mistargeting rate may have gone up. This needs to be looked into.

Finally, the social safety net is an important sector, particularly for the poor people. No matter how tight the budget is, the social safety net sector has to be given its due importance, which means the government needs to stop misleading the accounting, improve efficiency, reduce mistargeting, and address the unaddressed groups.

As told to Tamanna Khan of The Daily Star.

The direction of the budget is correct

Dr Ashikur Rahman
is principal economist at the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI).

ASHIKUR RAHMAN

If we start from the beginning, the inflation rate was triggered by a sharp decline in the exchange rate depreciation in 2022. This happened because the current account experienced a deficit of more than $30 billion. Moreover, had we supported the taka and mitigated the growing import pressure through a decisive hike in interest rate, the depreciation would not have been as strong. This was then complemented by energy price adjustments. Exchange rate depreciation and energy price adjustments were the first two triggers for the inflationary spike.

Till date, inflation is around 10 percent, which is still much lower compared to countries like Pakistan and Turkey. However, we must remain very cautious about not letting inflation run wild. Interest rates must be kept high, the central bank cannot undertake financing of the budget, and easy money under a 8.5 percent policy rate cannot be given to commercial banks. High powered money creation cannot become a routine phenomenon.

The policymakers have identified the three key problems facing the economy. The first problem is inflation, the second problem is we have lost around $20 billion of forex reserves over the last 24 months, and therefore we have to take measures to stabilise our balance of payments. The third is that we don't want to increase the debt burden through any expansionary fiscal policy. In the last budget, our Annual Development Programme (ADP) was around Tk 2 lakh crore, and it was totally financed through international and domestic borrowing. Our entire revenue is exhausted by the wage bill, subsidy bill, and interest payments. This basically means that every penny we spend in our development budget is a penny that we have borrowed. To address these three issues, this budget needed a correct strategic shift, and had to prioritise contractionary demand management.

On the whole, we needed this budget to prioritise economic stabilisation over economic growth. In other words, attention had to be paid to inflation, balance of payment, domestic resource mobilisation, cutting down expenditure, increasing the role of government revenue in financing development and reducing borrowing from the private sector to finance the budget. The government had to target inflation, forex reserve management, and managing the growing debt burden to stabilise the economy over the next 12-16 months.

It is promising that the budget deficit has been kept at 4.6 percent. It is the lowest budget deficit in 10 years, so that is indicative of a contractionary fiscal policy that supports the contractionary monetary policy of the central bank. The broad strategic direction is correct.

One point of concern is that the proposed budget outlines borrowing Tk 1,37,500 crore from the domestic banking sector. With the projected deposit growth of Tk 1,60,000 crore in the banking sector, a structural obligation of borrowing such a large sum may drive the Bangladesh Bank to step into budget financing, which will not be desirable.

Moreover, the proposed social security spending is 17 percent of the budget, which could have been higher. When interest rates are raised, when public expenditure is reduced, then under a high inflationary climate, poor people or people living on a fixed income must be supported.

The fundamental challenge facing policymakers in implementing a contractionary budget will be patience. The central bank has been of late somewhat aggressive in trying to bring down inflation, but inflation is stubborn. Even after a lot of measures, inflation could still not be brought down to the seven percent threshold. The political challenge of trying to stabilise the economy is that the benefits come in the medium run, but the costs are incurred in the short run. In the short run, people feel the tighter budget, people feel the pain of a higher interest rate regime, but when the economy ultimately stabilises over a year, growth will bounce back, and people will also experience and see the broader benefits of the stabilisation policies undertaken.

As told to Azmin Azran of The Daily Star.

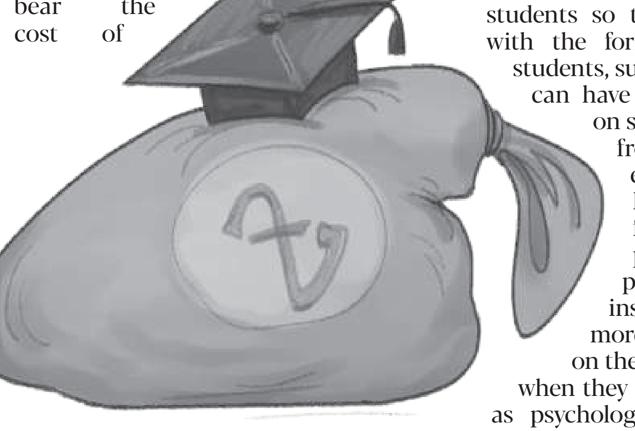
Invest more in the new curriculum

Prof Siddiqur Rahman
is former director of the Institute of Education and Research at the University of Dhaka.

SIDDIQUR RAHMAN

I am not a proponent of a sudden increase in education spending. Rather, I believe it is more viable to opt for an incremental increase over several years. A high increase in the amount allocated to education will result in a mismanagement of spending as there is a lack of capacity in the concerned bodies; it will not be productive.

It is important to know where to spend the money, as the same increase cannot happen across every part of the education sector. The new curriculum emphasises experiential learning. Hence, there needs to be greater spending on "learning by doing" instead of the typical rote memorisation. In addition, we must also pay attention to classroom size. A class should not have 60-70 students, but rather approximately 25 students. The solution is, of course, to increase not only the number of classrooms, but teachers too. It is imperative that we work on training teachers well, pay them a higher salary, and provide them with more opportunities. Many issues continue to exist in this aspect. Even when teachers are trained, many are unable to implement it in the classroom. We need capable teachers.



As for the new curriculum, its focus on experiential learning may mean there is a greater need for spending on educational resources. This may have to be covered by parents, the school, or the government. In the case of students in rural areas, it may often be difficult for parents to bear the cost of educational supplies.

Attention must also be paid to the recent spate of heatwaves across the nation. While there seems to be greater emphasis on physical facilities, we need to also consider the health of students. If the health services are poor, students will suffer and their performance and learning will be hampered. If not an AC, then at the very least fans should be ensured in every school. It could also be that schools have health screenings so that if there is a minor issue, the medical professional in school may treat it, while if it is a major issue, the school can refer the student to a medical institution with the capacity for treatment. However, with the high number of students, this can be difficult to accomplish.

Lastly, the matter of mental health must be considered, particularly considering its link to student suicides. There should be teacher-student rapport, and not a fearful relationship. Teachers should foster a close relationship with students so the latter feel comfortable with the former. Harsh treatment of students, such as corporal punishment, can have highly detrimental effects on students, discouraging them from coming to school and even making them associate learning itself with negative feelings. While some may propose having a school psychologist in every institution, it may be much more feasible to train teachers on the subject of child psychology when they are receiving their training, as psychologists may not be able to sufficiently pay attention to the high number of students and their needs in the appropriate way.

Increasing the allocations for education and health remains vital, as they impact the human capacity of the nation.

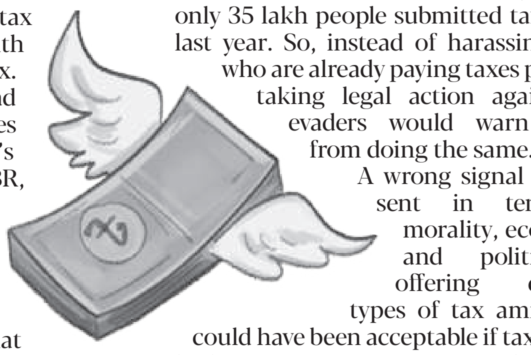
As told to Aliza Rahman of The Daily Star.

Offering tax amnesty sends a wrong signal

Dr Mustafizur Rahman
is distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN

The tax structure in Bangladesh is very much dependent on indirect taxes. This ends up weighing heavily on regular consumers. Especially at a time when income, wealth and asset disparity is increasing, this reliance on indirect tax increases the gap further. What we need is to increase our reliance on direct taxes. The disparity in income in the first stage will come down after tax is imposed so that people with higher income pay higher tax.



In the new budget, we had hoped to see some initiatives about increasing NBR's powers, digitalisation of NBR, and tagging expenditure with income. The highest tax slab has been raised to 30 percent again from 25 percent. This is a positive step. This will ensure that later on if the wealth surcharge taxes are implemented, even if the rate doesn't increase, the surcharge collection will increase. These are the things that we should focus on.

Bank defaulters or tax evaders receive amnesty and benefits to whiten black money. So, the focus in the new budget should have been on bringing them back under the tax system, instead of giving them an opportunity to legalise their undeclared money by paying a lower tax rate.

One way of increasing the tax collections is to increase the rate of taxation. The other is to increase the tax base. Then there are also those who are evading tax. The NBR chairman himself has said during a presentation that around one crore people should be under the tax bracket, whereas only 35 lakh people submitted tax return last year. So, instead of harassing those who are already paying taxes properly, taking legal action against tax evaders would warn others from doing the same.

A wrong signal is being sent in terms of morality, economics and politics by offering different types of tax amnesty. It could have been acceptable if tax evaders had to pay a 7-10 percent penalty on top of their tax amount. It is not acceptable that taxpayers on the highest tax bracket should pay 30 percent of income tax, but those who don't pay tax at all can hide their money and then pay a 15 percent tax to legalise their money.

As told to Monorom Polok of The Daily Star.

VISUALS: **REHNUMA PROSHOON**

FULL VERSIONS OF THESE COMMENTS ARE AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE

Star
SPORT
DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 8, 2024, JAISHTHA 25, 1431 BS

"The audiences will have expectations, and they want us to play good cricket. We want to show Bangladesh people how well we can perform."

Bangladesh captain
Najmul Hossain Shanto

Sri Lanka complain to ICC

AFP, *Colombo*

Sri Lanka said Friday they have complained to the International Cricket Council over their T20 World Cup team's treatment and conditions in co-host the United States.

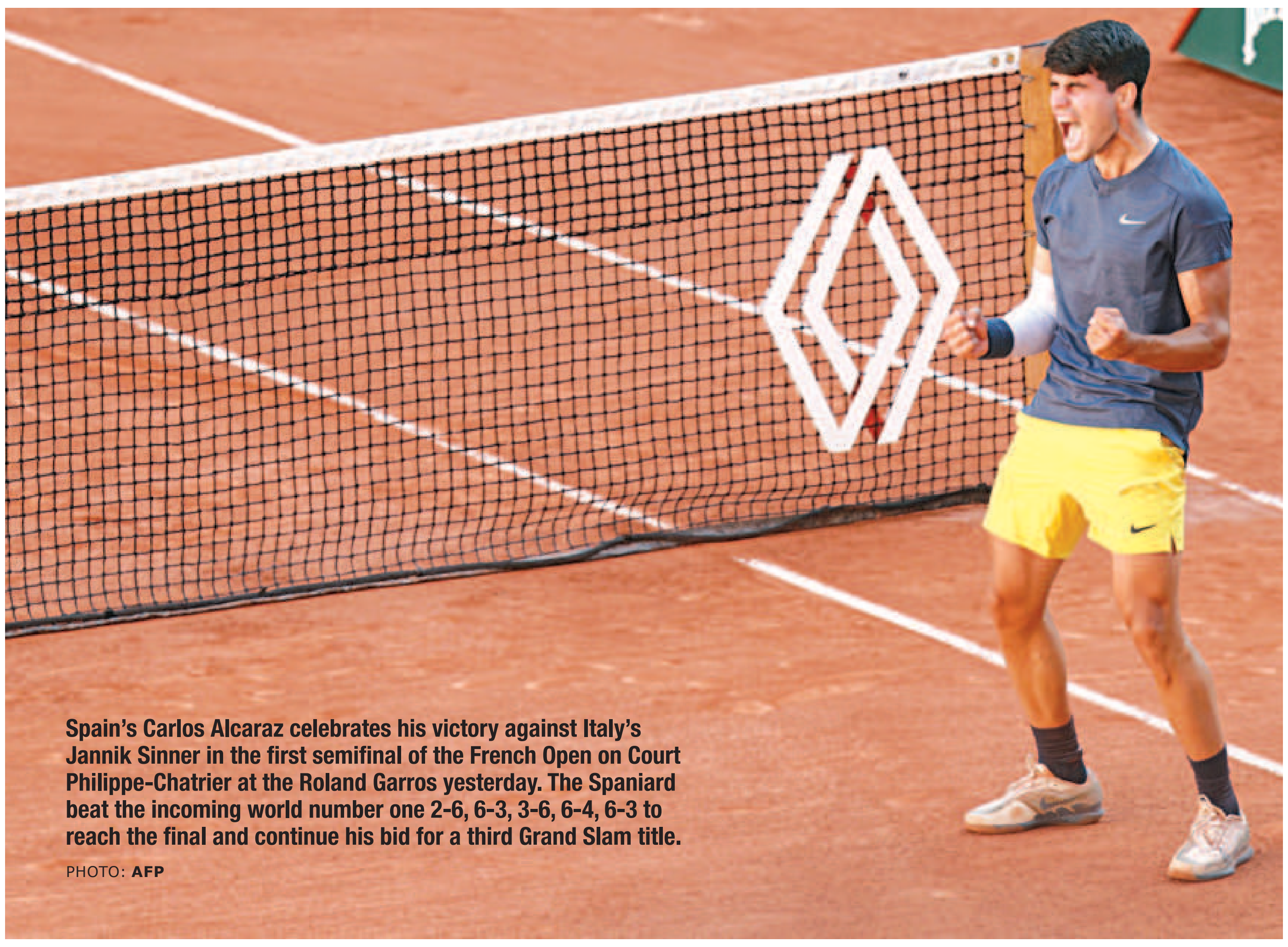
The sports minister Harin Fernando alleged other teams had it better and said Sri Lanka had lodged a formal protest after the squad was held up by a seven-hour flight delay at a Florida airport.

He said Sri Lanka had also been given accommodation more than 90 minutes' drive from the practice stadium when they reached New York. He said India's team had been put up much closer.

Sri Lanka lost to South Africa by six wickets in their opening match on Monday in New York.

"Sri Lanka Cricket has complained to the ICC," Fernando told parliament.

"Different countries are being treated differently. We have called for an explanation from the organisers of the tournament."



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz celebrates his victory against Italy's Jannik Sinner in the first semifinal of the French Open on Court Philippe-Chatrier at the Roland Garros yesterday. The Spaniard beat the incoming world number one 2-6, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 to reach the final and continue his bid for a third Grand Slam title.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Paris hangs Olympic rings on Eiffel Tower

AFP, *Paris*

As the countdown to the Olympics passed the 50-day mark, Paris hoisted its rings on the Eiffel Tower overnight and showed them off on Friday morning.

Workers assembled the prefabricated steel rings and after dark on Thursday lifted the logo, weighing 30 tonnes and 29 metres long, into place between two legs of the tower just above its first level.

Pierre Engel, an engineer at ArcelorMittal, the steel company that manufactured the rings from recycled material, said tests and studies had been carried out for many months to ensure the success of the operation.

The rings, each nine metres in diameter, will be illuminated every night.

"It will be one of the images of the Games," predicted Thierry Reboul, Director of Events and Ceremonies at the Paris Organising Committee for the Olympic Games.

Only two other buildings in Paris have the five rings attached to their facades.

Earlier in the week, the rings were also hoisted at the Paris La Defense Arena, in suburban Nanterre, where the Olympic and Paralympic swimming events will be held.

Old foes set for pivotal clash

AGENCIES

Two of cricket's greatest rivals, England and Australia, are set to produce a high-octane encounter in today's ICC Men's T20 World Cup fixture at the Kensington Oval in Barbados.

This Group B clash carries immense significance, particularly for the defending champions England, who find themselves in a tricky situation following their opening game washout against Scotland.

In contrast, Australia secured a comfortable 39-run victory in their campaign opener against Oman, placing them in a more favourable position. But the men in yellow had to largely depend on an all-round exploits from Marcus Stoinis.

Former England spinner Graeme Swann has labelled the match as a "must win" for England after their disappointing show against Scotland, where England's inability to take a wicket and the sloppy fielding during the rain-affected game has raised concerns as George Munsey and Michael Jones capitalised on England's lapses before piling up 90 runs in 10 overs.

"I do think it puts the next game against Australia as a must win. They need to go with a very aggressive attitude and take them on. If they go at them hard, they can win," Swann stated.

Swann, however, remains optimistic about England's prospects, but he acknowledges the urgency of the situation. Despite the hiccups, he believes England have the potential to clinch back-to-back T20 World Cup titles.

"I think on paper we are as strong a team as anybody, and Australia are the team to beat," Swann remarked.

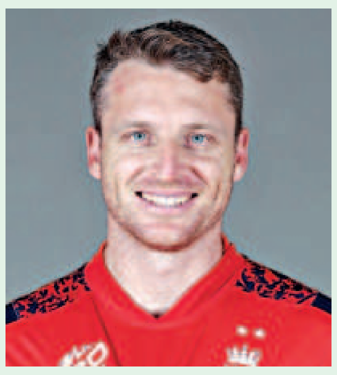
England head coach Matthew Mott is also focused on the upcoming showdown, emphasising its significance following the no result against Scotland.

"I definitely think Australia is a big game... and then depending on how we go there, we reset and go again," Mott commented.

For England, a loss to Australia would severely dent their hopes of advancing, especially after Scotland's victory over Namibia. This scenario could potentially bring run-rate into the equation later in determining the second team to advance from the group.

Both teams are aware of the stakes. England must execute their aggressive playing style and utilise depth in both batting and bowling to overcome a formidable Australian side. For the 2021 champions Australia, on the other hand, continuing their winning momentum could pave the way for a historic treble, having already secured the World Test Championship and last year's ODI World Cup.

As the tournament, still in its early days, gears up to reach fever pitch, this England-Australia face-off promises to deliver drama and high-quality cricket, keeping fans on the edge of their seats.



- England edge Australia in head-to-head records in T20Is with 11 wins to their names against Australia's 10 in 23 encounters overall. Two matches between the sides produced no results.
- England also boast a slender 2-1 lead over Australia in T20 World Cups, with wins in 2010 and 2021 editions. In the last five T20I meetings, England have won three and lost one against their arch-rivals, with the other match ending in a no result.
- Australia have a better record at the Kensington Oval in Barbados, the venue for the showdown, as they won four of their seven T20Is there while England have a 50 percent win record at the venue having won six of their 12 matches.
- In 28 T20Is at the venue, teams batting first have come out on top on 19 occasions in contrast to the nine wins by teams chasing.

South Africa look to overcome Dutch past

SPORTS REPORTER

South Africa will look to build on their dominant victory against Sri Lanka in the T20 World Cup on Monday but face a tricky opposition in the Netherlands against whom the Proteas suffered a memorable upset in the 2022 edition of the tournament.

The Proteas bundled out the Lankans for 77 at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York and after a few hiccups got across the line eventually.

At the same venue today, Aiden Markram's side will be wary of the Dutch courage that was the death of the Proteas in that Super 12 encounter in 2022.

The defeat eventually knocked the Proteas out of the tournament.

The Dutch will also come into the contest with the confidence of a win as they beat Nepal in their opening fixture on Tuesday.

However, the Dutch will undoubtedly be aware of the fact that they would need to up their game to rattle a star-studded South Africa.

In T20Is, the two sides have only ever met in T20 World Cups and are even on head-to-head records.

The Proteas won the first meeting in the 2014 edition and the Dutch stunned them in the second in Australia.

Southgate wants England to refocus

AFP, *London*

Gareth Southgate has urged his England players to refocus after he dropped Jack Grealish, James Maddison and Harry Maguire from his Euro 2024 squad.

Southgate believes his group now need to come together after an emotional day as they start to focus on their bid to win a first major trophy since the 1966 World Cup.

"I didn't want to keep the players waiting until Friday. I think that would have been a mess, really," Southgate told the BBC.

"It wouldn't have been fair on the players that we've released, wouldn't have been fair on the players that were waiting to have confirmation that they were in.

"Inevitably, we knew when we named a 33 there would be a period of a nice prep camp, and then there was going to be a couple of days where there would be a lot of anxiety and a difficult couple of days for us all.

"But we'll close that down later tonight and now tomorrow everybody's heads are clear."

England play Iceland at Wembley on Friday in their last warm-up before the Euros.

Paolini stands in way of treble-chasing Swiatek

AFP, *Paris*

Iga Swiatek goes into Saturday's French Open final as the overwhelming favourite in her quest for a third successive Roland Garros title against surprise challenger Jasmine Paolini of Italy.

Swiatek, the world number one from Poland, is attempting to become the fourth woman in the Open era to lift the Coupe Suzanne Lenglen four times -- after Justine Henin, Chris Evert and Steffi Graf.

Only two have won the French Open three years in a row -- Henin (2005-07) and Monica Seles (1990-92) -- but Swiatek's supremacy on the clay in Paris has attracted comparisons with Rafael Nadal, winner of 14 men's titles and who holds a 112-4 record at Roland Garros.

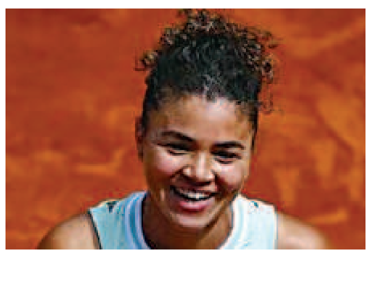
"We'll see in 14 years if the journey is similar. That's obviously really nice for me," said Swiatek.

"I would never expect anybody to compare me to Rafa because for me he's above everybody, and he's a total legend."

The 23-year-old Swiatek has won all four of her previous Grand Slam finals and will bid to extend that run against Paolini.

Swiatek has won both her previous meetings with 12th seed Paolini, although the last of those was at the 2022 US Open and the Italian is enjoying by far the best year of her career.

Paolini, 28, will be appearing in her first Grand Slam final after defeating Russian 17-year-old sensation Mirra Andreeva in the last four. That came after she knocked out former Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina, the only player to beat Swiatek on clay this season.



It is an astonishing transformation for a player who had never gone beyond the second round of a major before the start of this year.

The world number 15 had won a total of four matches in 16 Grand Slam appearances before advancing to the fourth round of the Australian Open in January.

Now she is one win away from an improbable title as she tries to emulate compatriot Francesca Schiavone, who won the 2010 French Open. Paolini's doubles partner Sara Errani lost the 2012 final to Maria Sharapova.

Paolini is the first Italian woman through to a Grand Slam final since Flavia Pennetta beat Roberta Vinci to win the 2015 US Open.

"I was watching the other Italians make it in the finals, and also won Grand Slams, but (to) imagine that can be myself was tough," said Paolini.

"Of course, I wished, but now it's something crazy for me. I'm really happy. Also surprised. I never dreamed to be, you know, number one, Grand Slam champion. Never dreamed so big. Never," she added.

The question before the tournament was whether anyone could stop Swiatek, who arrived in Paris having won titles in Madrid and Rome.

Her last defeat in Paris came to Maria Sakkari in the 2021 quarter-finals. Swiatek's only other loss here was in the fourth round of her French Open debut in 2019.

She takes nothing for granted and is trying to just focus on delivering another accomplished performance.

"Sometimes, yeah, it's hard not to see what's at stake and what the atmosphere is around these matches. So still I'm not used to it. It's not the routine."

It's certainly uncharted territory for Paolini, who this time last year was playing a WTA 125 event, below the top tier, in Croatia.

The biggest moment of her career now lies before her, with the toughest current assignment in women's tennis standing between her and French Open glory.

Bangladesh football team captain jamal Bhuiyan posted this photo on his official Facebook page yesterday of him sitting beside Sheikh Morsalin as the team flew to Qatar to play against Lebanon on June 11 following their 2-0 defeat against Australia at home in the penultimate World Cup Qualifiers fixture on Thursday. PHOTO: **FACEBOOK**

Star
SPORT
DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 8, 2024, JAISHTHA 25, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV AND STAR SPORTS 1,2,3
T20 World Cup
Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh
Live from 6:30 am
Netherlands vs South Africa
Live from 8:30 pm
Australia vs England
Live from 11:00 pm

SONY SPORTS 2,3,5
French Open
Women's Singles Final

In the T20 World Cup month, kabaddi and football garnered attention with Bangladesh retaining the Bangabandhu Cup International Kabaddi title, where Arduzzaman Munshi called time on his career, and the women's football team losing 1-0 to Chinese Taipei in a friendly where Sabina Khatun was sidelined. To learn more about their individual and collective state, The Daily Star caught up with the two stalwarts.

'I have come this far overcoming challenges'

Bangladesh women's national football team's new coach Peter Butler recently benched captain Sabina Khatun in the second match against Chinese Taipei, later saying that he wants to give younger players more chance and use Sabina as an impact player more in future. Does this push the veteran forward towards the end of her international career? In an interview with The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman, Sabina spoke about this issue and the experience of the two matches as well as the upcoming SAFF Women's Championship. The excerpts of the interview are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): Before the FIFA friendly matches against Chinese Taipei, you said that Bangladesh would understand their position in world football playing against such a strong team. What is your assessment after these two matches?

Sabina Khatun (SK): I think the result of the first match would not have been that bad if we played in the formation that we are used to playing. In the second match, the coach realised this and the girls played better.

DS: What have the team learned from the matches?
SK: The experience was that the girls who usually play the first half well also performed well in the second half. So the overall tempo has improved. Another thing that happened was we did not give up fight too early.

DS: What does Peter Butler want from the team and how much expectation have the team fulfilled?
SK: The new coach likes to play different formations. He tries to play high-line defence even though we used to play mid-line defence earlier. Every coach has a different philosophy which we all accept and respect. Every player also wants to present themselves the way the coach desires. The girls are trying to give 120 percent to learn things. I think the coach should talk to the girls to discuss which system they prefer and how they can do better.

DS: How do you evaluate the junior players, especially those who came into the senior fold from the under-19 squad?
SK: As they are coming through different age-level teams where they have already played age-level international matches, they did not perform badly.

DS: Butler said that he wants to create a competitive environment in the camp. How do you see this?
SK: Every coach has told us the same thing. The coaches motivate the girls in different ways. The girls are ready to take the challenge of a competitive environment.

DS: The coach dropped some senior players from the starting eleven of the second match including you. How do you see this?
SK: I think the coach wanted to see new players in the second match and he did it.

DS: Do you think you are heading towards the end of your international career or can Sabina serve the nation for a few more years?
SK: Time will tell. Actually, I have come this far overcoming challenges. In my 14-year career, I have always had to give extra effort. I had to compete against younger players and I always pushed myself to secure my place. I could not have served the nation for so long had I not pushed myself the way I did.

DS: What type of preparation do you think Bangladesh need ahead of October's SAFF Women's Championship?
SK: I think it is really necessary to shift the camp elsewhere (from the BFF dormitory) because too many girls are staying there. A new environment may help the girls focus more on training, similar to the men's training camps. We don't need five-star hotel accommodation, but an open and relaxed environment should be good and it can be either at home or abroad.

DS: Do you believe Bangladesh can defend the title?
SK: Retaining the title depends on our preparation and training. We need to play at least four tough matches – one match each month ahead of the tournament – against superior opponents. Only then can we hope to defend the title.

A.BANGLADESH
THAILAND
10

'We need a tournament like Pro Kabaddi League'

Country's star kabaddi player Arduzzaman Munshi bid adieu to the game after leading Bangladesh to their fourth title in the Bangabandhu Cup International Kabaddi on June 3 in Dhaka. The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman spoke with the Bangladesh Navy player about the ups and downs of his illustrious career and what steps need to be taken to improve the state of the game in the country. The excerpts are given below:

The Daily Star (DS): You ended your career in grand fashion. How did it feel?
Arduzzaman Munshi (AM): I never thought that my retirement would be so grand and memorable. I also did not expect that Bangladesh would win the trophy under my captaincy and I would be the best player of the tournament. It really can't be expressed in words.

When I decided that I would retire, I did not feel anything special about it. But the emotions became almost unbearable as the final approached. I had a sleepless night before the final, I was thinking that I will not represent Bangladesh any more. At one point I even started crying. I was restless throughout the night. The next morning, many people phoned me to talk about my retirement and the final but I switched off my mobile phone and tried to get some sleep.

DS: You debuted for Bangladesh in 2009. How was the country's kabaddi back then?
AM: Kabaddi was not in a good position as the performances of the players were not good. There also were shortcomings in organizing. In that period, we started returning home empty-handed from international competitions because we could not take enough preparation and did not have proper training facilities. We had to wait for funds from the Bangladesh Olympic Association to start camp ahead of international competitions.

DS: Bangladesh used to regularly win silver at the SA Games and the Asian Games. But now silver has turned elusive...
AM: We won silver medals in Asian Games when countries like Iran, Pakistan were learning kabaddi from us. They improved year by year while we remained stuck. We are still behind them in terms of training and facilities. That's why we are not winning medals anymore.

DS: Ha-du-du, a different format of kabaddi, is played all across the country. Still, there is a dearth of talented players in kabaddi...
AM: Former captain Tuhin Tarafder, Fedous, Monirul and I were ha-du-du players before entering kabaddi. There are still a lot of talented ha-du-du players. When I play ha-du-du matches in rural places, I encourage them to take up kabaddi. But they are unable to because there is no future in kabaddi, no financial benefits. I believe if the federation trains young players and includes them in a pay-scale system or provides them jobs, the interest in kabaddi will grow.

DS: You played at the Pro Kabaddi League in India twice. What are the differences here and there?
AM: There is a gulf of difference. I would have never learnt about modern kabaddi had I not gone there. Why wouldn't they [Indians] play kabaddi? The players of franchise teams are being guided by physios, trainers, coaches and nutritionists. Unfortunately, our coaches can't get the best out of the players because of poor environment.

I think if more players from Bangladesh are allowed to take part in that league, the players will try to improve their performance to get contracts. This will ultimately help the country's kabaddi.

DS: How much can Bangladesh benefit from Bangabandhu Kabaddi where strong teams are not competing?
AM: I don't think that the participants were weaker than Bangladesh. We lost to Nepal in 2017, to Thailand in 2016, Japan in 2010, Korea in 2016 and Sri Lanka in 2016. I have seen new players failing to cope with pressure and break down during international matches due to lack of experience. The benefit of holding this tournament is that players are gaining experience and learning how to manage different match situations. I think it will help new players against bigger teams in the Asian Games and SA Games.

DS: Do you regret not winning any medals in three Asian Games appearances?
AM: Of course, there is regret. In the three Asian Games that I took part in, the teams that won bronze were not superior to us. We got close, but could not win the medal.

DS: How can we improve the country's kabaddi?
AM: First of all, the financial benefits for kabaddi players have to be ensured. I think if the federation takes an initiative to hold a franchise tournament like the India's Pro Kabaddi League, then the new generation will be encouraged to take up kabaddi.

We also must improve the coaches by holding training course or sending them abroad for higher training. I am also interested in coaching and I would love it if the federation gives me the responsibility to train a group of young players by arranging a round-the-year training camp.

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Cut in agri subsidy will hurt farmers

Say experts; allocation reduced by Tk 272cr in proposed budget compared to the current one

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Economists say allocation for the agriculture sector in the new budget is inadequate, and it will not only hurt farmers but may also affect food production.

In the 2024-2025 budget placed at parliament by Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali on Thursday, the allocation for farming and food security is Tk 38,259 crore, which accounts for 4.80 percent of the total.

In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the allocation for farming was 4.97 percent, in the following year, it was 4.71 percent.

In the new budget, the Ministry of Agriculture gets Tk 27,214 crore, up from Tk 25,118 crore in the current fiscal year.

But the subsidy for the agriculture sector in the proposed budget is Tk 17,261 crore, down from Tk 17,533 crore.

Agricultural economist Jahangir Alam said, "Rice production in Bangladesh has grown by just 0.52 percent annually over the last three years, while the population has increased by 1.3 percent.

"When there is not enough investment in the sector, food prices rise. In order to boost grain production, more subsidies for farmers are crucial."

Moreover, fertiliser and oil prices have fallen in the global market, but not in Bangladesh.

"When the Russia-Ukraine war began, fertiliser and oil prices surged. Although the prices fell significantly last year, people in Bangladesh did not benefit from it," he added.

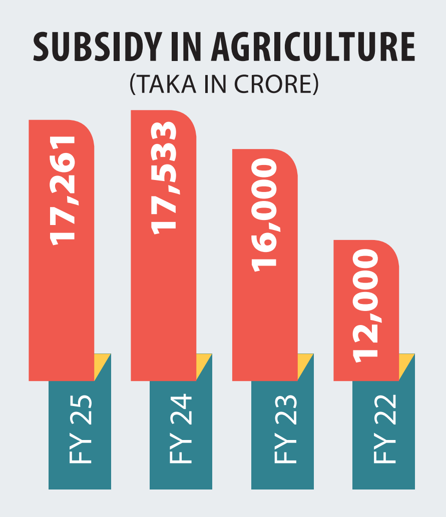
In his speech, Finance Minister Ali said, "Existing incentives to the agriculture sector will be continued since food security is of the highest importance here. We have given the highest priority to the agriculture sector in our budget."

However, many farmers were disappointed by the new budget.

Haider Ali, a 60-year-old farmer in Chapadaha area of Rangpur, said, "Every year, when a budget is announced, I think perhaps the government will support us. But it turns out the government does not really care much about us."

Cultivating the BR-28 variety of paddy on two bighas of land costs him around Tk 30,000, including expenses for fertiliser, seeds, irrigation, planting, and harvesting, he said.

"I get 34 maunds of rice from the land. Currently, the price of each mound is Tk 750. So, my entire harvest sells for Tk 25,500, which is less than what I spend," he added.



SUBSIDY IN AGRICULTURE
(TAKA IN CRORE)

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Canada players celebrate the dismissal of Ireland's Barry McCarthy during their 12-run victory in a Group A fixture of the T20 World Cup at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York yesterday. Batting first, Canada posted 137 for seven before restricting Ireland to 125 for seven.

PHOTO: **AFP**

USA stun cricket world, curious fans

AFP, *Fort Lauderdale*

It was always going to take something big to make Americans pay any attention to cricket and Thursday's stunning victory by the USA over established power Pakistan provided just that moment.

The thrilling Super Over triumph in Dallas by the T20 World Cup debutants over the 2022 finalists and 2009 winners was the biggest upset in the history of the competition.

But while the victory

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Israeli forces batter central, south Gaza

23 more Palestinians killed as offensive enters 9th month

REUTERS, *Cairo*

With no sign of progress in mediators' arduous efforts to broker a ceasefire in the Gaza offensive, Israeli tanks and warplanes blasted central and southern areas of the enclave overnight, killing at least 23 Palestinians, local medics said yesterday.

Qatari and Egyptian mediators backed by the United States, have tried to halt hostilities, secure the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinians jailed in Israel, and get aid flowing into shattered Gaza to ease a humanitarian crisis. But sources close to the talks said there were still no signs of a breakthrough as Israeli offensive in the enclave enters nine months.

Russia and China, which hold veto powers in the UN Security Council, raised concerns on Thursday evening with the US draft resolution that would back a proposal for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

The council's only Arab member, Algeria, also signaled it was not ready to back the text, diplomats said.

In the Gaza Strip, residents said Israeli tanks advanced further west in the embattled southern city of Rafah skirting the border with Egypt amid fierce gunbattles between Israeli troops and Hamas fighters.

Palestinian health officials said two Palestinians were killed and several wounded in western Rafah from tank shelling there. In central Gaza, Palestinians medics said at least 15 people died overnight in Israeli assaults.

Residents said armoured forces

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Jubo League activist shot dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Benapole

Criminals shot dead a Jubo League activist in Jashore Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The deceased, Mohammad Ali, 28, of Bahadurpur village in the same upazila, was a supporter of newly elected upazila chairman Touhid Chakladar Fontu, said locals.

Jashore Sadar upazila

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Palestinian medics rush a person to a hospital in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip following Israeli bombardment yesterday

PHOTO: **AFP**

Dazzling new blue ant species 'neela' found in Himalayas

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have discovered a new blue ant species in India's northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, sparking more interest in the unique biodiversity of this section of the Himalayas.

The rare small ant, named Paraparatrechina neela, reaches a length of less than 2mm and its body is predominantly metallic blue, except for its antennae, mandibles, and legs.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Modi to take oath as India PM tomorrow

President invites him to head new coalition government

AGENCIES

Narendra Modi will take oath as India's Prime Minister for the third successive term tomorrow, as his National Democratic Alliance (NDA) formally presented its claim to the president yesterday to form a government.

World leaders, including Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe and Nepalese PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal, will attend the swearing-in ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Modi, along with NDA leaders, yesterday met President Droupadi Murmu and submitted the claim of the alliance, led by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, to run the world's most populous nation for the next five years, the President's Office said.

"I want to assure the people of the country that in the 18th Lok Sabha (lower house) also...we will work with the same pace, same commitment to fulfil aspirations of the people," Modi told reporters outside the president's palace.

It is the first time in a decade that his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) - which won majorities outright in 2014 and 2019 - has needed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

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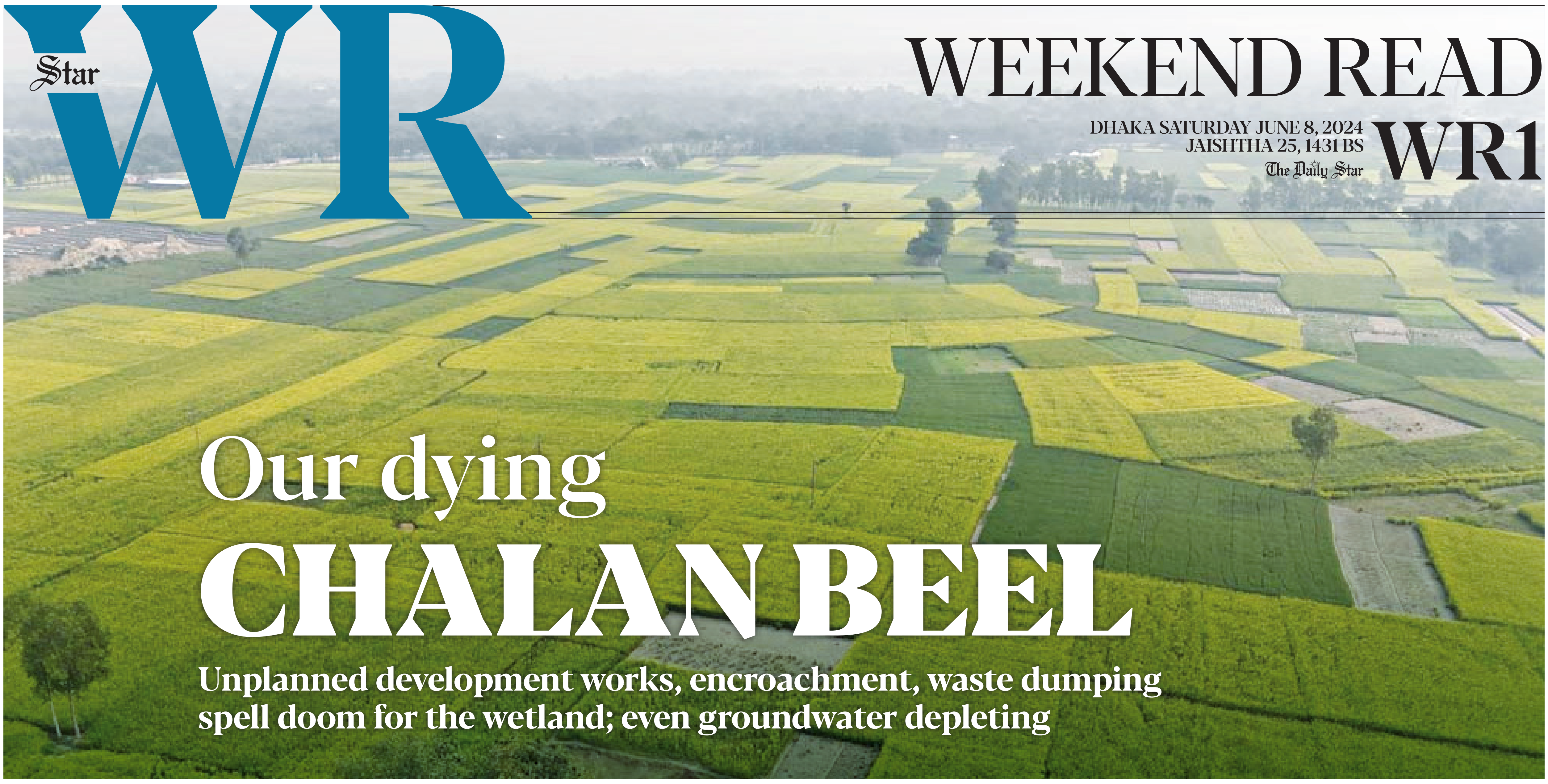
Our dying CHALAN BEEL

Unplanned development works, encroachment, waste dumping spell doom for the wetland; even groundwater depleting



The vast areas of Chalan beel turn into a crop field during the dry season. Thousands of farmers rely on the beel for survival. However, due to unplanned development works, encroachment and dumping of waste, this once pristine waterbody has not only shrunk alarmingly, its groundwater level is also dwindling. The photo was taken in Handial area of the Chalan beel in February.

PHOTO: **STAR**

A dried up Chiknai river in Chalan beel at Chatmohor upazila in Pabna last month.

Due to groundwater depletion, many farmers are struggling to sustain. The photo was taken last month in Mulgram area.

According to a research paper (IOSR journal) of Nahida Sultana and M Nazrul Islam of Rajshahi University, total fish production in Chalan beel has declined by 45 percent from 1982 to 2012. The average production has declined by at least 12.1 percent per year.

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU *and* **MASHFIQ MIZAN**

Imagine vast, shimmering water reflecting a clear blue sky. Boats glide across the surface, carrying villagers through a network of rivers and canals teeming with life. Schools of fish, like silver flashes, dart beneath the water.

Today, that image is a fading memory.

The water, once ever-present, has receded. The sky, now without flocks of white herons, is a harsh reminder of the ecological decline.

This is the story of Chalan beel, spanning over 11 upazilas across Pabna, Rajshahi, Naogaon and Bogura.

A 1909 survey showed the waterbody flowed across 1,085 square kilometers. By 1940, that number had shrunk to 705 square kilometers, a decline of over 35 percent in just three decades.

Now, by government estimates, the waterbody is only limited to 375 sq km.

Private estimations are even bleaker. According to Banglapedia, the current area of Chalan beel is 168 sq km.

On average, the area of the beel is shrinking by 1.83 percent per year.

Experts believe the name "Chalan beel" comes from "Chalanta Beel", meaning "moving" or "flowing beel". The beel's formation is linked to the ever-changing course of the Jamuna river.

Unplanned development works have accelerated its decline.

Silt has accumulated over the extensive network that once fed Chalan beel -- 32 rivers, 93 beels and 26 canals. Meanwhile, encroachment and garbage dumping have gradually killed these waterbodies.

It keeps getting worse.

Even groundwater sources in Chalan beel area have dwindled due to excessive use.

The irony is stark. An area historically defined by its abundance of water is now struggling to retain even its ground water.

So, what happened?

THE CURSE OF DEVELOPMENT

In 1914, after the British government constructed a railway line cutting across Chalan beel from Sirajganj to the Hardinge Bridge, the natural flow of water began to decline.

In 1980, the Baghabari-Tarash flood control embankment severely disrupted its water flow, said environmentalists and locals.

Since then, various development projects have been implemented one after another within the beel.

A review of government development projects from the 1995-96 fiscal year to the 2009-10 fiscal year reveals that in 15 years, 1,188.5 kilometers of paved roads, 113 bridges, 855 culverts, 90 growth centres and 21 sluice gates have been constructed in Chalan beel.

In 2003, the construction of the Nalka-Bonpara highway in Sirajganj also caused severe obstructions to the water flow, said Md Mizanur Rahman, the founder of Chalanbeel Rakhkha Andolan.

The construction of numerous roads around this highway has impeded the beel's water flow in various places, he claimed.

Additionally, the mouths of canals and rivers have been blocked with numerous structures, causing water movement to be hindered and silt to accumulate, rapidly filling up the beel and reducing its depth, said Mizan.

The latest blow to the existence of Chalan beel, one of North Bengal's significant natural diversities, has come from pond excavation. The excavation of ponds has disrupted the natural water flow.

In just 12 years, at least 8,000 to 10,000 ponds have been excavated across the vast expanse of Chalan beel.

DYING RIVERS

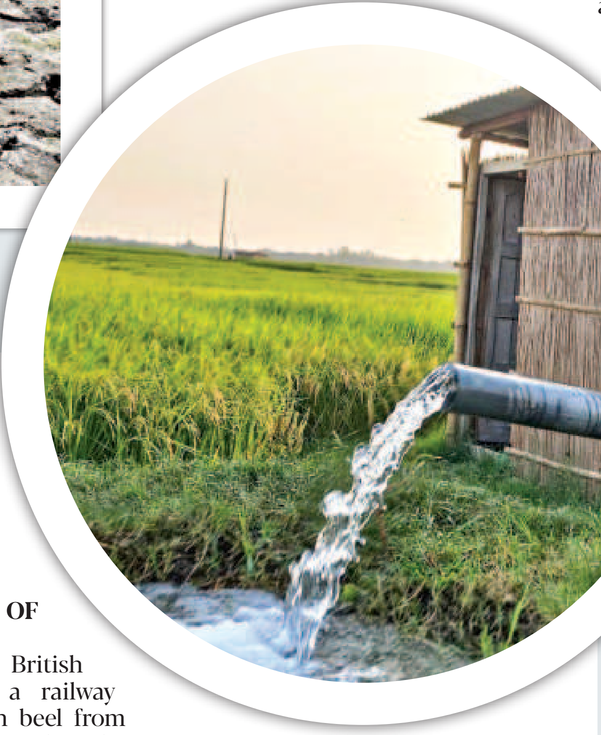
Eight rivers connected to the Chalan beel -- the country's largest wetland spanning across Sirajganj, Natore and Pabna districts -- have nearly been destroyed due to the construction of roads, regulators and sluice gates, according to a report by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon in 2023.

Take the case of the Boral river for example.

A 2018 National River Conservation Commission report said at least 18 kilometres of the river has been lost due to encroachment. The Daily Star ran a report in 2021 detailing how even public entities set up illegal structures on the river land.

The Boral also bears the brunt of mindless garbage dumping and construction of unplanned sluice gates.

Eight municipalities in four districts, along with local industries, dump waste into the river.



Originally, the river was over 500 feet wide, but the construction of narrow sluice gates and dams has reduced the water flow significantly.

In 1985, the construction of a sluice gate at the source of the Boral in Charghat, Rajshahi, resulted in the river losing water flow. Since then, Chalan beel has also started drying up.

A 2018 feasibility study conducted by the water resources ministry recommended removing illegal structures, reconstructing sluice gates, and dredging the river to restore water flow and navigability.

The study also highlighted the need to prevent untreated sewage from being discharged into the river.

According to Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation, most of the 21 rivers in the Pabna, Natore, and Sirajganj sections of the beel are now filled with silt.

It has 71 canals and drains spanning 410 kilometers. Around 66,240 farmers used to get irrigation water from these canals and drains.

Currently, 368 kilometers, or 90.24 percent of these canals and drains are silted up. Efforts are underway to dredge and restore the remaining 42 kilometers to restore navigability, according to officials.

DISAPPEARING FISH SPECIES

In the 1980s, Chalan beel was a thriving habitat for a wide variety of fish species, including rui, katla, mrigal, shol, boal, chitol, koi, pabda, silong, magur, shing, gochi, baim, bata, khashla, nandai, taki, chela, chapila, puti, mola, banshpatari, boumach, bele, deshi chanda, mola, dhela, tengra, kakila, shrimp, and batashi.

However, around 80 species of fish have become extinct. The extensive use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, along with natural changes, has led to the decline of many fish and other eco-friendly species.

Around 52 fishers have left the profession from 1982 to 2006, according to a survey titled "Chalan beel in Bangladesh: Habit, biodiversity degradation and implications for future management".

An additional 19 species of fish are in risk of extinction, the survey added.

In 1982, fish production in Chalan beel was 26,990 tonnes.

This decreased to 24,336 tonnes in 1987, 18,700 tonnes in 1992, 15,421 tonnes in 1997, 12,460 tonnes in 2002 and 12,117 tonnes in 2006.

In 2012, it further dropped to 11,999 tonnes.

According to a research paper (IOSR journal) of Nahida Sultana and M Nazrul Islam of Rajshahi University, total fish production in Chalan beel has declined by 45 percent from 1982 to 2012.

The average production has declined by at least 12.1 percent per year.

The Pabna District Fisheries Office reports that as natural fish production declines, there is a corresponding increase in fish farming in artificially dug ponds.

"A few decades back, we would catch a significant amount of fish by casting nets in the beels or rivers of Chalan beel. There were times when we couldn't even manage to carry all the fish we caught. Nowadays, the natural fish population has declined drastically due to the prevalence of artificial fish farming," said Subal Haldar, a fisherman from Kumargara village of Pabna's Chatmohar upazila.

GROUNDWATER DEPLETION

Farmer Saidur Rahman from Kholishagari beel in Pabna's Chatmohar upazila, started farming back in the 90s. He now finds it difficult to access sufficient water for his fields.

"In the 90s, when I first installed a shallow pump, I could find water at depths of 12 to 13 feet below the ground. But this year, I had to dig down to 32 feet to reach water," Saidur said.

Over the past three decades, the water level has dropped below 20 feet, if not more.

"Currently, I need to operate the mechanical pump for two to three hours to irrigate just one bigha of land whereas a few years ago, one hour was sufficient," Saidur added.

Farmers across Chalan beel echoed him.

Mizanur, founder of Chalanbeel Rakhkha Andolan, said over 7,000 deep tube wells, 100,000 shallow tube wells, and more than 700,000 to 800,000 submersible pumps have been extracting groundwater across the vast Chalan beel region, none of which have been properly installed.

The haphazard installation of pumps and the rampant extraction of groundwater have led to a drastic decline in ground water level.

In Tarash upazila, covering 25,490 hectares of land, crop cultivation depends entirely on 10,190 shallow pumps and 84 deep tube wells, said Md Abdullah Al Mamun, upazila agriculture officer.

SAVE RIVERS, STOP UNPLANNED DEV

According to Dr Md Nazmul Islam, associate professor of Geology at Pabna University of Science and Technology and a researcher, said almost all the major rivers feeding the Chalan beel are in a precarious situation due to encroachment, pollution and unplanned construction of embankments and sluice gates.

Farmers harvesting paddy in Chalan beel at Dharamgar.

"These rivers must be saved to protect Chalan beel," he added.

He also called for bringing installation of subversive pumps under regulation to prevent further depletion of groundwater.

Citing data collected from three weather centers in the Chalan beel region, Nazmul said weather patterns have changed significantly over the past 100 years.

Average rainfall has decreased, while the temperature has risen up.

The fluctuating weather pattern also leads to decreased oxygen levels in the water, affecting fish population, increasing humidity and also damaging crops, he added.

FICTION

STORM CHILD

I remember the sense of disquiet I'd get, looking at random strangers on the road, and how, whenever I told anyone about it, they'd take it incredibly seriously.

SARAZEEN SAIF AHANA

The majority of my early childhood was spent in a big house filled with endless possibilities. At least, that's what my preteen self thought at the time.

Here in South Asia, kids don't generally move out of their parents' home until they have a house of their own, though that's a tradition that's slowly edging out. Anyways, what that means is I lived with my parents, my older sister, my grandparents, three uncles, two aunts, and two cousins. The latter two were both boys, the older being about two years older than my sister, and the younger about a year my junior. We were essentially raised as two sets of twins, and I did not realise my brothers were my "cousins" and not "actual" brothers until I was well into my teens. To us, we were brothers and sisters, and that was that.

The thing you need to know about my family is that we're bat-sh*t crazy. It was a house full of overly-emotional, excitable, very noisy, and very loving people, and we kids grew up loved and pampered, but not spoiled. The first thing we were taught was respect, and it's a lesson I retain to this day. My world was one of hugs and being sneakily handed treats by winking aunts so my mother didn't see.

It was idyllic.

I didn't realise until last year that it was not as perfect as I remembered. There were hints of something darker, especially concerning me, that my preteen mind either didn't notice or just ignored.

Like how there was a room in the south-west corner of the big house that no one was allowed to enter, and how no one ever told me what was in there. I'd overhear snatches of conversation about "*that* room" at times, but those conversations always cut off whenever they saw me. I never tried to sneak in, because that would be disrespectful, and over time, my curiosity faded.

There were other odd aspects of life in that place, too.

Like the time I bounced past my youngest uncle's room (on a yoga ball, of all things), and I thought he must have invited at least 50 people over because of all the voices. When I bounced in, ready to be cuddled and made a fuss over by the guests, I found the room empty, and my uncle fast asleep.

I prodded him awake. "Where are your friends?"

"At home...?" he said groggily. "What're you talking about, you under-sized elf?" He reached over with a half-asleep arm and mussed my hair.

I giggled. "But they were *here*! I just heard them!"

"I thought *I* was the one asleep."

And I squealed as he grabbed me, and I fell asleep in the crook of his arm, tucked safe and warm. He smelled like ice cream. I woke up to my mom calling everyone to dinner and was vaguely surprised to find the blankets I'd burrowed under replaced with musty old curtains I'd never seen before. They smelled like foetid meat.

"Sarah! Get your plate before your brothers eat the whole fridge."

"Coming, Mommy! And someone please tell Uncle Sam to change his curtains. They're *ew*!"

But everyone was too busy with the food, and I only mentioned the curtains in passing.

I told my eldest aunt to get me better toys on my birthday when I found a rubber snake in the formal sitting room. A toy that I now realise was too thick and skin-like to be a toy. It was striped yellowish-orange and black, and the end was oozing blood, with bits of flesh still attached. It was too morbid, especially with what looked like a tooth stuck on the bloody end. I was too young to pay attention to the news, but I remember my father and my eldest uncle discussing a break-in at the local zoo.

I remember, when I was about eight, I saw two kids push another one down the stairs at school. He bounced all the way down, and when he finally stopped at the landing, his neck was bent at a strange angle, with blood gushing from the place in his throat where something white was poking out.

I ran, crying, to my favourite teacher, and I led her to the stairs. There was nothing there, not even the blood. When she very gently asked me about all three of the children, my descriptions matched none of the students enrolled in that school. I sat in the principal's office, shaking, and she sat with me, holding me close until my mother came to get me.

At home, I found the kid in my room, his neck still broken, holding my favourite teddy.

I asked him if he was okay, but he said nothing. His eyes were hauntingly empty. I heard someone laugh in the other room, but when I looked back, he was gone.

My teddy's neck was twisted around, and not even my grandmother could fix it. She had to get me a new one.

I remember the smoke that I saw sometimes, seeping under the locked door of that forbidden room, thick and oily.

I remember the sense of disquiet I'd get, looking at random strangers on the road, and how, whenever I told anyone about it, they'd take it incredibly seriously.

I remember feeling that way about an old friend of my grandfather's, and how, after I told Grandda about it, he flew into a rage and threw him out of the house. One of my uncles told me a few years ago that, a couple of weeks after that, the man was arrested for filming child pornography.

My early childhood was not idyllic at all. Not even remotely. It's just that my entire family worked so hard to give me good memories that I eventually forgot the strange ones.

Until last year.

I was eleven years old when my parents purchased a big, beautiful apartment in a newer part of the city, and we moved out. My new home felt strange to me, with no rambling uncles and aunts, and none of my brothers with me. It was lonely. My grandfather died about a year after that, an event that none of us ever really recovered from.

After Grandda's death, the family sort of unwound. My uncles and their families eventually moved out of the big house until it was just Gramma living there. We'd all gather every few weeks for dinner and a family movie night, but it wasn't the same.

As time went by, those odd memories of mine faded, and my brothers and sister grew up. The two sets of twins were not twins anymore, but two brothers and two sisters, and, eventually, we became cousins. We were still close, but not like before. I guess that happens as time goes by, but it's still sad.

And then, last year, Gramma called me. That, in itself, was nothing special, but she didn't sound right to me.

"Darling, can you come to see me this weekend?"

I had plans with a bunch of my friends, but this was *Gramma*. She is important. "Sure. What time? And what're you cooking for me?"

She laughed. "Anything you want, my love. Do you still like candy? I have a bunch left."

"I'm 25, Gramma."

"So? I'm almost 90, and I still like candy."

"That's why you barely have any teeth left," I teased her.

"Life's too short for teeth. Can you come over after breakfast?"

"I can't wait. Love you to bits!"

"I love you more, sweetheart."

Gramma is the most beautiful woman in the entire world. Yes, she's old and stooped and her skin is wrinkled, but she's beautiful. She has the brightest smile I've ever seen, and she's tough as old roots. She's probably smarter than my entire group of friends put together. Half of my poetry is inspired by her. That morning, she looked like none of it. She did not look bright or tough or smart. She looked old and weary and slightly scared.

She smiled and hugged me, but there was no heart in it. It was not a Gramma-hug at all. Not remotely.

I knew something was wrong, and I knew it was big. I tried to lead her inside because I didn't want her to be cold, but she shook her head, and we sat on the old swing by the porch.

"Tell me," I said.

She did not speak for a long time, and I did not urge her. She'd tell me when she was ready. And she did. And it was a story like none I could ever have expected.

This is part one of "Storm Child", to be serialised here on Star Literature.

Sarazeen Saif Ahana *is an adjunct member of the faculty at Independent University, Bangladesh where she teaches English and has a small cult of friends similarly obsessed with genre fiction.*

POETRY

Raw Magnolias

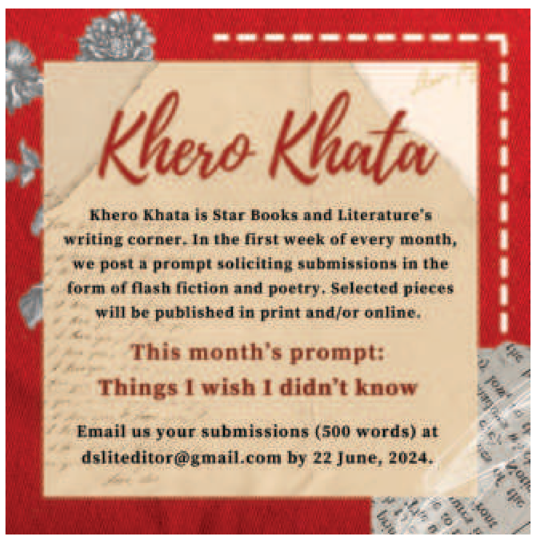
SNATA BASU

This is a garden, these are my petals; this is my armoring plant
that harbours the first light. Birthing river, are you ready to give to the world?
Are you ready to dawn my beloved auroras? To break my darling things—
evil-eyed and crouched against the cold respite?
What can I say about being a woman? There is nothing much I can say.
In a cup pin-floats your passive nescience; my resistance,
ready to arm itself, coils against the ripples
of a mighty hot earth, pulped like barbed wire
that's easy to bloom, quick to swallow...difficult to crack.
Here in this deity-womb climbs shoddy water,
fighting dislocations of the body—this body that is a temple,
a malady, a ground of battling pilgrims.
This body is disarmed and gentler than all that has ever happened to it.
Lunar dust that's blocked against the light patter of the rain
bears this body that is fleshed into something human,
so that one day you might understand
what a mother's labour has prized, what her blood has given.
This body that has loved and forgiven, disfigured by a thousand
cruelties, asks to flower like a bare sea.
All it asks is to be left alone, to be freed
remorseless into a grave of everyone it had had to be.

ILLUSTRATION: **MAISHA SYEDA**

What is there to say about being a woman? Now, there is that question.
Will you allow me a final hour to heap up
all the bodies, disclaimed and given up to cerebrate
on these trifling convictions hollowed to the bone?
Not much to say about being a woman,
but while the shell cracks open, would you peer inside:
in it, raw magnolias—dispetaling like Venus in a drought;
scraps crocheting into a blooming Moon-God.

Snata Basu *is an aspiring poet from Dhaka, Bangladesh. Her work mostly centres on passionate, personal bindings. She is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature at North South University.*



Khero Khata

Khero Khata is Star Books and Literature's writing corner. In the first week of every month, we post a prompt soliciting submissions in the form of flash fiction and poetry. Selected pieces will be published in print and/or online.

This month's prompt:
Things I wish I didn't know

Email us your submissions (500 words) at dsliteditor@gmail.com by 22 June, 2024.

ILLUSTRATION: **MAISHA SYEDA**

POETRY

burnt honey

MARISSA MANAL WAIZ

the terracotta stain
as i stand in my kitchen
with hands hovering over the tawa in which i cooked my morning paratha
i see the bubbles in the kettle
and move one of my hands to infuse the water
with tea leaves and cardamom
after all, everyone is home.
stacks of unwashed plates in the sink
leaning, like the tower of Pisa
i let my hands drown in the smoke
i quite like the smell of cloves, even more when they're burning
turning charcoal in front of my eyes
while my henna darkens and it dries.
i turn the button as right as it goes
remove the tawa and pull back my long sleeved shirt so it rests above my elbows
i put my hands close to the sapphire flame
the heat makes me feel something
it makes me feel better
burning but better.
'what's the weather today, alexa?'
43 degrees, i hear from the living room
i pour the milk inside the kettle
i take two teacups out , fill it with tea
mix a spoon of ginger and dash of honey
and i pull my sleeves down, purple patches peaking through the translucent cream linen.
i give him the tea
he complains about my henna possibly staining the white shirt
and notices his marks through it
eyes fixated on it, like it's a piece of art
before they're shut;
ignored, like a masterpiece he cannot afford.
he raises his gaze to my face
his iris pulls and his pupils dilate
a curve breaks open a familiar dimple
as he compliments my henna and the tea
even the honey, like i don't mix a spoonful everyday.
i smile, as i burn my tongue on my cup
with a closed fist to endure the heat of the sip
like the one i took not too many cups of burnt honey before.
here, open arms come with a closed fist
just like tea comes with burnt honey.

"Burnt honey" was the winning entry in last month's Khero Khata.

Marissa Waiz *is just another 17-year-old girl from Dhaka who writes by taking every minor inconvenience as inspiration.*

Monalisa's ENDURING CHARM

For Mozeza Ashraf Monalisa, popularly known as Monalisa, love is more than just a feeling– it's a way of life. The sweet-smiling actress and sought-after model, who has captured hearts across Bangladesh and beyond, has recently returned to her homeland for a visit. Despite having lived abroad for years, Monalisa's popularity in Bangladesh remains undiminished.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

During her recent visit to The Daily Star office, Monalisa opened up about her life's journey, her artistic pursuits, and her unending quest for a soulmate worthy of her boundless affection.

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED
OUTFIT: ANZARA
HAIR: PROBINA
JEWELLERY: AROHYE ISLAM ANU

How do you view love in your life?
Love can arrive many times in one life, at any time, anywhere. Also, why do we always associate love with another person? For me, love transcends the mere connection between two people. You can fall in love with a river, a mountain, or an ocean. I want to fall in love all my life. I don't want to live without love. No one can live without love.

What are your thoughts on marriage?
I haven't found the kind of person I want yet. First, I have to find the right person and then I can think about marriage. When I find someone with whom I can share an understanding relationship, someone who will respect me, love me, and value me, and our relationship–only then I might decide. Till then, I want to focus on my professional journey.

How busy have you been after returning to the country?
I'm having an extremely busy time after returning to the country. I've received many invitations. I've met many friends and co-artistes. I've participated in various photoshoots and interviews. I'm also spending quality time with my mother.

How has the acting world responded to your return? Are you receiving offers?
I've been inundated with a myriad of opportunities since setting foot back in Bangladesh. I've been receiving offers for dramas and modelling gigs. However, I'm not one to blindly accept every role that comes my way. I intend to be selective in my choices, picking projects that truly resonate with me.

My plan is to strike a balance, dividing my time between my homeland and living abroad. Even if the stars don't quite align for me to take on an acting project during this particular visit, I'm certain the future holds such prospects.

It is perceived that you're still as popular as before. What are your thoughts on it?
The day I landed at the airport, I realised how much people love me. Wherever I go, I'm getting everyone's love. I thought people had forgotten me. But apparently, they didn't. I'm overwhelmed by everyone's love and amazed at the same time. This love is a gift from the Almighty.

You were offered silver-screen projects before. If you get an offer now, will you take it?
At one stage of my career, yes, I received hundreds of offers for films. I didn't do it then. Now, many quality films are being made in our industry. If I get offered a good story and character that align with me, as well as director and producer, I will take on films. I have to like it first.

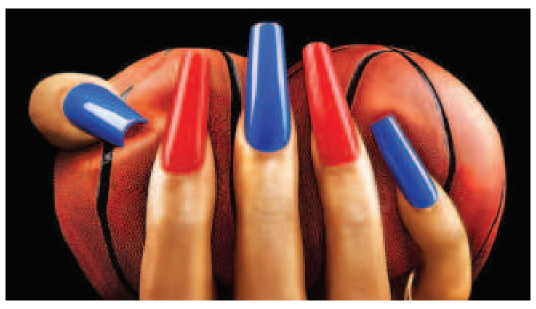
What is the last Bangladeshi movie you watched?
The last ones I watched were ***Priyotoma*** and ***Surongo***. I watched both films in America. I really liked them. Bangladeshi cinema has improved a lot. Whenever I go to America, I try to watch Bangladeshi films out of love and admiration for the country's art. Shakib Khan was also there during the screening of ***Priyotoma***. I attended the screening after receiving an invitation.

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Sweet Tooth

Paramount+
Mayor of Kingstown

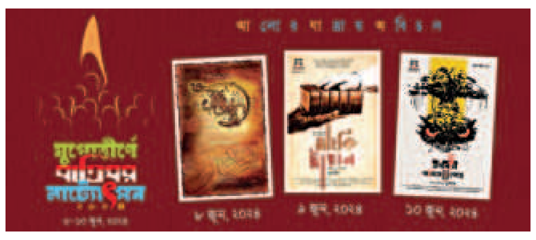
Hulu
Clipped



HBO Max
Fantasmas

Prime Video
Panchayat (Season 3)

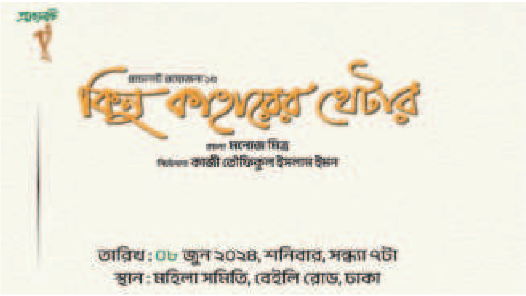
OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



Jugottirne Baatighar Drama Festival
June 8-10 | 7:15pm
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy

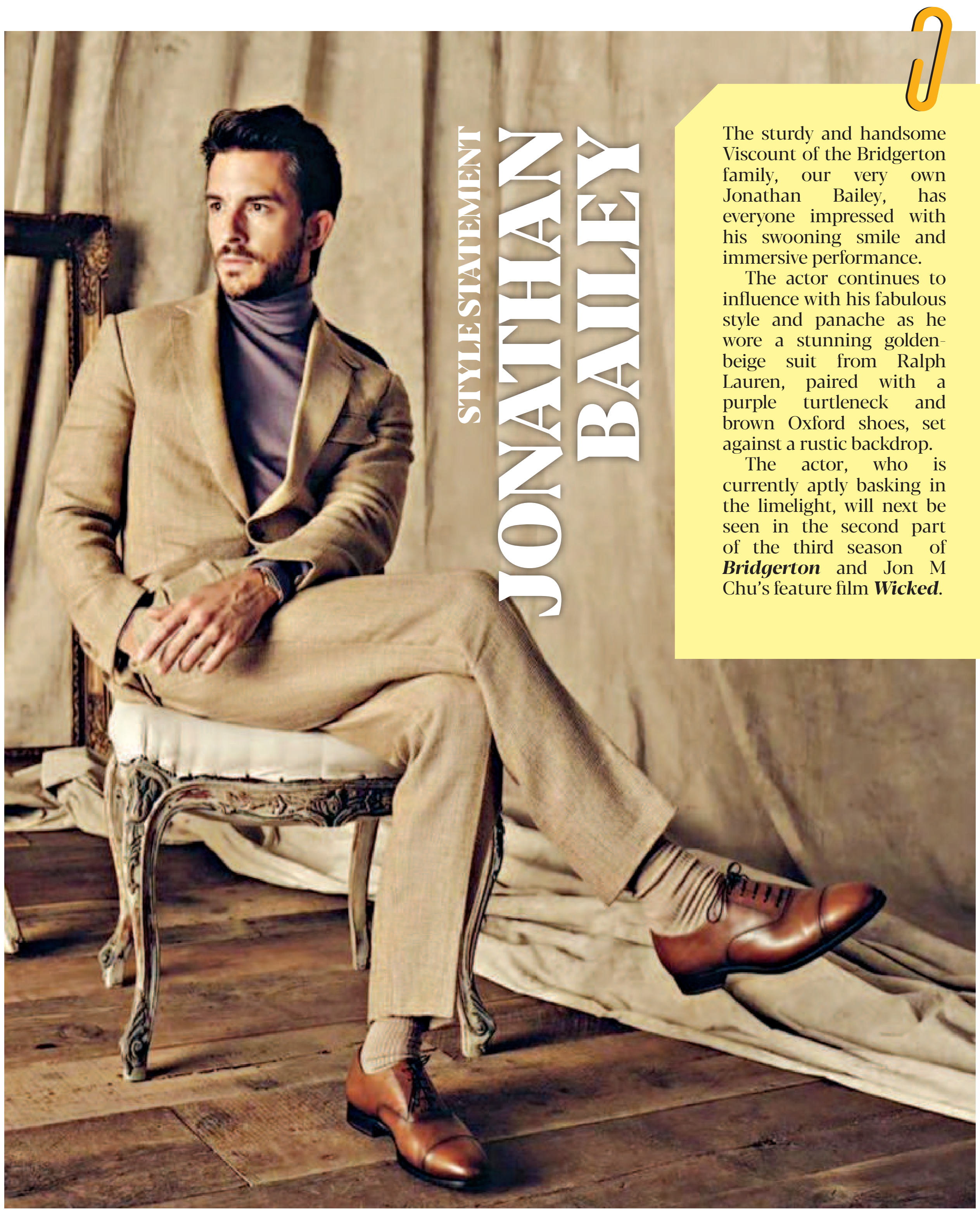
Jazz Masterclass & Performance by Parijat Moumon

Kinu Kaharer Thetar
June 8 | 7pm
Bangladesh Mohila Samity, Bailey Road


কিনু কাহারের থেটার
তারিখ: ০৮ জুন ২০২৪, শনিবার, সন্ধ্যা ৭টা
স্থান: মহিলা সমিতি, বেইলি রোড, ঢাকা

Jazz Masterclass by Parijat Moumon
June 9 | 4pm-8pm
EMK Centre

STYLE STATEMENT
JONATHAN BAILEY



The sturdy and handsome Viscount of the Bridgerton family, our very own Jonathan Bailey, has everyone impressed with his swooning smile and immersive performance.

The actor continues to influence with his fabulous style and panache as he wore a stunning golden-beige suit from Ralph Lauren, paired with a purple turtleneck and brown Oxford shoes, set against a rustic backdrop.

The actor, who is currently aptly basking in the limelight, will next be seen in the second part of the third season of ***Bridgerton*** and Jon M Chu's feature film ***Wicked***.

WHAT'S PLAYING
Perdida

Perdida (Spanish for 'loss'), the eighth studio album by American rock band Stone Temple Pilots, is a departure from their signature grungy sound. With flute, acoustic guitar, and generic lyrics, the onetime grunge icons seem to be evolving into something different. The title track, ***Perdida***, devoid of power chords, showcases a light and airy texture, exuding a melancholic, longing feel – both musically and lyrically.

The song, delivered in slow to mid-paced tempos and often permeated with a Spanish feel, explores the narrative of looking back, heartache and loss.

The song's introspective nature and sonic reinvention make it a thought-provoking, if imperfect, addition to Stone Temple Pilots' discography.

5G TECHNOLOGY remains a pie in the sky. Why?

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Is 5G merely a vanity, just another technology that offers nothing extraordinary? Or has it emerged as a central cog in transforming the digital space by resolving issues related to low speed and latency?

Despite being launched years ago across the world, firm answers to these questions are yet to be produced. But if you look at statistics, it may surprise you.

Over 1.5 billion people – more than one in every four mobile subscribers globally – now use the fifth-generation technology standard for cellular networks, widely known as 5G.

The technology offers several advantages over previous generations, including faster data speeds, lower latency, and greater capacity to connect multiple devices simultaneously.

Its impact spans industries like healthcare, autonomous vehicles, virtual reality and many more.

Such benefits make it attractive for both consumers and businesses and its widespread adoption indicates significant impact, suggesting that 5G is more than a passing trend.

The Automated Future
Teleoperation, factory a
a World of Possibilities

> **5G's true value lies in specialised use cases, such as digitising ports, airports, hospitals and industry, says Sigve Brekke, president and CEO of Telenor**

But for Bangladesh, the launch of this technology, which promises faster speeds and broader connectivity capabilities, remains a far cry.

Although the rollout of 5G was part of the ruling party's election manifesto in 2018, the technology has so far been limited to trial runs.

Globally, operators began launching 5G networks around 2019, with initial rollouts in major urban areas. By 2021-2022, 5G adoption peaked as more operators expanded coverage and consumers embraced the technology.

According to the GSMA, by 2025, 5G networks are likely to cover one-third of the world's population, which would have a profound impact on both the mobile industry and its customers.

But in Bangladesh, sluggish moves to prepare 5G guidelines, operators' reluctance and a lack of readiness are hindering the launch of the technology.

REGULATORY DELAYS

As the election manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League set out the aim to launch 5G by 2021 to 2023, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) formed a committee and multiple subcommittees to issue 5G guidelines ahead of its roll-out.

The committee, which is represented by all stakeholders, including officials from intelligence agencies, academics and policymakers, was tasked with drafting the guidelines so 5G could be launched in Bangladesh by the end of 2022 or 2023.

To do so, the committee had to choose a suitable spectrum for the service and fix the price of the spectrum among others.

Later, the BTRC designated 2.3 GHz, 2.6 GHz and 3.5 GHz spectrum bands for 5G technology-based cellular mobile services, according to the BTRC's documents.

In March 2022, the telecom regulator issued Instructions for Radio Frequency Auction – 2022, announcing it would hold the spectrum auction for 2.3 GHz and 2.6 GHz bands on March 31, eying to roll out services by that year.

In its instruction, the BTRC made it mandatory for operators to launch 5G services within six months from the date of the spectrum auction.

"The Commission shall immediately issue Cellular Mobile Service Operator Licence (unification of 2G, 3C, 4G, 5G and beyond) for further expansion of 5G and beyond cellular mobile services," it said.

"In this regard, the terms and conditions of the said licence will be applicable for the deployment of the networks for 5G and beyond cellular mobile technologies," it said.

The country's four mobile phone operators bought 190 megahertz (MHz) of spectrum for $1.23 billion on March 31, 2022, but the regulator failed to issue guidelines that year.

Finally, in 2024, nearly two years after the 5G spectrum auction and over 4 years after the start of the process of the formulation of the guidelines, the BTRC issued a licensing guideline.

However, the guideline failed to explicitly outline the 5G roll-out obligation and omitted the word "5G" from the headline amid the operators' unanimous stance against immediate 5G roll-out.

WHY ARE OPERATORS RELUCTANT?

In March 2022, market leader Grameenphone bought 60 MHz in 2600 band for Tk 3,361 crore. The same was done by Robi, the second largest operator.

Banglalink took 40 MHz in the 2300 band for Tk 2,241 crore while state-run Teletalk 30 MHz in the same band for Tk 1,681 crore.

The Daily Star spoke to around a dozen officials of mobile network operators and top officials of their parent companies over the past year and all of them expressed reluctance to roll-out 5G.

They said rolling out 5G is not financially viable due to high infrastructure costs, consumer affordability concerns, and uncertain returns on investment.

However, the differences between 4G and 5G networks are substantial. 5G offers significantly faster data speeds, potentially reaching up to 10 gigabits per second (Gbps) compared to 4G's maximum of around 1 Gbps.

5G reduces latency to as low as 1 millisecond (ms), compared to 30-50 ms for 4G, enabling near-instantaneous communication critical for applications like autonomous vehicles and real-time gaming.

But officials pointed out that both 4G and 5G enable users to access mobile data services for quality internet, streaming media, and accessing online content.

"For us, bringing 4G to all, not 5G for a few, is the number one priority," said Kaan Terzioğlu, group chief executive officer (CEO) of Banglalink's parent company Veon.

In an earlier interview with The Daily Star, he added that he was not a big fan of the vanity of 5G.

"I see that mobile internet access in the country is growing but I believe '4G for all' -- the vision that we initiated at Banglalink -- still needs a lot of work," he added.

He also pointed out that almost half of the mobile users in Bangladesh still do not even use 4G.

Currently, over 55 percent of mobile subscribers in Bangladesh use 4G networks.

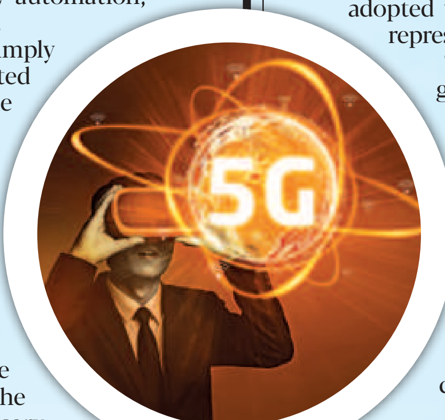
Sigve Brekke, president and CEO of Telenor, the parent company of Grameenphone, said in a recent interview that Grameenphone has established extensive 4G coverage across Bangladesh and now aims to improve indoor connectivity.

Regarding their 5G launch plans, he noted consumer benefits of 5G are minimal compared to 4G.

"5G's true value lies in specialised use cases, such as digitising ports, airports, hospitals and industry," he said.

He emphasised the need for specific 5G applications, such as factory automation, to justify its implementation.

This is because simply deploying 5G without targeted use cases is not a viable business model, he added.



Some industry people said Bangladeshi consumers are not ready for 5G. According to the BTRC and official of operators, only 3 to 4 percent of mobile users have 5G devices.

"In order to assure the use of updated technology, the right device is also necessary. Bangladesh's perspective should be strengthened in this regard," Vivek Sood, group chief executive officer of Axiata Group, the parent company of Robi Axiata, told The Daily Star in an interview.

But despite their unwillingness to launch 5G in the near future, the operators have already completed the successful trial run of the technology.

Although Bangladesh became one of the first nations in Asia to launch 2G in the 90s, 3G only arrived in the country in 2013 and 4G in 2018 – a significant delay since the technologies were launched around the world in the early and late 2000s respectively.

Experts divided on 5G necessity

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Experts are split on the necessity of rolling out 5G in Bangladesh due to several critical issues.

Some believe the delay in implementing 5G technology may cause the country to lag behind in digital infrastructure, economic growth, and technological innovation, affecting its global competitiveness and limiting access to high-speed internet for businesses and consumers.

"Before the launch of 4G, we didn't even think that it would revolutionise services like video streaming, e-commerce and mobile gaming," said a top official of a company in the telecom sector, wishing anonymity.

"If 5G isn't launched, you might not realise what transformative advancements you're missing out on," the official added.

According to Mahtab Uddin Ahmed, former CEO of Robi Axiata, the return on investment for 5G is unclear and given the current forex crisis, it is deemed a non-essential service.

"With low 4G device usage, allocating funds to enhance 4G device availability and network strength would be more beneficial for the nation," he said.

"Even if 5G is pursued, it should be limited to select areas like port authorities and the military. For general use, it is not justifiable under the current circumstances," he added.

Even leading 5G pioneers such as Japan, China and South Korea struggle to get a return on investment, he said.

Operators would need to double their sites for 5G deployment, which requires more than just setting up radio access network equipment on existing sites. Device penetration remains a significant hurdle, he added.

According to Khaled Mahmud, a professor of the Institute of Business Administration at the University of Dhaka, two factors primarily hinder development of 5G in Bangladesh.

Firstly, Bangladesh has not yet widely adopted the technological paradigm shift represented by 5G, he said.

"Our businesses, customers, and government agencies are still unclear on the sheer magnitude of transformative changes possible," he said.

Second, the number and variety of business models that would drive demand for and adoption of 5G are sparse at present. This makes large-scale deployment of this technology an unprofitable venture for cellular companies, he said.

However, he pointed out that the delay in 5G adoption limits the country's businesses in creating novel, real-time, and scalable value.

"It impedes our government agencies from delivering individual and community-level solutions to tackle education, healthcare, agricultural, energy, and climate issues. In all, it holds back our citizens in reaching higher productive and welfare potential," Mahmud said.

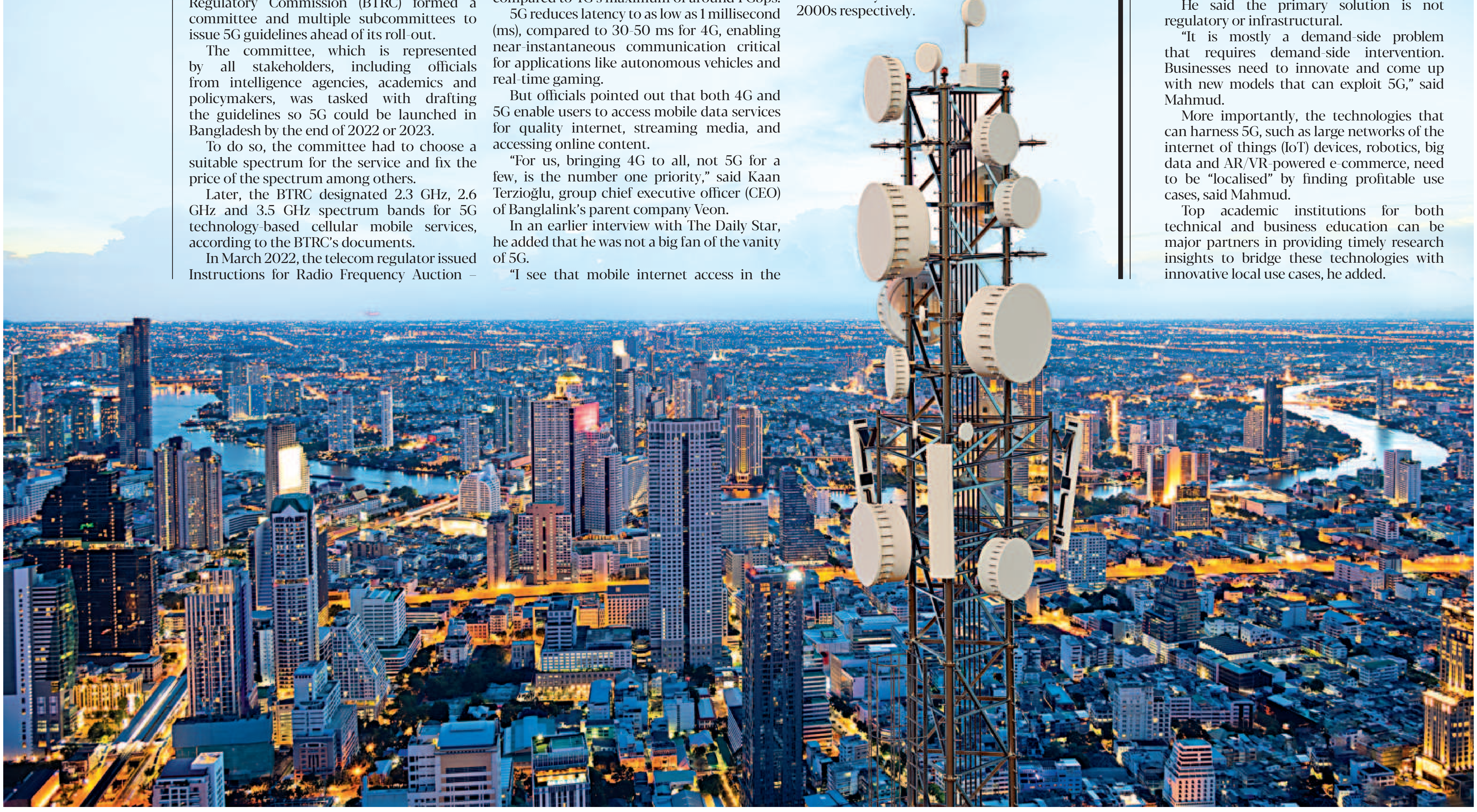
In the upcoming decade, Bangladesh could face significant competitive hurdles, especially if peer nations such as Vietnam continue to make progress in commercialising 5G, he added.

He said the primary solution is not regulatory or infrastructural.

"It is mostly a demand-side problem that requires demand-side intervention. Businesses need to innovate and come up with new models that can exploit 5G," said Mahmud.

More importantly, the technologies that can harness 5G, such as large networks of the internet of things (IoT) devices, robotics, big data and AR/VR-powered e-commerce, need to be "localised" by finding profitable use cases, said Mahmud.

Top academic institutions for both technical and business education can be major partners in providing timely research insights to bridge these technologies with innovative local use cases, he added.



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DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 9, 2024

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Power gets a third of Tk 108,240cr subsidies

Capacity charges may take up most of it

ASIFUR RAHMAN *and* **REJAUL KARIM BYRON**

More than a third of the subsidies allocated in the new budget is for the power sector due to what experts say is the huge spending on capacity charges.

The large sum of subsidy has raised eyebrows as the government increased electricity prices several times since January last year.

Currently, the power generation capacity is around 26,000 megawatts while the highest generation was recorded at 16,477MW on April 30 this year.

Finance Minister AH Mahmood Ali in his budget speech said 27 power plants with a combined capacity of 9,144MW were being constructed.

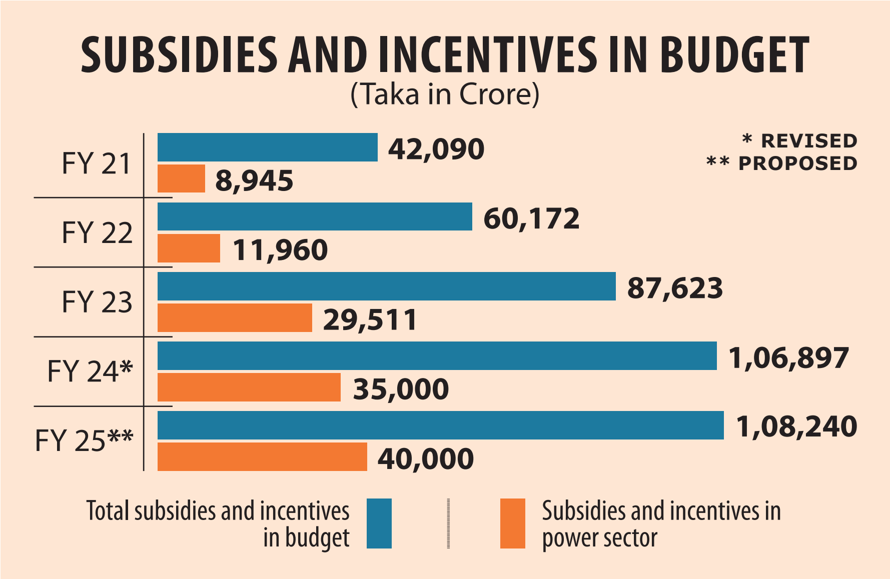
All sectors combined, subsidy allocation for the fiscal 2024-25 is Tk 108,240 crore, of which the power sector will get Tk 40,000 crore, or 37 percent of the total.

In the current fiscal year, the power sector got Tk 35,000 crore of the total Tk 106,897 crore subsidy.

For many years before 2021-22, subsidies for the sector used to be between Tk 7,000 crore and Tk 9,000 crore.

According to a study by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) last year, most of the subsidy money was spent to pay capacity charges, a fee paid to private power plants whether they produce electricity or not.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



bti The Daily Star
STELLAR WOMEN
2 0 2 3

PHOTO: STAR

Winners of the bti-The Daily Star Stellar Women Award 2023 pose for a photo at the Banquet Hall of the Kurmitola Golf Club last night.

Hasina gets warm welcome in Delhi

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reached New Delhi yesterday to attend the swearing in-ceremony of Narendra Modi today as the Indian prime minister.

She became the first

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Laurels for women breaking the barriers

bti-The Daily Star Stellar Women 2023 gala puts the spotlight on 12 pioneers in various sectors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Building Technology and Ideas Ltd (bti) and The Daily Star yesterday honoured 12 women from various walks of life for their exemplary contributions to nation-building.

The first ever "bti-The Daily Star Stellar Women-2023" gala, held at the banquet hall of Kurmitola Golf Club in the capital, acknowledged the women who challenged conventions and inspired innovation, inclusivity, and empowerment.

They were selected in 12 categories for trailblazing in their respective fields: Shamsin Ahmed in the development sector; Tasfia Tasbin in technology; Nazli Hussain in architecture; Sadia Jafrin in education; Ridy Sheikh in culture; Shamima Akhter in corporate; Salma Akter Mone in sports; Dr Sakina Khanam in agriculture; Lutfunnahar Piki in writing; Monoshita Ayruani in startup and entrepreneurship; Tawhida Shiropa in social welfare; and Rozina Islam in journalism.

Speaking as the chief guest, Housing and Public Works Minister RAM Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury appreciated the initiative, terming it a "great task".

He congratulated bti and The Daily Star for organising a programme promoting women and recognising their contributions, saying this recognition will greatly inspire other women.

About the government measures to empower women, Muqtadir said that after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's assassination, there were attempts to take the country backwards.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

bti The Daily Star
STELLAR WOMEN
Spark Your Inner Power
Congratulations!
bti The Daily Star Stellar Women 2023!
SHAMSIN AHMED
Identity Inclusion
Development Sector
TASFIA TASBIN
Markopolo.ai
Technology
NAZLI HUSSAIN
PRAXIS Architects
Architecture
SADIA JAFRIN
Grow Your Reader
Education
RIDY SHEIKH
STARBASE Dance Studio
Culture
SHAMIMA AKHTER
Unilever Bangladesh Ltd.
Corporate
DR.SAKINA KHANAM
BINA
Agriculture
SALMA AKTER MONE
AFC
Sports
LUTFUNNAHAR PIKI
NBR
Writing
MONOSHITA AYRUANI
SHAPE Industries Ltd.
Startup & Entrepreneurship
TAWHIDA SHIROPA
Moner Bondhu
Social Welfare
ROZINA ISLAM
Prothom Alo
Journalism
A JOINT INITIATIVE BY
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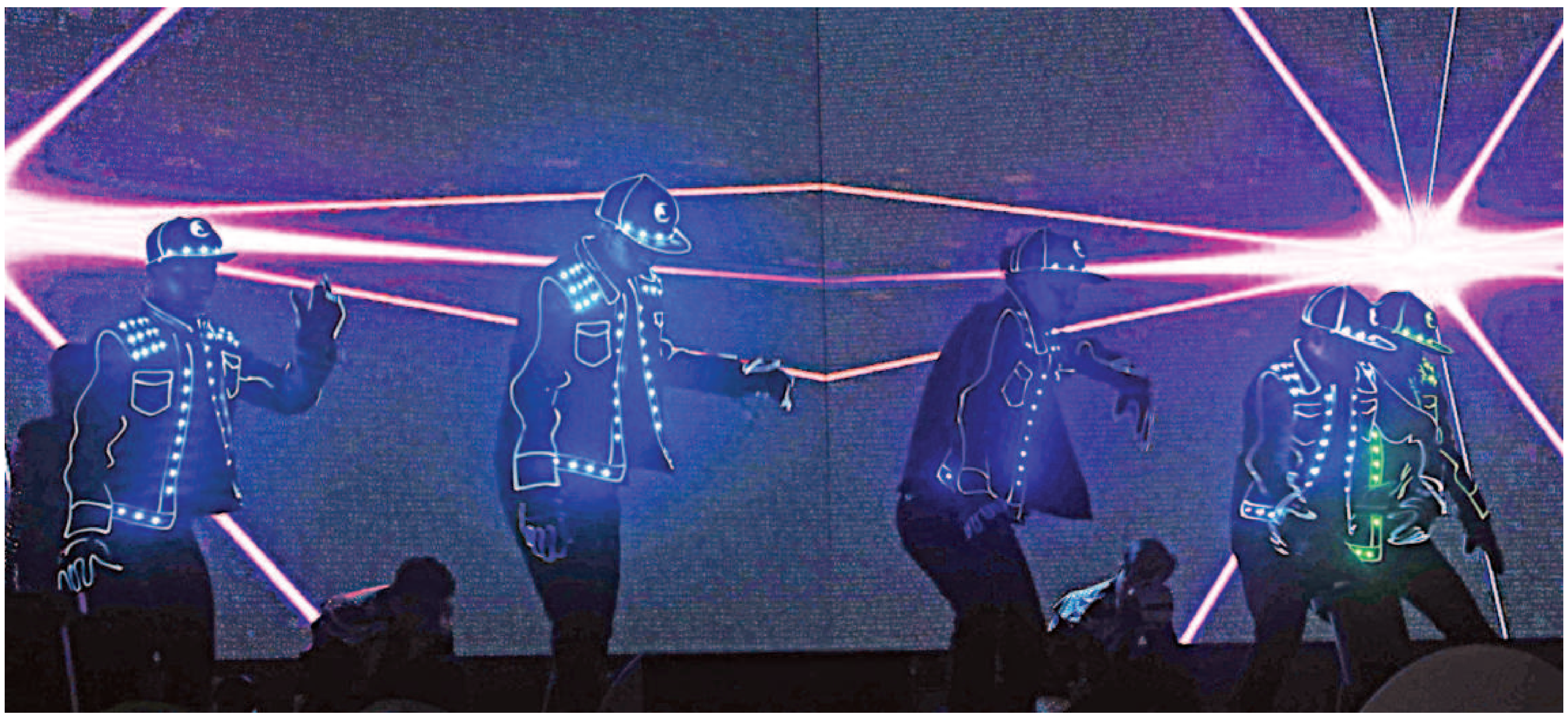
Since 1984
in pursuit of excellence...
& The Daily Star
We are proud of you!



An electrifying performance by Eagles dance troupe dazzles guests at the bti-The Daily Star Stellar Women-2023 gala at the Banquet Hall of the Kurmitola Golf Club last night.

PHOTO: **STAR**

"Now, we see that 60 percent of attendees in village high schools and colleges are women. This didn't happen overnight. The government provided various facilities to women, offered incentives and implemented numerous measures that led to their enormous empowerment."

RAM OBAIDUL MUKTADIR Chowdhury, housing and public works minister

"bti has unwavering commitment towards women empowerment and with this aim The Daily Star has initiated the Steller Women Awards-2023 for those who have enormous contribution to the society in different sectors, including education, development, art, culture."

NALAKA HETTIARACHCHI, CEO of bti

"Through this initiative, we're honouring those women who've been working for the society and having a profound impact in building the nation, despite facing enormous challenges. The stories of these stellar women and their determination will inspire and empower other women in the society."

FR KHAN, bti managing director

"The main theme of this whole effort is to highlight the brilliant roles that women are playing in the country. The leadership emerging at practical, enterprise, company, and small business levels is setting a trend and contributing significantly to the nation's progress."

MAHFUZ ANAM, editor and publisher of The Daily Star

BCL leader arrested over activist's murder

Admits to police about opening fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Brahmanbaria*

A Chhatra League leader has been arrested for his involvement in the murder of a BCL activist, who was shot dead in broad daylight in Brahmanbaria during the fourth phase of the upazila polls on Wednesday.

Prior to his arrest, Hasan Al Farabi Joy was expelled from his post as vice president of BCL's district unit.

Farabi was directly involved in the murder of BCL activist Ashrafur Rahman Ijaz, said Mohammad Shakhawat Hossain, superintendent of Brahmanbaria police, at a press conference in his office yesterday.

A court sent Farabi to jail yesterday afternoon, a day after the victim's father filed a case against 16 people, including Farabi, in connection with the murder.

A team from the Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested Farabi from Kutubpur village under Atpara upazila of Netrakona on Friday morning, said the SP.

After the arrest, Farabi told police where he dumped the pistol used in the murder. Subsequently, the pistol was retrieved from a bush in Bhatpara village under Brahmanbaria Sadar Upazila, said SP Shakhawat.

During primary interrogation, Farabi admitted that he opened fire at a victory procession brought out by Ijaz and others before the announcement of the results of the Sadar upazila parishad election.

The police official also mentioned that Farabi had a conflict with Ijaz. A heated argument took place between them at a polling centre on Wednesday morning. Later in the afternoon, Farabi opened fire on the victory procession.

POST-POLLS VIOLENCE

Journo attacked by defeated candidate

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

A local journalist was allegedly assaulted by a defeated upazila vice-chairman candidate and her supporters in Bakshiganj upazila, Jamalpur early yesterday.

Masud Ul Hasan, 35, Bakshiganj correspondent of the daily Samakal, filed a written complaint with the local police against four named people and five to six unnamed others.

According to the complaint, as Masud was returning home on his motorcycle from his office, a group of people ambushed him when he reached Russell Amin Market 12:15am, leaving him injured. They also vandalised his motorbike and snatched his camera.

Atiq Mia and his wife defeated female vice chairman candidate Masuma Yasmin Smrity led the attack, Masud alleged in his complaint.

Hearing his scream, locals rescued him and took him to Bakshiganj Upazila Health Complex.

Masud said he has no dispute with Masuma Yasmin Smrity, adding that she might have attacked him for not working in favour of her in the recent upazila parishad election.

This correspondent could not reach the accused over the phone for their comment.

Abdul Ahad, officer-in-charge of Bakshiganj police station said they received a complaint in this regard. "We are looking into the matter."

The president and general secretary of Bakshiganj Press Club condemned the attack and demanded the immediate arrest of the attackers.

Jamalpur Zilla Press Club formed a human chain also demanding immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the attackers.

Power gets a third of Tk 108,240cr subsidies

FROM PAGE 1

Capacity payments reached Tk 28,000 crore in 2022-23, a major leap from Tk 5,600 crore in 2017-18, said the study.

In the current fiscal year, it was Tk 32,000 crore, according to officials of Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB).

Contacted, Mohammad Hossain, director general of the Power Cell, said, "It is not true that the subsidy money is spent to pay capacity charges. The PDB buys electricity from the Independent Power Producers at a higher rate than we sell [at a lower rate] to the distributor companies and consumers. What we get as subsidy is used to fill the up."

The PDB pays for gas and fuel used by the power plants, he said. "The volatile prices of fuel in the global market and devaluation of the taka against dollar are raising power generation costs.

"We only slightly increased power prices and have plans to hike more. But we are still spending more for each unit of electricity."

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director at the CPD, said capacity payments and higher energy prices in the international market were making the subsidy necessary in 2024-25.

Even after raising power prices several more times, the government will still need to subsidise the sector because power plants that are in the pipeline will soon require capacity charges, he said.

By retiring the inefficient and old power plants and getting rid of the provision for capacity charge when a plant does not produce electricity, the government can reduce the burden, he said, but the focus is not there.

The government has plans to raise power tariffs three to four times a year to lower subsidies over the next three years.

Electricity price was raised by 5 percent in February this year and three times last year.

A finance ministry official, requesting anonymity, said, "Power price is being raised slowly while generation costs have risen rapidly."

Prof Mohammad Tamim, former adviser to a caretaker government, said, "If subsidy is withdrawn, the cost of power will rise and drive up inflation."

In the new budget, the government allocated Tk 7,000 crore for importing liquefied natural gas (LNG), up from Tk 6,000 crore in the current fiscal year.

OTHER SUBSIDIES

Considering the rising costs of living, food subsidy has been raised to Tk 7,250 crore from the current year's Tk 6,916 crore.

Ahasanul Islam Titu, state minister at the commerce ministry, told a press conference yesterday that more people will get subsidised food.

"We plan to have shops in designated areas under the Open Market Sale programme," he said.

In the agriculture sector, Tk 17,533 crore was allocated in the proposed budget last year, but the amount reached Tk 25,644 crore in the revised budget. In the new budget, the amount is Tk 17,261 crore.

The government will provide Tk 9,025 crore to the export sector in the form of incentives.

Laurels for women breaking the barriers

FROM PAGE 1

"But since the Awami League-led government assumed office, it has been tirelessly working to change the country and improve the fate of women."

He mentioned how the government promoted women with opportunities in various top positions in different government agencies, security forces, and other sectors.

The minister also said, "Now, we see 60 percent of the attendees in village high schools are girls. This didn't happen overnight."

Managing Director of bti FR Khan, who was the guest of honour, gave the welcome speech. "We're very happy that The Daily Star is with us for this prestigious event.

"Through this initiative, we are honouring the women who have been working for the society and profoundly impacting the nation-building, despite facing enormous challenges. The stories of these stellar women and their determination will inspire and empower other women in the society."

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, in his speech thanked bti for taking this initiative and said, "For The Daily Star and me personally, it's a proud privilege to be here at this absolutely brilliant event. More so, it's an honour to be the partner of bti on this great journey. I must confess that when bti first proposed the idea to us, we were a bit surprised because no real estate company had come forward with such an initiative before ...

"The main theme of this whole effort is to highlight the brilliant roles that women are playing in the country. The leadership emerging at practical, enterprise, company, and small business levels, is setting a trend and contributing significantly to the nation's progress. Through this award, each of the women honoured has inspired many of us."

CEO of bti Nalaka Hettiarachchi thanked the audience, the winners, The Daily Star, and the chief guest for being present.

"Bti is unwavering in its commitment towards women empowerment, and with this aim bti and The Daily Star have initiated the Stellar Women Awards-2023 for those who made enormous contributions in different sectors, including education, development, art, and culture. We are honouring them to recognise their contribution and innovation, and provide financial assistance."

He urged other women, who believe they are making such contributions, to register for next year's edition of the awards.

The awardees were handed over crests, cheques and scarves at the end of the programme.

The 2024 categories for the initiative were also launched.

Rahul nominated

FROM PAGE 12

early next week.

Parliamentary regulations require the opposition leader to come from a party that commands at least 10 percent of the lawmakers in the 543-seat lower house.

The post has been vacant for 10 years because two dismal election results for Congress -- once India's dominant party -- left it short of that threshold.

Tuesday's election results increased the party's parliamentary representation from 52 to 99 seats.

A statement from the Congress executive said that "many challenges" remained in the party's road to reclaiming its credibility and returning to government in the future.

"The people of India have spoken -- the Congress has been given another chance," the statement said.

"It is now up to us to build on it. We must and we will."

Modi and his Hindu-nationalist BJP ruled outright for the past decade but failed to repeat its previous two landslide wins this time, despite widespread expectations of another easy triumph.

Hasina gets warm welcome

FROM PAGE 1

foreign leader to have reached the Indian capital for the event at the Rashtrapati Bhavan at 7:20pm, the Indian external affairs ministry tweeted.

"This visit of one of our most valued partners will further strengthen close and deep-rooted bonds of friendship," said the ministry.

It also tagged pictures of Hasina being warmly received by External Affairs Secretary Muktesh Pardeshi. Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Mustafizur Rahman and Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Kumar Verma were also present.

This is Hasina's first visit to India after the January 7 parliamentary polls in Bangladesh.

During her stay in New Delhi, the Bangladesh premier, who is leading a 60-member delegation, is likely to meet Modi after his swearing-in ceremony.

Hasina along with other foreign leaders will attend a banquet, to be hosted by Indian President Droupadi Murmu, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan after the oath-taking.

Apart from Hasina, Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu, Vice-President of Seychelles Ahmed Afif, Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Prime Minister of Bhutan Tshering Tobgay, have accepted the invitation to attend Modi's oath-taking, the Indian external affairs ministry said in a statement yesterday.

"The visit of the leaders to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for his third consecutive term is in keeping with the highest priority accorded by India to its 'Neighbourhood First' policy and 'SAGAR' vision," the ministry said.

Muizzu was a surprise addition to the list of invitees, especially amid the strained ties between India and the Maldives since his election last year on the back of an "India Out" campaign.

The opposition INDIA bloc is yet to get invitation for attending the swearing-in of Modi.

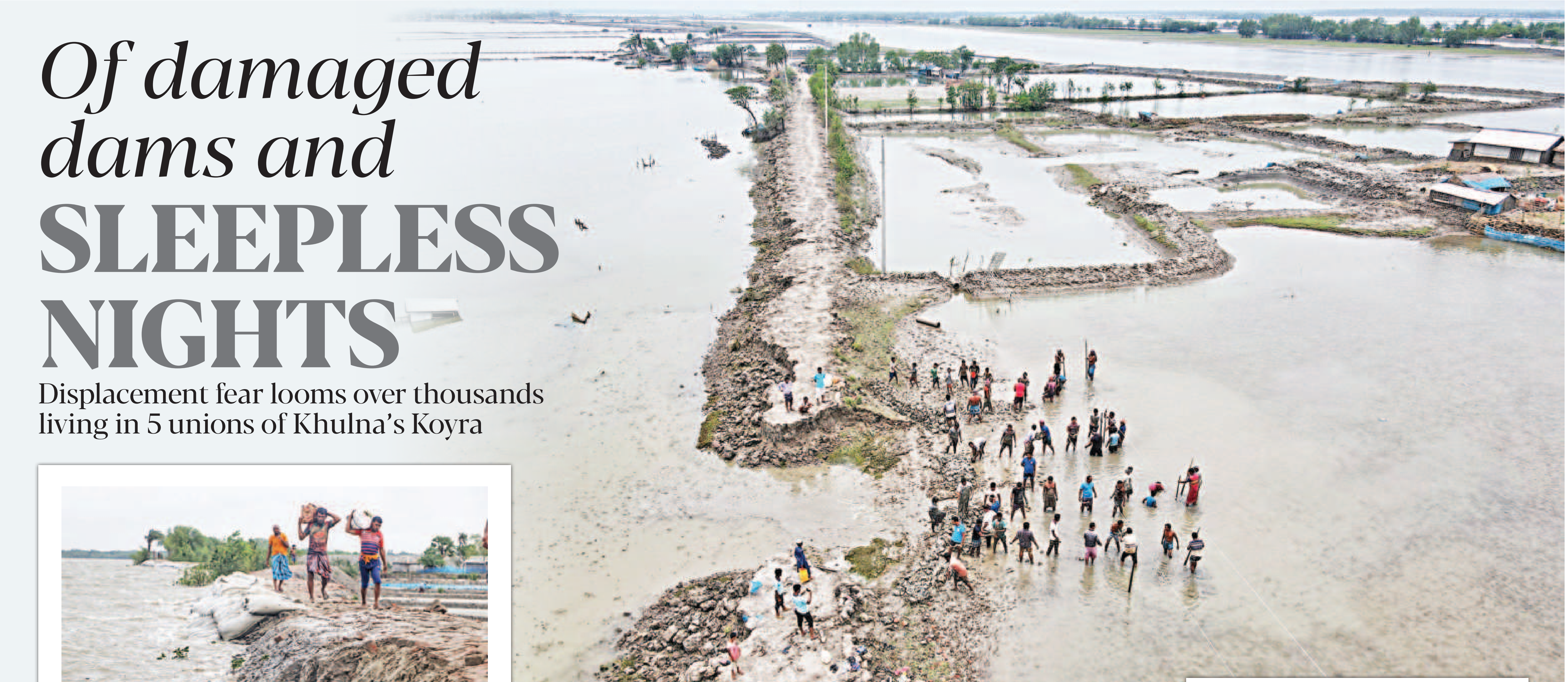
Replying to a question from reporters, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said his party was yet get any invite for the swearing-in. "If and when we get it, we as INDIA bloc will take a collective decision."

In Kolkata, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday made it clear that her party Trinamool Congress would not attend Modi's oath-taking.

Hasina is scheduled to return Dhaka tomorrow.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is greeted by a group of Manipuri dancers who performed as she arrived at Palam Air Force Station, the VVIP airport in New Delhi, yesterday to attend the oath-taking ceremony of her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.

PHOTO: **PID**



Of damaged dams and SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

Displacement fear looms over thousands living in 5 unions of Khulna's Koyra

PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

Breached embankments, homes under water and submerged croplands, this is a regular scene in five unions of Koyra upazila, Khulna, every monsoon.

This year is no different. An unsettling stillness hung heavy in the air as more properties were dangerously close to getting devoured by relentless tides.

Despite this being a perennial issue, the embankments in coastal areas continue to have fault lines.

The situation became particularly worse this year after cyclone Remal battered most of the embankments in this area, just before monsoon.

Forced displacement due to climate change is not new to around 1,93,931 people of Koyra upazila. But that doesn't mean one gets used to the pain of seeing their belongings disappearing into the river, year after year.

Locals alleged that the embankments were in a state of despair even before the cyclone made landfall.

Sabita Sana, a local living beside the Shakbaria river embankment, echoed the collective anxiety. "This year, we are passing days in fear as water has already invaded the village. There are breaches in many points in the embankment," she added.

Around 2,000 villagers in the area share a similar fate.

In Dakkhin Bedkashi Union, the situation is particularly dire. Erosion has brought the Shakbaria river embankment in Katkata to the brink of collapse.

Local residents, public representatives, and WDB officials said about 12km of embankments along Ghatakhali, Harinkhola, Madinabad Launchghat, Mathbaria, Hogla, Gazipara, Golkhali, Hajatkhali, Jorshing, and Maheshpur areas are in an unsafe condition.

Additionally, eight sluice gates in the Kapotaksha and Shakbaria rivers are out of order, with the sluice gate of the Shakbaria river near Nayani and Sutia Bazar almost broken.

Santosh Sardar, a resident of Gunari village in Dacope upazila of Khulna, said, "Recently, at least 10 places of polder number 32 have been breached."

Polder is a piece of low-lying land reclaimed from the sea or a river and protected by dykes.

"We were forced to live on the embankment for two years after Aila hit, as our land was underwater and saline water destroyed all kinds of trees and agricultural land. We have not yet recovered all our losses," he said.

"We have survived Remal, but we are now worried about the Dhaki river erosion," he added.

Sattajit Sardar, a resident of the same village, said within the last five months many sections of the newly constructed embankments in Kamarkhola, Jaliakhali, Kalabgi, and Sutarkhali have partially broken down, leaving vast areas at risk of flooding.

According to BWDB, approximately 73km of embankment out of the 2,006km in the Khulna, Bagerhat, and Satkhira districts are in a dilapidated condition.

Abdur Rahman, executive engineer of BWDB in Khulna Division-1, said 10.5km of the 365.24km of a dam in his zone are in a vulnerable condition.

Additionally, 12km of 630km flood protection embankment in Koyra, Dacope, Paikgachha, and Batiaghata upazilas are at risk of collapse, confirmed sources within BWDB, Khulna Division-2.

Gouranga Nandy, researcher and chairman of Center for Environment and Participatory Research, said the embankments are often built in an unplanned way, and sometimes using substandard materials.

Bidyut Kumar Saha, additional chief engineer of the South Western Region of BWDB, said a new megaproject is underway to build stronger embankments and reduce risks for communities in Khulna and Satkhira.

ROAD, RAIL, BRIDGE SECTORS

Allocation cut may hamper projects

Fear officials, transport experts stress proper utilisation

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government has proposed to cut down budgetary allocation for road, rail and bridge sectors by around 9 percent in the next fiscal year.

Officials say this may delay the implementation of some ongoing projects as well as execution of their expansion plans.

The allocation for Roads and Highways Department, which is in charge of a 22,476km network of roads and bridges, came down for the first time in five years.

Bangladesh Railway, which is still struggling to expand its service even after receiving a huge investment in the last 16 years, will receive less allocation for the first time in four years.

Prof Hadiuzzaman, an independent transport expert, however, said the allocation given for roads, rail and bridges is still a "handsome one"; and proper utilisation of the allocation is the key.

BUDGET
2024-2025

RHD, BR and Bangladesh Bridge Authority will get Tk 58,087 crore under Annual Development Programme, which is Tk 5,010 crore (8.62 percent) less than the allocation of previous fiscal year.

He said although allocation of these sectors has decreased, allocation for shipping has gone up by around Tk 1,000 crore, which is a positive signal towards building a balanced and smart transport system in the country.

"I think the ongoing financial crisis is the main reason behind the less allocation in this priority sector," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

As per proposed budget placed on Thursday, RHD,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Fake note for sale online

Counterfeiters active ahead of Eid; 4 held in drives

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Hridoy Matobbar, 22, an employee at a computer shop in the capital's Shaympur, learned counterfeiting from YouTube and mastered his computer skills to produce fake money at home. He formed a network and started selling counterfeit currency on social media.

Not only Hridoy, several other gangs are now active in selling counterfeit notes as demand for fake notes increased ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

A team of the Rapid Action Battalion arrested Hridoy on Friday from the West Dholaipar area and seized various equipment including a computer and printer used to counterfeit notes, said Shamim Hossain, assistant superintendent of police at Rab-3.

Rab said the gang usually charged Tk 10,000-12,000 per Tk 1 lakh of fake notes, but ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, they were selling it for Tk 15,000.

Using various social media platforms and online mediums, Hridoy built a network for selling fake money. By promoting and boosting these pages, he attracted many wholesalers and retailers. Besides, the accused were illegally producing fake national and foreign identity cards and selling them to various criminal gangs for substantial amounts of money, he added.

Rab recovered nine fake NIDs, three fake Indian identity cards, and fake notes.

Meanwhile, in a separate drive yesterday, a team of Detective Branch of police busted a counterfeit currency gang and arrested four members of the racket including the ringleader, from Kadamtoli area in Jatrabari.

The arrestees are -- Liaqat Hossain Zakir, 40, also known as "Mazar Zakir" and "Guru Zakir", along with his second wife Mumtaz Begum, 25, Lima Akhtar Rina, 40, and Sajeda Akhtar, 28.

Mashiur Rahman, deputy commissioner (DB) of Lalbagh Division, said the group was planning

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Saad Ershad comes under 'friendly' fire

Leaders of 'Raushan's JP' slam him for lack of political tact

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Jatiyo Party officially split for the fifth time on March 9 this year when a faction, led by Raushan Ershad, severed ties with the GM Quader-led group and held a council of their own. They labeled themselves as the "Real Jatiyo Party".

However, fault lines have started appearing in the new group within less than three months.

A section of leaders have bashed Rahgair Almahe Ershad, son of Raushan Ershad and co-chairman of the splinter group, for his perceived lack of political tact and decorum.

This discontent was voiced during a meeting of the party's presidium members, held at Raushan Ershad's Gulshan residence.

According to insiders, a JP co-chairman told the meeting, "He seldom answers our calls, which is disrespectful. We can't expect this from a top leader who we rely on to rebuild our organisation's image."

The JP leader also asked, "How can the party progress if our leader treats senior members poorly?" referring to Rahgir Almahe, also known as Saad Ershad.

Another JP co-chairman mentioned that he recently called Saad Ershad from abroad to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Budget designed for plundering

Says Fakhrul

UNB, *Dhaka*

New arrangements have been made in the proposed budget for fresh looting of the nation's wealth, said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday.

Speaking at a discussion, he also criticised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's comment where she described the provision for whitening black money as "using bait for catching fish".

"How long will you [PM] be able to deceive people by creating a smoke screen with such statements?" he asked.

"Just by looking at the budget, you can understand that arrangements have been made

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'They speak like BNP'

Quader on CPD, TIB, Sujan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday defended the provision to whiten black money saying it aims to bring undisclosed income into the mainstream economy.

The provision, which allows a person to whiten black money by submitting a 15 percent tax, has come under severe criticism from policy experts and organisations.

"It [the move] will increase money flow into the banking system. The scope to whiten black money has been kept in the budget to recover the money secretly possessed by many," said Quader while addressing a press conference at the AL central office on the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue.

Asked about the Centre for Policy Dialogue's (CPD) comment that allowing black money to be whitened contradicts AL's election manifesto,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Artist Hashem Khan honoured

CITY DESK

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC) has recently honoured artist Hashem Khan, said a press release.

On the occasion, an artwork album was published.

Hashem Khan is known to conjure vivid representation of history and humanity with his brushstrokes. He was awarded Ekushey Padak and Swadhinata Padak for his contributions. At the ceremony, art enthusiasts gathered to honour his lifetime artworks.

Prime Minister's Education and Cultural Affairs Adviser Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury attended the event as the chief guest. State Minister of Cultural Affairs Naheed Ezaher Khan was present as the chairperson.

Besides, lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor, Liberation War Museum's founder trustee Mofidul Hoque, and Bengal Foundation Director General Luva Nahid Choudhury attended the event as special guests.

Dedicated roads for cycling twice a month: Atiqul

UNB, *Dhaka*

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday said specific roads in the DNCC area will be designated for cycling two days a month.

He made the announcement while attending the "Pedal for Planet" cycling rally organised by Jaago Foundation and Volunteer for Bangladesh from in front of the Sangsad Bhaban to Gulshan-2 intersection.

The rally was organised to raise awareness about carbon emissions and environmental protection.

Now political rivalry adds to the murder mystery

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **RASHIDUL HASAN**

Gold smuggling, honey trap and narcotics, lots of theories have been floating around since the last few weeks over the murder of Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim Anar in a Kolkata flat.

Now local political rivalry has come to the fore after detectives picked up Jhenaidah Awami League leader Kamal Ahmed Babu for interrogation.

Babu is the relief and social welfare affairs secretary of district AL.

Investigators are now trying to find out whether the gold racket, which is behind the murder of Azim, collaborated with his political rivals.

The Detective Branch of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police has already made a list of suspects and picked up Kamal as part of the interrogation on Thursday night, said DB sources.

Kamal, who is a cousin of Aktaruzzaman, one of the masterminds behind the murder.

Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (DB) of the DMP, yesterday said, "Kamal is being interrogated on various important issues. He will be arrested if his involvement is found during the interrogation."

Ashraful Alam, mayor of Kaliganj municipality, informed The Daily Star that Kamal was one of the rivals of the lawmaker.

"The lawmaker's rivals might have been linked with the murder, as many are already trying to take nomination from the constituency," he said, adding, "We demand that the law enforcers look into this matter and reveal the identity of the real killers of the lawmaker."

Besides, the detectives have already sought bank account information of two others -- Taj Mohammad Khan, and Md Jamal Hossain alias Jamal Hazi.

Both are from Jheniadah and close aides of Aktaruzzaman.

Local sources said Taj and Jamal used to oversee Aktaruzzaman's businesses, including gold smuggling.

MP AZIM
MURDER

> **The lawmaker's rivals might have been linked with the murder, as many are already trying to take nomination from the constituency.**
>
> **ASHRAFUL ALAM**
> Kaliganj Municipality Mayor

The two allegedly kept the gold consignments in Aktaruzzaman's farmhouse and then smuggled those out with the consent of lawmaker Azim.

Syed Al Mamun, officer-in-charge of the Kotchandpur Police Station, told this newspaper that Taj and Jamal are on the run.

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and stayed at his friend Gopal Biswas' house for a night. He went out the following day saying that he would visit a doctor. On May 22, India and Bangladesh police confirmed that the lawmaker was murdered.

Regarding the DNA test of the recovered body parts from the New Town's flat on May 28, DB chief Harun said the lawmaker's family members will go to India very soon.

On extraditing Aktaruzzaman from the US, Harun said, "We are working in this regard, and they [India] are working too. We have submitted relevant papers to the NCB [National Central Bureau] at the police headquarters, and the NCB have reported it to the Interpol."

Meanwhile, a Kolkata court yesterday granted a 14-day remand for Siam Hossain, one of the key suspects in the murder of Azim.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Mandakranta Mukherjee confirmed the development while addressing reporters outside the court premises yesterday.

"The police argued that they wanted to know other persons involved in the killing and their whereabouts. Besides, police also said Siam is an important person who knows the whereabouts of the body parts of MP Azim and what kind of weapons were used to kill him," she said.

Siam was produced before the court on Saturday after he was taken to India from Nepal.

Harun said Siam and Jihad Howlader knew about the murder of the lawmaker. They are also involved in dumping the body parts, he added.

"India has both of them now. Interrogating them will yield good results. If necessary, we will also interrogate Siam," he said.

Harun said they informed the NCB after learning that Siam was in Nepal, and the NCB immediately passed the information to their Nepal counterparts who eventually made the arrests.

[Our Jhenaidah correspondent also contributed to this report.]

Fake note for sale

FROM PAGE 3

to release a large volume of counterfeit money into the market ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

During the raid, the officers seized counterfeit currency worth over Tk 1 crore. They also seized materials including paper, ink, laptops, four printers, screens, white paper, heater machines, and security threads.

The operation also uncovered a significant quantity of counterfeit Indian rupees.

Zakir employed around 15 to 20 individuals, paying them a total of Tk 2-2.5 lakh monthly.

The gang took orders online via social media platforms and delivered counterfeit notes through couriers. They also installed CCTV around their house to stay alert.

When arrests were imminent, Zakir and his associates would take refuge in shrines, earning Zakir the nickname Mazar Zakir.

Zakir had been involved in counterfeiting notes for the last 25 years and was previously arrested six times, but he has continued his counterfeiting activities, the DB said.

Earlier in Eid-ul-Fitr, the DB arrested a woman over drug trade. Later she got involved in counterfeit note trading.

Some days ago, she bought fake notes worth Tk 50 lakh from Zakir. The DB learnt about Zakir's whereabouts after arresting her.

Need roadmap

FROM PAGE 5

Addressing the event, former Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said people at the local level have very limited understanding about renewable energy, though the government has policy regarding this.

BEI President M Humayun Kabir said local government institutions, including the city corporations and municipalities, need to be empowered to expand renewable energy.

"We need to frame an inclusive and comprehensive roadmap to achieve the target of renewable energy. Peoples' participation towards this goal is critical," he said.

WB loan for Rohingyas

FROM PAGE 5

"However, international organisations are not reducing management costs accordingly. It must be reduced immediately or this crisis will become extreme," he said.

Omor Farooq Bhuiya of Bangladesh Civil Society Organization Process said per capita debt of the people of Bangladesh is $580 and increasing the debt means putting the next generation in debt before they are born.

Budget

FROM PAGE 3

for another feast of big fishes," the BNP leader said.

He said the new budget will do nothing but harm the country.

Fakhrul said the growing inflation is the biggest crisis for the common people as the skyrocketing prices of commodities have made their lives unbearable.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Rob) arranged the programme at Jatiya Press Club, marking the first death anniversary of Serajul Alam Khan, one of the key organisers of the Liberation War.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 9

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-45	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-50	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Saad Ershad comes

FROM PAGE 3

discuss party matters, but Saad didn't respond and seemed uninterested.

Meeting sources said most leaders present at the meeting supported the two leaders' remarks.

Meanwhile, executive chairman of the faction Kazi Firoz Rashid told the meeting that they would have to teach political mannerism to Saad.

"Otherwise, we will fail to compete with our opponent group," a JP leader who was present in the meeting quoted Kazi Firoz as saying.

The allegations were made in front of Raushan, but The Daily Star couldn't independently verify what her initial reaction was.

Saad Ershad was not present in the meeting. This newspaper could not contact him despite repeated attempts.

They speak like BNP

FROM PAGE 3

Quader said, "What CPD, TIB, or Sujan said is not our headache. They all speak in the same language as the BNP. Their actions do not match with what they say."

The AL general secretary said there is no scope for exempting punishment of illegal acts, "If someone commits a criminal offence, the perpetrators will face the music according to the existing law."

Quader expressed hope that the move will also help control inflation.

When asked about taking action against AL leaders accused of corruption, Quader said: "Provide a list of those you believe are corrupt. We will request the ACC to investigate them."

Allocation cut

FROM PAGE 3

BR and Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) will get Tk 58,087 crore under Annual Development Programme (ADP), which is Tk 5,010 crore (8.62 percent) less than the allocation of previous fiscal year.

RHD will get Tk 32,042 crore in 2024-25 fiscal year, which is Tk 2,021 crore (5.93 percent) less than the outgoing fiscal year.

Contacted, Shoaib Ahmed, acting chief engineer of RHD, said it's true that they received less allocation than they sought, but there is still scope to get more allocation when the ADP will be revised in the middle of the fiscal year.

A senior engineer from RHD highlighted that reduced allocation could negatively affect road improvement and bridge replacement projects, impacting the transportation system overall.

Meanwhile, the budget proposed Tk 13,726 crore for BR in the next fiscal year, which is Tk 1,234 crore (8.25 percent) less than the outgoing fiscal year.

A top BR official said main works of several major projects including Padma Bridge Rail Link, Khulna-Mongla Rail Line, Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Rail Line will be completed within the ongoing fiscal year.

But there are several projects, which are now at initial stage and would require more funds for land acquisition, he said.

He said they have sought over Tk 8,000 crore from the local fund (government) for land acquisition of Sirajganj-Bogura Rail Line, Khulna-Darshan Double Line, Dheerashram ICD, but they got only Tk 4,354 crore.

As a result, the land acquisition process will get delayed, which will also delay the project, he added.

The budget proposed Tk 7,309 crore for BBA, which is Tk 1,755 crore (1,936 percent) less than the outgoing year.

Contacted, BBA Chief Engineer Quazi Muhammad Ferdous said, "We received our expected allocation."

Replying to a question, he said two major projects -- Padma Bridge and Bangabandhu Tunnel -- will be completed within this outgoing fiscal year, resulting in less allocation.

EMBASSY OF SWEDEN

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eosdhaka@proedge-asso.com by 25 June 2024

Receipt of application will not be acknowledged. Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview.

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- Verify the authenticity of documents
- Collect biometrics
- Share information externally through email and telephone
- Other related tasks as instructed

For details, please visit https://proedge-asso.com/careers

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- Fluent in English (verbal and written)
- Good computer skills
- Service-minded
- Ability to independently perform duties and to ensure the delivery and completion of tasks, also under periods of high workload. Flexibility and ability to prioritize is a must, as well as to be motivated and have a willingness to learn new things

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আগারগাঁও মেট্রোরেল স্টেশন সংলগ্ন লায়ন্স টাওয়ারে পার্কিং সহ ৭০০০০ বর্গফুট বানিজ্যিক ভবনের ৫-৯ তলা ভাড়ার জন্যে বুকিং আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে।

প্রতি বর্গফুট হিসেবে ভাড়া প্রদানের নিমিত্তে কোটেশন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

*শর্তাবলী আলোচনা সাপেক্ষে
বিশেষ দ্রষ্টব্যঃ কর্তৃপক্ষ নোটিশ ছাড়াই কোনো কোটেশন গ্রহন/প্রত্যাখ্যান করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করে।
কোটেশন জমা দেয়ার শেষ সময়ঃ ৩০ই জুন, ২০২৪
কোটেশন জমা দেয়ার ঠিকানাঃ এডমিন রুম, ৫ম তলা, লায়ন্স টাওয়ার, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা
যোগাযোগঃ ০১৩৩২৫৩৩১৬১, ০১৩৩২৫৩৩১৬৬

BIRDEM GENERAL HOSPITAL
(An Enterprise of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh)
122 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Shahbag,,Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.
☎ : 41060501-24, Fax: 41060476
Website: www.birdembd.org orwww.dab-bd.org

INVITATION FOR TENDER

<table>
<tr><td>01.</td><td>Division /Entity</td><td colspan="5">Diabetic Association of Bangladesh</td></tr>
<tr><td>02.</td><td>Procuring Entity</td><td colspan="5">BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka</td></tr>
<tr><td>03.</td><td>Source OF Fund</td><td colspan="5">Revenue & Donation BIRDEM General Hospital</td></tr>
<tr><td>04.</td><td>Reference No</td><td colspan="5">BIRDEM/Purchase/10-Group (Medicine & MSR Items)/2024/01 Dated: 08 June 2024</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">05.</td><td rowspan="5">Details of Work</td><td colspan="2">Group-01: Medicine and Related Items.</td><td colspan="3">Group-06: Stationery, Furniture (Hospital and Office) and Related Items.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Group-02: Surgical and Related Items.</td><td colspan="3">Group-07: Crockery's, Cutleries, Miscellaneous & Related Items.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Group-03: Linen /Laundry, Apparel & Related Items.</td><td colspan="3">Group-08: Hardware, Sanitary & Related Items.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Group-04: Gauge-Bandage, Cotton, Dressing and Related Items.</td><td colspan="3">Group-09: Electric, Mechanical ,Civil, Electro' medical Items with all Spares and AC, VRF, Chiller, HVAC, HEPA items</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Group- 05: Chemical, Reagents and Related Items</td><td colspan="3">Group-10: Cleaning Materials and House Keeping Items.</td></tr>
<tr><td>06.</td><td>Procurement Method</td><td colspan="5">Open Tender Method (OTM)</td></tr>
<tr><td>07.</td><td>Source of fund</td><td colspan="5">Revenue, Donation, Govt.</td></tr>
<tr><td>08.</td><td>Name, designation & address of official inviting tender</td><td colspan="5">Director, Hospital Administration, BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000, On behalf of Director General, BIRDEM General Hospital</td></tr>
<tr><td>08.</td><td>Name & address of the office selling tender documents</td><td colspan="5">Procurement Section, Room: 230, 1st floor of OPD Building, BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.</td></tr>
<tr><td>09.</td><td>Date of selling of tender documents</td><td colspan="5">Tender documents will be available from 11 June 2024 to 09 July 2024 on all working days (09.00 am to 01.00 pm).</td></tr>
<tr><td>10.</td><td>Tender closing date</td><td colspan="5">11 July 2024 (From 08.00 AM to 12.00 PM).</td></tr>
<tr><td>11.</td><td>Tender opening date</td><td colspan="5">11 July 2024 at 12.30 Noon (In presence of the tenderers or their authorized agent, if anybody available).</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">12.</td><td rowspan="3">Price of tender document (For each group)</td><td colspan="5">Group: 1, 2 & 5 = 5,000/ (Five Thousand) Taka Only. (Each Group)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Group: 3, 4, 8 & 9 = 2,000/ (Two Thousand) Taka Only. (Each Group)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Group: 6, 7 & 10 = 1,000/ (One Thousand) Taka Only. (Each Group)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">13.</td><td rowspan="6">Tender Security</td><td>Name of Group</td><td>Tender Security Amount (BDT)</td><td>Name of Group</td><td>Tender Security Amount (BDT)</td><td>Comments</td></tr>
<tr><td>Group-01</td><td>1,00,000.00</td><td>Group-06</td><td>10,000.00</td><td rowspan="5">Said amount for each group have to be deposited in the form of Demand Draft or Pay-order from any local commercial bank in favor of BIRDEM General Hospital.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Group-02</td><td>50,000.00</td><td>Group-07</td><td>10,000.00</td></tr>
<tr><td>Group-03</td><td>30,000.00</td><td>Group-08</td><td>20,000.00</td></tr>
<tr><td>Group-04</td><td>30,000.00</td><td>Group-09</td><td>20,000.00</td></tr>
<tr><td>Group-05</td><td>50,000.00</td><td>Group-10</td><td>10,000.00</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">14.</td><td colspan="6">Eligibility of tenderers</td></tr>
<tr><td>a.</td><td colspan="5">The tenderers should be manufacturer or their authorized supplier/distributor/dealer or seller of the items.</td></tr>
<tr><td>b.</td><td colspan="5">Each group & item of the lot/group shall be evaluated separately.</td></tr>
<tr><td>c.</td><td colspan="5">The tenderers should have valid & updated trade license, TIN, VAT & Income Tax Certificate.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="6">Detail Specifications, Terms & Conditions, Warranty & After sales services are enumerated in the tender schedule.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="6">BIRDEM authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">Note: In case of holiday or any unavoidable circumstances last date of dropping & opening will be the next working day.</td></tr>
</table>

Brig Gen Dr. Md. Nasir Uddin Ahamed (Rtd)
Director, Hospital Administration
BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.

D-31

POLLS WITHOUT SYMBOLS

No need to amend the law: Tazul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local Government, Rural Development, and Co-operatives Minister Tazul Islam yesterday said there is no need to amend the law to hold elections for upazila parishads and other local government bodies without party symbols.

Speaking at a seminar at the Dhaka Reporters Unity, he noted that the existing law allows parties to field their nominated candidates, who can contest the election without using party symbols.

The Reporters Forum for Election and Democracy (RFED) organised the seminar titled "Challenges in Strengthening Local Government System and the Role of Party Symbols in Elections".

Brig Gen (retd) Sakhawat Hussain, a former election commissioner, emphasised that local government elections were not initially intended to be held under party symbols. He argued that assigning party symbols to candidates centralises power within party leadership.

"Now the entire election system has become corrupted. The party symbol was introduced in local government elections to serve the interests of a party," he said.

Another former election commissioner, Kabita Khanam, suggested that changing the political culture is essential for making elections acceptable.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan), mentioned that the local government system has weakened due to "intervention by lawmakers and control by public administration".

A long tailback on the capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue near Paribagh around 2:00pm yesterday. Heavy traffic, even in the afternoon, continues to be a problem that haunts the city.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Recognise the 1971 genocide

Speakers tell first council of 'Aamra Ekattor'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The new generation is stronger than the freedom fighters and will lead the country forward while preserving the pride, heritage, and heroism of the Liberation War, said Mahbub Zaman, chairperson of Aamra Ekattor, yesterday.

He made the remarks at the first council of Aamra Ekattor, an organisation dedicated to upholding the spirit of the Liberation War, held in the capital.

Zaman said the pride, heritage, and heroism associated with the Liberation War and its victory will continue to grow stronger. To support this mission, "Aamra Ekattor" has been established to pass the national flag to the new generation.

"Our slogan is 'Awaken in the spirit of '71, awaken others'," he added.

During the inaugural ceremony, freedom fighter Hilal Foyezi, chief coordinator of Aamra Ekattor, delivered the welcome speech.

Marking 53 years of independence, 53 freedom fighters were honoured by 53 young individuals who have excelled in fields such as literature, culture, sports, science, technology, and travel.

Speaking about the organisation's journey, Mahfuza Jasmine, a member of Aamra Ekattor, said, "Following the glorious path of our past and inspired by the ideals of the Liberation War, we started an informal journey. Our goal is to create a new awakening to build a non-communal, humane, and equitable Bangladesh."

Addressing the organisation's objectives, another member, Tamzid Siddiq Spondon, said one of their major goals is to achieve international recognition of the 1971 killings as "genocide".

He said they have already submitted a memorandum to the United Nations secretary-general and are actively engaging in international seminars and various movements to pursue this goal.

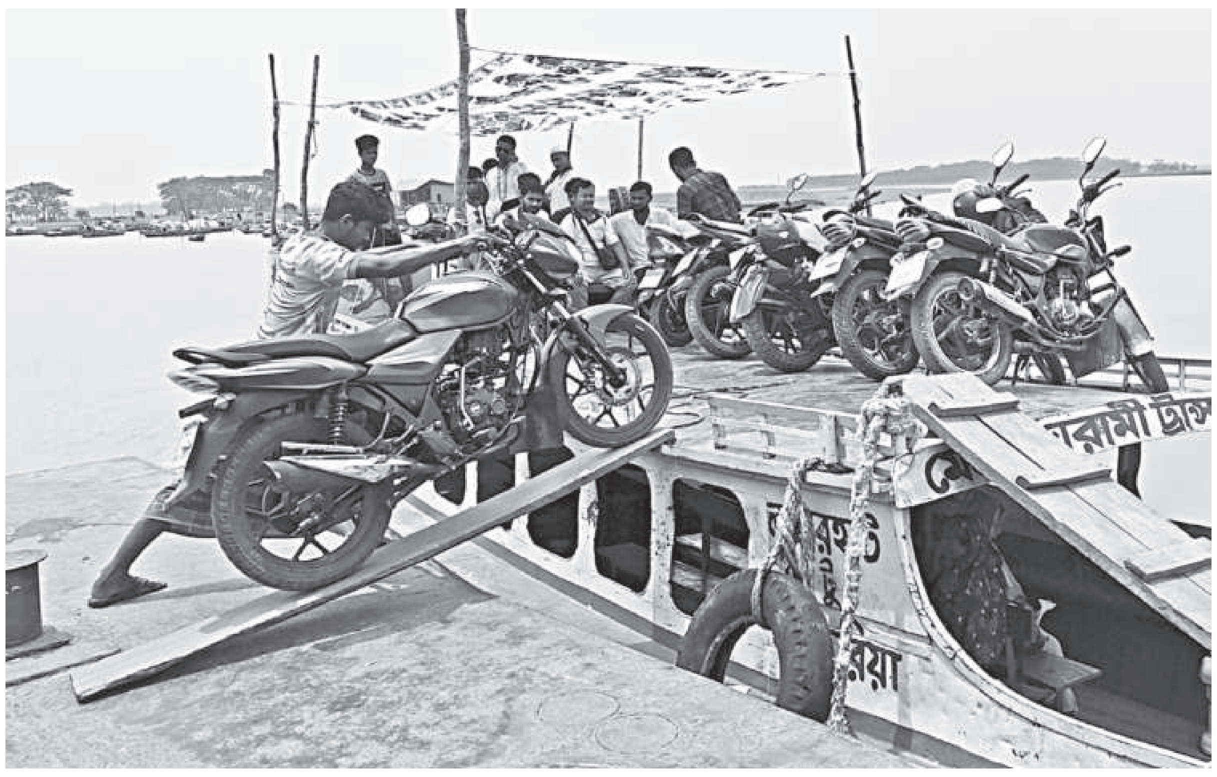

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Workers lift motorcycles onto the roof of this Bhola-Bheduria bound launch docked next to Laharhat ferry terminal in Barishal. Such boats were not designed to carry the load of motorcycles on its roof and a disaster could strike at any moment. The fare for a passenger is Tk 100, while fare for a motorcycle is Tk 120. The photo was taken recently.

Need roadmap to meet renewable energy targets

Speakers tell dialogue

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh needs a clear roadmap to implement the renewable energy targets set by the government, said lawmakers and policy experts at a dialogue yesterday.

They said people in general have limited awareness on the importance of renewable energy, that will be critical in the days to come because of climate change impacts.

The observations came at a national dialogue organised by Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) at a Dhaka hotel.

The Bangladesh government aimed to generate 5 percent of its electricity from renewables by 2015 and 10 percent by 2020. However, as of June last year, this number is less than 5 percent.

The government has now set new targets, aiming to produce 15 percent of electricity from renewables by 2030, 40 percent by 2041 and 100 percent by 2050.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

'WB loan for Rohingyas won't solve crisis'

Speakers say it will make country more debt-ridden

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank loan that is being provided for projects involving Rohingyas and host communities means the country will be more debt-ridden, said civil society groups at a rally yesterday.

When there is no option but to repatriate the around one million Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar and Bhashanchar, the WB loan will intensify the crisis of Bangladesh, which is already debt-ridden, they said.

Nine civic and development organisations organised a human chain and rally in front of Jatiya Press Club.

Recently, Ecnec approved two projects involving Tk 8,483 crore. Here, WB will provide Tk 7,720 crore ($700 million) -- Tk 4,475 crore in loan and Tk 3,244 crore in grants.

Civil society groups said there has been no repatriation in the last seven years, while funds for Rohingyas are also dwindling. The WB loan, instead of just grant, does not ensure justice for the people of Bangladesh.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, chief moderator of EquityBD, said, "When Bangladesh asked for assistance in the development of local communities affected by the Rohingya crisis, WB offered a loan. Since Bangladesh is not responsible for the Rohingya crisis, it must not take loans."

EquityBD Secretariat Coordinator Mustafa Kamal Akand said the per capita fund allocated for Rohingya population has already dropped from $12 to $8.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

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Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur
E-mail: fmch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd

Momo No. Director/BSMMCH/Tender/Diet & Other-2023-2024/2879 Date: 06/06/2024

Invitation for Tenders

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from bonafide Businessmen/Experienced Service Providers to supply of Dietary Items, Other Stationaries, Computer Conjumables & Electrical goods and Washing of Linen of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur as per PPA-2006 & PPR-2008

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
2	Agency	Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS)
3	Procuring entity name	Director, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur
4	Procuring entity code	NA
5	Procuring entity district	Faridpur.
6	Invitation for	Goods & Services
7	Invitation Ref No.	Director/BSMMCH/Tender/ Diet & Other/2023-2024/2879
8	Date	06/06/2024
KEY INFORMATION		
9	Procurement method	NCT Open Tendering Method (OTM)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
10	Budget and source of funds	Non-Development GOB
11	Development partners (if applicable)	NA
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
12	Project/programme code (if applicable)	NA
13	Project/programme name (if applicable)	NA
14	Tender Package No.	Package No-1, Lot No-1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
15	Tender package name	Procurement of (i) Dietary Items, (ii) Other Stationaries, (iii) Computer Conjumables, (iv) Electrical goods and (v) Cleaning & Washing Services for financial year 2024-2025
16	Tender publication date	09/06/2024
17	Tender last selling date	07/07/2024
18	Tender closing date and time	08/07/2024, 12:00 Noon.
19	Tender opening date and time	08/07/2024, 12:30pm
20	Name & address of the office(s)	
	-Selling tender document	Office of the Director, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur
	-Receiving Tender Document	Office of the Director, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur
	-Opening Tender Document	Office of the Director, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
21	Brief eligibility and qualification of tenderer	a) The tenderer should have valid trade license, VAT registration certificate, latest income tax clearance certificate, and Bank's Commitment for line of Credit as specified in the TDS. b) The tenderer shall have overall experience in the supply of similar goods and related service and shall have a minimum experience for supply of similar goods and related services in the matter of money as specified in the TDS. c) Other detail conditions are included with the tender schedule.
22	Brief description of goods or services	(i) Dietary Items, (ii) Other Stationaries, (iii) Computer Conjumables, (iv) Electrical goods and (v) Cleaning & Washing Services of linen goods of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur.
23	Brief description of related services	As required
24	Price of tender document (Tk)	Tk. 4,000/- (four thousand) for Lot-1, 2 & 5 and Tk. 2,000/- (two thousand) for Lot-3 & 4. To purchase tender document fixed money must be submitted in favoure of Director, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur. Code-No-1-2711-0000-2366 in Sonali Bank by CTR form with online challan verification.

25	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	Completion time in weeks/months (approximate)
	1	Dietary Items	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur	2% of total Quoted amount	12 months
	2	Other Stationaries	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur	2% of total Quoted amount	12 months
	3	Computer Conjumables	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur	2% of total Quoted amount	12 months
	4	Electrical goods	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur	2% of total Quoted amount	12 months
	5	Cleaning & Washing Services of linen goods	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur	2% of total Quoted amount	12 months

26	Name of official inviting tender	Dr. Md Humayun Kabir
27	Designation of official inviting tender	Director, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur.
28	Address of official inviting tender	Office of the Director, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur.
29	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: 02478803331, E-mail: fmch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd
30	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings	
	Authority is not bound to accept the lowest tender rate. Authority may cancel the whole tender(s)/part of the tender without assigning any reason.	
	Terms and conditions of the tender and other information will be available with the tender schedule.	

Note: If the date of selling, receiving & opening of tender is disturbed under any unavoidable circumstance, the next working day will be applicable for the same respectively.

Dr. Md. Humayun Kabir
Director
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, Faridpur

GD- 966

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

'OBAK BHALOBASHA'
30 years later

The very talented Babna Karim, a former member of the band and also the original creator of the song, was flown in from the US to perform with the band. The song also featured a host of gifted musicians who played and vocalised alongside the band.

ELITA KARIM

Warfaze, one of the most celebrated bands in Bangladesh, turned 40 years old on June 6. With albums, compositions, awards, and several hits to their name, the band has contributed much to the music industry in Bangladesh. They have also played a vital role– through their melodies and lyrics– in keeping the Bengali language alive, thriving, and evolving, over several generations and in countries all over the world, where Bengalis live and communicate accordingly.

The latest release of the famous song, ***Obak Bhalobasha*** on the Coke Studio Bangla version proved to many that certain compositions are here to stay forever and can be reborn generations later.

As the new version of the song crosses the eight million mark, one can't help going back to the original version of the song, which was released in a self-titled album 30 years ago. The album was definitely a big hit, especially the song ***Obak Bhalobasha***. The unique elements that defined the composition– the beginning of the guitar solo, going on for minutes, sounds of waves crashing against the rocks at sea, calls of seagulls flying above, and then finally sliding into the words of a beautiful saga– had the younger ones asking for more.

Fast forward to almost three decades later, the release of the new version of ***Obak Bhalobasha*** now has a younger set of followers and music lovers. The song featured the current band members of Warfaze– Sheikh Monirul Alam Tipu (drums), Ibrahim Ahmed Kamal (lead guitar), Palash Noor (vocals), Samir Hafiz (lead guitar), Naim Haque Roger (bass guitar) and Shams Mansoor Ghani (keyboard).

The very talented Babna Karim, a former member of the band and also the original creator of the song, was flown in from the US to perform with the band. The song also featured a host of gifted musicians who played and vocalised alongside the band.

"It was Arnob who got in touch with me last November regarding Coke Studio Bangla Season 3," says Tipu.

PHOTOS: BAYEZID BIN WAHEED/ RAW EXPOSURE

Tipu adds that initially, the band was considering working on ***Ekti Chele***, yet another Warfaze hit. "Palash, the band's current vocalist, does a fantastic rendition of the song," says Tipu, adding, "And we all thought that the song would be perfect. However, the Coke Studio team wanted ***Obak Bhalobasha*** instead."

The entire production was nothing less than a team effort, says Tipu, with Arnob, Samir, and himself working on the production of the new version.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Babna Karim, the lyricist and composer of ***Obak Bhalobasha***, remembers writing the song on February 29, 1992, a couple of years before it was released. "I first created the melody and the lyrics followed later," he says.

After the release of the self-titled album in 1994, the band found out about the Coca-Cola Band Music Award and was adamant about participating in the competition with the submission of their newly released song ***Obak Bhalobasha***. However, they were falling short of approximately Tk 3,500.

"The requirements were as follows: the song was to be submitted on five chrome cassettes, along with the lyrics and the structure of the song," says Tipu. "Neither I nor Babna had the funds to do this, so I went to Kabir *bhai* from Rainbow Music Store. He immediately handed me the money and recorded the chrome cassettes himself."

As one can guess, the team won the competition and walked off with a cash prize of Tk 50,000. This, undoubtedly, motivated them to flourish and achieve more in the industry. Three decades later, it was as if fate reunited Coca-Cola and Warfaze for this new rendition of ***Obak Bhalobasha*** in the third season of Coke Studio Bangla.

"I simply loved everything about it!" says Babna, referring to the production and the set. "Also the blending between two different scales was done perfectly," he adds, noting the striking difference between the original and the new version of the song. "This was done because Palash and I sing on different keys."

The key shift that Babna Karim speaks of is the transition to an E minor from a C minor - while performing the new version live on set. Shifting of keys within a composition is sometimes done to add an artistic layer to a performance, where the tempo also goes through exciting changes. This is also done to make adjustments between two or more vocalists performing the composition.

"In the rendition, we moved from C minor to E minor– a total of four shifts!" Palash exclaims.

"Both Warfaze and Arnob had long discussions about how this transition would take place. Eventually, a point was reached where the transition for the instruments and vocals would be smooth. I definitely learned a thing or two that day!" says Palash.

Obak Bhalobasha has been relevant for several generations and has created connections through the power of love and music. It is now time for the younger musicians to come forward and create new dimensions; this will only be possible if the legends make way and welcome new ideas to the circle.

The author is a singer and journalist.

COUNTRYWIDE

Traditional duli still in demand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

Duli, a traditional rice storage bin or a small silo, made of bamboo, is still being used by farmers in different rural areas of the northern region.

Usually, use and sale of traditional duli increase in many folds during the paddy harvesting period as most of the farmers in Rangpur region prefers it for storing rice all the year round.

As a result, local bamboo craftsmen pass busy times in making and selling duli during the rice harvesting season.

Currently, the bamboo-made rice storage bin is available in almost all the Haats (weekly markets) in Rangpur region's five districts--Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Rangpur, Nilphamari and Gaibandha.

Locals said duli still has a high demand among farmers in rural areas.

A number of farmers said gradually traditional agricultural practices as well as the tools and accessories, used by farmers, are being replaced by modern machinery and gadgets.

But duli, a traditional paddy storage bin or a miniature silo, is still being used by farmers in rural areas for storing harvested rice at their homes.

Depending on the amount of paddy harvested in a single season, each farmer usually sets-up one or two duli at their homestead to store rice for consumption of their family members all through the year, they added.

Farmer Nagendra Nath Das of Thetrai village in Kurigram's Ulipur upazila said the demand for duli is at its peak during the paddy harvest season.

Moreover, most of the craftsmen remain busy during that period, trying to keep up with orders made by duli traders.

"Duli is considered as one of our traditional accessories for storing rice," he said.

Craftsman Anil Chandra Das of Nayarhat village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila said duli is available in three regular sizes -- small, medium and large.

The small one holds about 10 to 12 maunds of rice, the medium one about 20 to 22 maunds, and the large one holds as much as 25 to 30 maunds.

If made with inferior quality and thin bamboo slices, a duli lasts around three to four years, but a duli made with high quality thick bamboo slivers can last up to seven to eight years.

Each small size duli is being sold for Tk 1,000 to 1,200, medium size at Tk 1,800 to Tk 2,000 and the large one at Tk 2,500 to Tk 2,700.

It takes about two to three days to make a duli, while profit from each duli is around Tk 500 to Tk 800, he said.

Craftsmen seen busy in selling bamboo-made traditional duli at Nayarhat Bazar in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Will Tigers cash in on lucky break?

FROM PAGE 12

his only boundary in the innings, killing off a match which got unnecessary tense owing to some questionable batting.

In the end, Mahmudullah remained 16 not out off 13 balls following a steady 36 off 38 from Liton Das and a bold 20-ball 40 from Towhid Hridoy as Bangladesh got over the line with two wickets in hand in a nervy 125-run chase.

The low-scoring thriller had multiple twists and turns, with Bangladesh faltering in a chase that should've been much more straight-forward, accepted their captain.

"We gave our 120 percent. Last 10-15 days we have been making plans and all the fielders are doing their job. I think they bowled really well, but on a wicket like this we should have won this easily," said skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto after the match.

Sri Lanka had started the match brilliantly, plundering 53 runs in the Powerplay, thanks to Pathum Nissanka's 28-ball 47. But after Mustafizur Rahman, who eventually finished with 3-17, got the batter caught with his trademark cutter, it was all Bangladesh.

The bowlers conceded just 71 runs from the seventh to 20th over at a run-rate touch above five runs per over with leg-spinner Rishad Hossain claiming three wickets, being in with a chance to claim a hat-trick at one point, and injury returnee Taskin Ahmed taking 2-25.

The bowlers had set up the match wonderfully for the Tigers but the batters nearly threw it away multiple times, owing to a mixture of some brilliant bowling from Sri Lanka and sub-par batting.

Even Bangladesh's final runs in the chase came off an overthrow, after Mahmudullah was nearly run out going for a single, which would've seen the Tigers needing two runs with just one wicket in hand in the last over.

Bangladesh's win over Sri Lanka may not have been entirely convincing but it has already put the Tigers in a favourable position in the race to Super 8s.

After the defeat to Bangladesh, Sri Lanka are staring down the barrel, as they now need to win against associates Nepal and the Netherlands by big margins and pray for a few upsets if they are to finish as one of the two top teams in Group D.

Sri Lanka's misery has opened the doors for Bangladesh as a couple of wins over the associates should be sufficient for them to progress. However, if this World Cup has shown anything, it's that the margin between the elites and the full members has shrunk and many associates have the ammunition to pull off surprises.

Nevertheless, in a campaign where not much was expected of them, Bangladesh now have a clear cut path to the next phase following their South Africa fixture as their final two group games will be played in the Caribbean pitches, which are closer to pitches back home.

The Tigers now can dare to dream.

It encourages corruption

FROM PAGE 12

"There is an understanding, but the initiatives are not enough to overcome the crisis," he said.

The SANEM executive director said there is also a lack of initiatives for achieving the targets on institutional reforms.

The projections on foreign currency reserves, revenue collection, and investment, are also not realistic, he observed.

The research organisation said that the government has set some unrealistic targets for inflation and economic growth.

The government seeks to bring down inflation to 6.5 percent, which averaged more than 9 percent in the last two years.

It also aims to achieve the target for 6.75 percent gross domestic product (GDP) growth for FY25, which is much higher than the provisional estimate of 5.82 percent for the current fiscal year.

In order to achieve the targeted GDP growth, the government's goal is to increase the private investment-to-GDP ratio to 27.3 percent in FY25 from 23.5 in the current fiscal year.

"Significant challenges remain in alleviating poverty, reducing inequality, and creating employment. Bringing inflation to a tolerable level will be another big challenge," said Sayema Haque Bidisha, research director of SANEM.

It is not possible to bring down inflation to the targeted level, said Bidisha, a professor of economics at Dhaka University.

She said higher foreign and domestic debts will have a direct impact on inflation.

"The authorities should have taken measures to stop Hundi [transaction of money through illegal channels]. No steps have been taken in this regard. There is no initiative to encourage farmers to produce agricultural products as an alternative to imports," she said.

Also, there are no significant initiatives in the proposed budget to encourage employment generation, she said, adding that a detailed roadmap is needed in this regard.

SANEM, however, praised the government's decision to increase the highest tax rate from 25 percent to 30 percent, abolish the tax at source on some essential commodities, and raise the allocations for the health and social safety net sectors.

Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali placed the Tk 7,97,000 crore national budget in parliament on June 6.

123 illegal

FROM PAGE 12

by department personnel and the drone unit.

"A total of 252 people were inspected, and 92 of them were arrested for various offences.

"We also arrested a 62-year-old local man under Section 56(1)(d) of the Immigration Act 1959/63 for harbouring illegal immigrants," he said.

Those detained included 30 men from China, four men from India, four men from Indonesia, 53 men from Bangladesh, and one man from Pakistan.

"Those arrested are aged from 20 to 40," he said, adding that the settlement was located about 500 metres from a construction site where the illegal immigrants were working.

Swiatek wins 3rd straight French Open title

FROM PAGE 12

in the Open era to lift the Coupe Suzanne Lenglen four times -- after Justine Henin, Chris Evert and Steffi Graf.

"It's amazing to be here. I love this place. I wait every year to come back," said Swiatek, who clicked into gear after saving a match point against Naomi Osaka in the second round.

"I was almost out of the tournament," she said. "I also needed to believe this one is going to be possible, it's been a really emotional tournament."

Swiatek becomes only the third woman to win the tournament three years running. Henin, in 2005-07, was the last to do so. Monica Seles also achieved the feat as a teenager at the start of the 1990s.

At 23, her four Roland Garros titles is the same number Rafael Nadal, the record 14-time champion, had at the same age.

For the 28-year-old Paolini it was a sorry conclusion, at least in singles, to an otherwise brilliant fortnight in the French capital.

The world number 15 had won a total of four matches in 16 Grand Slam appearances before advancing to the fourth round of the Australian Open in January.

While she fell short of emulating compatriot Francesca Schiavone, who won the 2010 French Open, Paolini could yet finish on a winning note with her and doubles partner Sara Errani through to Sunday's final.

"I have to say congratulations to you, Iga," said Paolini. "I think to play you here is the toughest challenge in this sport."

Cop shoots

FROM PAGE 12

embassy. When our driver slowed down, a policeman, who was sitting next to the body began firing at us indiscriminately. So, we left the area immediately."

Police recovered four to five bullet casings from the spot.

On information, additional police personnel, including a SWAT team, were deployed in the diplomatic zone.

D-8 group urges world to up pressure on Israel

AFP, *Istanbul*

An alliance of mostly Muslim-majority countries including Turkey, Egypt and Iran yesterday demanded full Palestinian membership of the United Nations and greater international pressure on Israel amid the Gaza war.

The D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, which also includes Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria and Pakistan, called for an immediate ceasefire in the devastated Palestinian territory, where Israel has been battling Hamas militants for more than eight months.

Foreign ministers from the group meeting in Istanbul called on the United States to lift its veto on full Palestinian UN membership and on all countries to "exert diplomatic, political, economic and legal pressure" on Israel.

They also urged states to ensure Israel complies with the International Court of Justice's decisions, withdraws from the southern Rafah governorate and guarantees the safe entry of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Denouncing an "ongoing genocide and grave violations of international law", the group called on states to contribute to and join legal proceedings against Israel at international courts.

The eight countries also demanded an end to arms and ammunition deliveries to Israel and that all measures be taken to protect Palestinian civilians, rejecting any attempted forced displacement.

FREE PALESTINE
CEASEFIRE NOW!
GAZA

Protesters hold placards and wave Palestinian flags as they take part in a "National March for Gaza" in central London yesterday, calling to "end the genocide" and "stop arming Israel". PHOTO: AFP

'INDIA bloc offered PM post to Nitish Kumar'

NDTV ONLINE

Bihar Chief Minister and Janata Dal (United) chief Nitish Kumar was offered the prime ministerial post by the Opposition INDIA bloc after the Lok Sabha election results were announced, party leader KC Tyagi claimed in an exclusive interview with NDTV.

The remarks came amid speculation that the INDIA bloc is trying to get Nitish Kumar back into the alliance in a bid to stop the NDA from forming the government for a record third term.

Tyagi, though, made it clear that the JDU has rejected all the offers from the opposition and plan to work with the NDA for the next five years.

"Nitish Kumar's speech supporting Prime Minister Narendra Modi has put to rest all the rumours doing the rounds. These reports should have stopped when we (JDU) joined the NDA," Tyagi told NDTV.

"We were hurt by the way Congress and its allies treated our leader, and had to choose a different path. Those who thought Nitish Kumar was not worthy of being the alliance's convenor are now offering him the prime minister's post. But the JDU has already rejected all such offers," he added.

Buzz of a sensational Nitish Kumar - INDIA bloc reunion surfaced Tuesday evening after it became clear the BJP would not win 272 seats on its own. Senior INDIA leaders, including former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, suggested an olive branch might be extended to Nitish Kumar.

On Thursday sources close to Nitish Kumar ruled out this possibility, but left a sting in the tail; with both sides locked in talks over ministerial berth allocation, the BJP brass was reportedly told to remember Nitish Kumar had walked out of the INDIA bloc over delays in naming him as its Convenor.

According to sources, JDU will get two key posts in the new cabinet led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which will be sworn in today. The party has proposed the name of two senior leaders - Lalan Singh and Ram Nath Thakur. Lalan Singh was elected to the Lok Sabha from Bihar's Munger, while Ram Nath Thakur is a Rajya Sabha MP. Thakur is the son of Bharat Ratna awardee Karpoori Thakur.

Strikes on Russia-held Ukraine kill 26

AFP, *Moscow*

Ukrainian strikes on parts of the Russian-held Lugansk and Kherson regions killed 26 people and injured dozens more on Friday, occupation authorities said.

Both Ukrainian regions were among four Russia claimed to have annexed in September 2022 despite not fully controlling any of them following the full-scale military campaign launched that February.

A shop in the village of Sadove in the southern Kherson region "with a large number of visitors and employees was destroyed", Vladimir Saldo, head of Russian occupation authorities in Kherson, wrote on Telegram.

A HIMARS missile struck shortly afterwards as residents from neighbouring houses rushed to help the victims, Saldo told Russian media.

Saldo condemned the "vile murder of civilians" made possible by Western arms deliveries to Ukraine.

Earlier on Friday, Russian-appointed officials in Lugansk reported that a Ukrainian missile strike on an apartment block in the eastern region's main city of the same name killed four and wounded more than 40.

The strike tore open the facade of a five-storey Soviet-era block of flats from the roof down and left a deep crater in the ground, images posted by the Russian emergency services showed.

UK foreign minister fooled by hoax call

AFP, *London*

Britain's foreign minister David Cameron has been the victim of a hoax video call from someone claiming to be the former president of Ukraine, officials said.

Cameron had a short video call with former Ukrainian leader Petro Poroshenko, who was president from 2014 to 2019, but later became concerned. The hoax was being made public to alert others of the risk and ensure the video was not "manipulated and subsequently used", a Foreign Office statement said.

A number of "text messages were exchanged followed by a brief video call between the foreign secretary and someone purporting to be Petro Poroshenko", according to the statement issued on Friday. "Whilst the video call clearly appeared to be with Mr Poroshenko, following the conversation the foreign secretary became suspicious and stopped communication."

The statement did not say when the call took place.

France's President Emmanuel Macron (L) talks with US President Joe Biden during a ceremony at the Arc of Triomphe in Paris yesterday. Biden, after meeting Macron pledged Washington's support for Kyiv in its battle against the Russian invasion, warning that Vladimir Putin would "not stop" at Ukraine. Both Biden and Macron on Friday met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Paris, pledging support for the Ukrainian cause. The US president, 81, has been in France since Wednesday and took part in this week's commemorations marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings that changed the course of World War II. PHOTO: AFP

Danish PM attacker gets 12 days in custody

REUTERS, *Copenhagen*

A 39-year old man who assaulted Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen in Copenhagen on Friday causing her to suffer a neck injury was sentenced yesterday to 12 days in custody, Danish police said.

The assault took place in a square in the city centre on Friday when a man walked up to the prime minister and hit her.

Frederiksen's office said the incident had left the politician "shocked" and suffering a minor whiplash injury.

All programmes of PM have been cancelled. .

The assault comes two days before Danes head to the polls in the European Union election.

A month ago, three German politicians suffered assaults ahead of European Parliament and district council elections and more attacks followed earlier this week.

Suspected Islamists kill 38 in DR Congo

REUTERS, *Beni*

Suspected Islamist rebels killed at least 38 people in an overnight attack on villages in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, two district officials and a civil society leader said yesterday.

Local civil society leader Justin Kavalami blamed members of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) for the attack. The ADF, alleged to be behind another village assault that killed at least 16 people earlier this week, originates from neighbouring Uganda.

Now based in eastern Congo, it has pledged allegiance to Islamic State and mounts frequent attacks, further destabilising a region where many militant groups are active.

Armed men used guns and machetes to attack residents of villages in Beni territory, in North Kivu province, overnight on Friday, local official Fabien Kakule told Reuters.

District official Leon Kakule Siviwe said the death toll stood at 38 and said the recent surge in violence was due to the attackers taking advantage of a low security presence.

Engineering Division
Khulna University, Khulna
www.ku.ac.bd

Tender No. KU/ENGG/617/2024
Date: 09/06/2024

e-Tender Notice Tender No. 14/2023-24

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of

SL.	Tender ID No.	Name of the works	Tender closing and opening date & time
01	996386	Supply and Installation of Power Factor Improvement Panel (PFI) at Khulna University, Khulna.	24-Jun-2024, 3:00pm
02	996415	Construction of EPT including Installation of laboratory Equipment at Khulna University, Khulna.	24-Jun-2024, 3:30pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to Banking hours on e-GP System.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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Tel: 02-477734157

GD- 967

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
পরিচালকের কার্যালয়
কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল
২, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পিপিএ-২০০৬, পিপিআর-২০০৮ এবং এ সংক্রান্ত সংশোধীত সকল বিধিমালা অনুসরণক্রমে ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ সালের জন্য কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল এর অনুকূলে আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে জনবল সরবরাহের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের মালিকদের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে-

ক্রঃ নং	সংগ্রাহক সত্তা ও তথ্যাদির বিবরণী	আগ্রহী দরদাতাদের জ্ঞাতব্য ও যোগ্যতার বিবরণী
১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়।
২	এজেন্সি	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
৩	ক্রয়কারীর নাম	পরিচালক (ডিআইজি), কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, ঢাকা
৪	অর্থের উৎস	জিওবি (বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ বাজেটের সংশ্লিষ্ট খাত)।
৫	দরপত্র ধরণ	আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে জনবল সরবরাহ কাজ।
৬	দরপত্র নম্বর ও তারিখ	কেঃপুঃহাঃ/হিসাব শাখা/দরপত্র-০৩/২০২৪-২০২৫-২৫১০ তারিখঃ ০৮/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ
৭	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী দপ্তরের নাম	পরিচালক (ডিআইজি) কার্যালয়, কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, ঢাকা
৮	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	০৯/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ।
৯	দরপত্র ক্রয়ের শুরুর তারিখ	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ হতে
১০	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান	পরিচালকের কার্যালয়, কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, ২য় তলা, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা
১১	দরপত্র সিডিউল দাখিল ও খোলার স্থান	পরিচালকের কার্যালয়, কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, ১ম তলা এর কনফারেন্স রুম
১২	দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	উম্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (ফ্রেমওয়ার্ক) জাতীয়।
১৩	দরপত্রদাতা/ যোগানদার/ সরবরাহকারীর যোগ্যতা	ক) দরপত্রদাতা প্রতিষ্ঠানের অনুকূলে অনুরূপ কাজের ব্যবসায়িক বৈধ এবং হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স লাইসেন্স থাকতে হবে; খ) দরপত্রদাতা/প্রতিষ্ঠানের একক নামে বিগত ০৬(ছয়) মাসের ব্যাংক সাচ্ছলতার সনদপত্র ও ব্যাংক স্টেটমেন্ট থাকতে হবে; গ) যে কোন সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের অনুকূলে সমপ্রকৃতির কাজ সফলভাবে সম্পাদনের প্রমাণস্বরূপ প্রত্যয়নপত্র থাকতে হবে; ঘ) হালনাগাদ পরিশোধিত আয়কর সনদপত্র ও ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র থাকতে হবে; ঙ) নাগরিকত্ব ও জাতীয়তা সনদপত্র এর সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি দাখিল করতে হবে; চ) দরপত্রদাতার যোগ্যতা সংক্রান্তে প্রদত্ত সকল কাগজপত্রাদি একজন প্রথম শ্রেণীর সরকারী কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত হতে হবে; ছ) দরদাতা এই মর্মে (তাহার নিজস্ব প্যাডে) প্রত্যয়নপত্র দাখিল করবেন যে, তিনি পূর্বে যে সকল প্রতিষ্ঠান সমুহ হতে কার্যাদেশ গ্রহণ করেছেন সেই সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানের সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজ সঠিকভাবে সম্পন্ন করেছেন এবং সেই সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানের সহিত চুক্তি/শর্ত ভঙ্গ করেন নাই বা সেই সকল প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে জামানত বাজেয়াপ্ত করা হয় নাই। ভুল তথ্য প্রদান করলে উক্ত দরপত্র বাতিলপূর্বক দরপত্রদাতার বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে; জ) পিপিআর মোতাবেক সিডিউলে বর্ণিত যাবতীয় শর্তাবলী পালনসহ আনুষাঙ্গিক কাগজ/দলিলপত্রাদি দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে; ঝ) বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী দরপত্র তফসিলে উল্লেখ থাকবে (Procurement of Non-Consulting Services-PSN)।
১৪	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৩/০৬/২০২৪ইং তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১৫	দরপত্র সিডিউল দাখিলের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৪/০৬/২০২৪ইং তারিখ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৬	দরপত্র উন্মুক্তকরণ কমিটির সভার তারিখ ও সময়	২৪/০৬/২০২৪ইং তারিখ দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা। দরদাতা অথবা তাহার প্রতিনিধির সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)
১৭	প্রি- টেন্ডার মিটিং	১৩/০৬/২০২৪ইং তারিখ দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকায় (পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়ের কনফারেন্স রুমে)
১৮	প্যাকেজের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	দরপত্র তফসিল মোতাবেক (Procurement of Non-Consulting Services-PSN)।
১৯	বিবরণ	

ক্রম	কাজের নাম	সিডিউলের মূল্য (টাকা) (অফেরতযোগ্য)	দরপত্র জামানত (টাকা) (ফেরতযোগ্য)	দরপত্রের সময়কাল
(ক)	আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে জনবল (ক্যাটাগরি ১ হতে ৫) সরবরাহ কাজ	৭০০/- টাকা মাত্র	২,০০,০০০/-	২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছর (পুঃহাঃকেঃ হতে অর্থ বরাদ্দ সাপেক্ষে ফ্রেম-ওয়ার্ক চুক্তির আওতায় কার্যাদেশ প্রদান করা হবে)

২০	দাপ্তরিকভাবে দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম	ডাঃ মোঃ এমদাদুল হক
২১	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর পদবী	অতিরিক্ত ডিআইজি (প্রশাসন ও অর্থ)
২২	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর ঠিকানা	পরিচালকের কার্যালয়, কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, ১ম তলা, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা
২৩	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর সাথে যোগাযোগ	ফোনঃ ৮৮-০২-৮৩১২০৭৫; ফ্যাক্সঃ ৮৮-০২-৯৩৪২২৯৭
২৪	বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলীঃ	

(ক) উপরে বর্ণিত টেন্ডারের দরপত্র জামানত ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার/ ব্যাংক গ্যারান্টি সহ দরপত্র দলিলের সকল শর্তাবলী পূরণ করে অতিরিক্ত ডিআইজি (প্রশাসন ও অর্থ) এর অনুকূলে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।
(খ) কোন কারণে দরপত্র জমা দেওয়ার তারিখ ও সময় বা খোলার সময় সরকারি ছুটি থাকলে পরবর্তী কর্মদিবসে দরপত্র জমা দিতে হবে এবং পূর্ব নির্ধারিত সময়ে খোলা হবে।
(গ) নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারী কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ কিংবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার পূর্ণ ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

ডাঃ মোঃ এমদাদুল হক
বিপি- ৭৭০৫১১৯৮১৯
অতিরিক্ত ডিআইজি (প্রশাসন ও অর্থ)
পক্ষে/- পরিচালক (ডিআইজি)
কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, ঢাকা
ফোনঃ ৪৮৩২২৪০০

GD- 968

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

No good news for the unemployed youth

Proposed budget offers no hope or way out for them

Historically, the promise of job creation has been a cornerstone of political pledges. When Awami League came to power in 2009, it vowed to provide employment to every household. But we all know how that turned out. Such lofty promises are difficult to fulfil when contrasting priorities emerge and bureaucrats take over, but there is no denying the importance of sustained efforts—"sustained" being the keyword—to ensure proper utilisation of the youth. Unfortunately, the recently proposed budget has been frustrating in that regard. Not only does it offer no way out of the present job crisis, but it also betrays no intention of eradicating well-known barriers to employment such as corruption; if anything, it seems to have encouraged it. Case in point: allowing whitening of black money.

Corruption, it bears repeating, stifles economic growth and deters investment, thus limiting job opportunities. It is because of the widespread corruption and lack of targeted measures in Bangladesh that the number of the unemployed, especially among educated youths, has reached alarming levels. Many are forced to settle for low-paying jobs despite being overqualified. Many are seeking employment abroad through illegal and often precarious channels due to lack of opportunities. Businesses and entrepreneurs are facing various systemic hurdles. Even a large number of vacant positions in the public sector remain unfilled. The budget, as the nation's roadmap to secure its financial future, has missed the chance to address all such issues affecting the job market. Its poor allocations for education and health sectors, vital for the development of human resources, also do not help.

This reality—a stagnant job market and the uncertainties surrounding it—has been weighing heavily on young undergraduates. A recent survey by the Aachol Foundation, as reported by *Prothom Alo*, highlights the mental health struggles of university students with 55 percent of the surveyed expressing anxiety about their future careers. The intense pressure to succeed, coupled with an environment rife with bullying, harassment, and dissatisfaction with educational standards, has led to significant mental health issues among them, including depression and suicidal thoughts. This, among other things, indicates the growing disconnect between the education and employment sectors, with many students being forced to consider a career overseas.

This is bad news for the country. Clearly, what we are missing is an enabling environment for the nurturing and utilisation of young talents. We, therefore, urge the authorities to treat unemployment as a national emergency, with comprehensive strategies to stimulate job creation, curb corruption, and support both undergraduates and graduates as well as other job seekers. Our future and well-being depend on it.

Stop the decline of Chalan beel

Protecting the beel and its network of waterbodies is vital

It is appalling how we have allowed unplanned development, encroachment, waste dumping and over-extraction of groundwater strangle life out of the largest wetland of the country: the Chalan beel. The beel once provided subsistence to thousands of farmers and fishers in North Bengal. But in just over a century, according to a report, its size has reduced from 1,085 square kilometres to a mere 168 sq km, with its biodiversity largely destroyed and groundwater sources almost depleted.

The gradual decline of many of the rivers and canals that feed water into the beel caused its alarming decline. Those rivers too have been subjected to encroachment, construction of unplanned sluice gates, and mindless waste dumping. Lack of dredging is another issue. Despite repeated media reports in this regard, no effective measures have been taken by the government. Instead, the government itself built structures and set up projects, especially on Boral river's land, the main water source of Chalan beel. Although some ad hoc steps were taken to remove some of the structures on the Boral, based on a 2018 study by the water resources ministry, no long-term coordinated action has been taken to restore the navigability of the river, and consequently, the beel continued to dry up.

Several government agencies are responsible for the protection of our rivers and wetlands. It is, however, clear that no one is doing their job right. While the ill-equipped Department of Environment has done nothing to protect the biodiversity of Chalan beel, the fisheries and livestock ministry did not think twice before giving permission for pond excavation and fish farming. No action was taken to penalise illegal enclosures harming the beel's natural environment. The local administration and other responsible agencies too kept on turning a blind eye to the unplanned roads, bridges, culverts, regulators and sluice gates constructed through the beel and its network. Unfortunately, it is not the only victim of the government's sheer apathy in protecting our wetlands. We have seen several other beels being subjected to the same fate.

This needs to stop. Government agencies must work together, and develop and implement long-term projects to save this precious wetland and others. They must also preserve the networks of rivers and wetlands breathing life into our delta.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Donald Trump indicted

On June 9, 2023, the former president of the US was indicted with a felony over storing sensitive documents about nuclear capabilities in his Florida estate. It was alleged that he repeatedly attempted to hide records that were requested by investigators, and showed off a classified map and military plan from the Pentagon.

LABOUR RECRUITMENT TO MALAYSIA

Syndicate wins, migrants suffer, country loses

Shariful Hasan
is the associate director of Migration Programme and Youth Platform at BRAC, and a columnist.

SHARIFUL HASAN

"Is the syndicate more powerful than the state?"

This was the closing line of my article about labour recruitment to Malaysia, published in *The Daily Star* on July 25, 2022. After two years, particularly in the last few days, many now understand the syndicates' complexities and influential role in the recruitment process of Bangladeshi migrants for Malaysia.

Such incidents are common in the context of migration to Malaysia. Over the past 15 years, Malaysia's labour market has been shut down three times due to the same syndicate's involvement, irregularities, corruption, and bribery allegations.

When Malaysia resumed hiring Bangladeshi workers in August 2022, following a four-year hiatus, the governments of both countries agreed that a worker would spend no more than Tk 78,990 during the whole process. However, migrants each had to pay Tk 5.44 lakh or $5,000, according to a survey by the US-based non-profit Verité.

On March 28, four UN experts wrote to the governments of Bangladesh and Malaysia, highlighting the plight of Bangladeshi migrants. They reported that each migrant spent between $4,500 and $6,000 to secure a job in Malaysia. Several migrant workers told the media they spent over Tk 5 lakh to get there.

Despite paying such excessive amounts, at least 16,970 migrant workers failed to reach Malaysia before the May 31 deadline due to mismanagement by the government authorities and local recruiting agents.

Deceived by the recruiting agencies, some failed to obtain airline tickets, while others bought tickets at triple the usual price, but still couldn't travel due to a lack of clearance from the concerned company in Malaysia. Many mortgaged their lands or sold livestock and borrowed from banks, friends, and relatives, only to see their dreams shattered as they missed the opportunity to travel within the stipulated time.

The government could have avoided this by proper planning, as the deadline was set three months ago. But we saw repetition of the cycle of halting the intake of Bangladeshi workers, then re-opening the market, workers paying five to seven times the official cost and struggling to find work and eventually, the market shutting down again. Meanwhile, a group of people profited immensely.

State Minister Shofiqur Rahman Choudhury announced that the ministry had formed a six-member probe committee to investigate this mismanagement. "Those responsible will be brought to book," he assured, adding that the committee would submit its report within seven days and action would follow. However, will this committee uncover the truth? What solutions will they propose, as this is not an isolated incident?

Migration to Malaysia has been fraught with issues since the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) recorded the first 23 Bangladeshi workers migrating in 1978. Over the last 46 years, the recruitment process has seen different names, but it has experienced persistent mismanagement, high migration costs, corruption and repeated closure.

After the market was almost frozen between 1997 and 2005, Malaysia introduced the calling visa system at the end of 2006. Then, in 2007 and 2008, 400,000 Bangladeshi workers went to Malaysia. Although the migration cost was fixed at Tk 84,000, individuals had to pay Tk 2-3 lakh. Despite that, many Bangladeshis did not get jobs and started to suffer in KL. Nearly half a million migrants became undocumented at that time. Due to this, Malaysia stopped hiring workers from Bangladesh in 2009.

After closure from 2009 to 2012, a G2G (government to government) agreement was signed on November 26, 2012, and people went to Malaysia at a very minimal cost of Tk 33,000. But strong opposition from the businessmen and private agencies put a stop to G2G and in 2016, Malaysia declared that it would hire workers through private agencies again. This time, they adopted a syndicate of 10 agencies. There was corruption and massive ambiguity about the process in both countries, and migrants had to pay high costs, at least 10 times more than the government-fixed cost. In September 2018, the market closed again due to corruption and irregularities, re-opening in 2022, only for the same syndicate to emerge.

Most people were delighted about the Malaysian market re-opening, but optimism was replaced by anxiety and scepticism when the syndicate issues re-emerged again in 2022. Dhaka wanted to allow all 1,520 licensed recruiting agencies to send manpower to Malaysia, but in a letter sent to Bangladesh's Expatriate Welfare Minister Imran Ahmed on January 14, 2022, Malaysian former Human Resources Minister M Saravanan said that Malaysia wanted to recruit workers from Bangladesh through 25 agencies.

According to media reports, Aminul Islam Bin Abdul Nor, a Malaysian national of Bangladeshi origin, controls the entire business of sending workers to Malaysia. Ruhul Amin, alias Shawpon, the former Secretary-General of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), represents Aminul in Bangladesh. Together, they decide who joins the syndicate.

Aminul also owns the Foreign Workers Central Management System (FWCMS) software MiGRAMS, used for recruiting workers in Malaysia. If the demand papers for any workers are finalised in Malaysia, they are distributed among the approved agencies through the FWCMS software.

Initially, the syndicate had 25 agencies sending workers to Malaysia. This number increased to 100 private agencies, including several owned by parliament members, their relatives, and political leaders, controlled by the syndicate.

From August 2022 to May this year, around 4,76,672 Bangladeshi workers migrated to Malaysia for jobs. This means the syndicate syphoned over $1 billion out of Bangladesh.

There are 14 countries, including Bangladesh, that send workers to Malaysia. However, other than Bangladesh, none of the countries have such a syndicate. So, the government needs to start analysing the amount of remittance and the amount of cost for migration to Malaysia. Nothing will happen if Bangladesh denies sending people through the syndicate.

However, for the sake of the people and for the country, Bangladesh and Malaysia should investigate such irregularities and punish the guilty. But the crucial question remains the same: Is the syndicate more powerful than the state? If not, why do they go unpunished? Are they above the law?

Many mortgaged their lands or sold livestock and borrowed from banks, friends, and relatives to arrange the money to travel to Malaysia, only to see their dreams shattered.

PHOTO: **RASHED SUMON**

The Indian election's winners and losers

Shashi Tharoor
is an MP of the Indian National Congress, who was re-elected to the Lok Sabha for a fourth successive term, representing Thiruvananthapuram.

SHASHI THAROOR

When the results of India's general election were announced on June 4, the biggest losers were the pundits and pollsters, who had almost unanimously predicted an overwhelming victory for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Their exit-poll projections were so far off the mark in several states that one prominent pollster, appearing on India's most popular English-language television channel, burst into tears on camera when the actual results were revealed.

To be sure, Modi's BJP has been returned to power. But its victory looks more like a defeat. Far from expanding its formidable majority from 303 to 370 seats in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of Parliament—as Modi and his principal lieutenant, Home Minister Amit Shah, had predicted—the BJP lost 63 seats.

Indeed, the BJP now holds only 240 seats—well short of the 272 needed for a majority. With the allied regional parties in the National Democratic Alliance similarly falling short of Modi and Shah's predictions, the BJP now must depend on a motley array of NDA allies to get any legislation passed.

The second-biggest loser was Modi himself. He made the election all about himself, seeking to capitalise on the personality cult that he has spent years promoting. His approach was shameless: Covid-19 vaccination certificates bore his photo, rather than that of the vaccinated person; bags of grain distributed to 800 million people were emblazoned with his image; railway stations across the country featured "selfie points," where travellers could pose with life-size cutouts of Modi.

So inflated were Modi's delusions of grandeur that they apparently morphed into illusions of divinity. During the election campaign, he told one interviewer that he used to believe that he was biologically born, but had become convinced that he was sent directly by the Almighty to serve India. Some might find this cringeworthy, but the public seemed to lap it up: in one recent survey, Modi obtained a 75 percent approval rating.

Now, however, Modi is confronting the downside of his strategy: the BJP's failure to secure even a simple majority has damaged Modi's reputation not only in the eyes of Indian voters, but also within his own party, over which he has long enjoyed unchallenged dominance.

In fact, Modi has taken highly consequential decisions—such as the disastrous demonetisation of 2016 and the stringent pandemic lockdown in 2020—without so much as a discussion with his cabinet. But this is likely to change, because prominent BJP figures and the leaders of the party's now-indispensable allies can now be more assertive, thereby reining in Modi's increasingly autocratic tendencies.

Just as the BJP's victory represents a kind of defeat, the resurgent opposition's defeat looks a lot like victory. The opposition Indian National Congress (of which I am a member) and its partners in the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) have much to celebrate.

The Congress party nearly doubled its seat total, from 52 to 99. And several of its INDIA allies performed better than ever before. With control of 232 seats, INDIA is now a formidable force. One can be certain that the Lok Sabha will no longer serve as a mere rubber stamp for Modi's agenda.

A striking feature of the vote is the widespread rejection of the BJP's Hindu-chauvinist *Hindutva* doctrine. The BJP lost several formerly "safe" seats in constituencies where Modi's campaign rhetoric had been the most Hindu-centric and inflammatory, including Ayodhya, where he inaugurated a magnificent new temple in January.

In fact, opposition parties made significant gains in the "Hindutva heartland" of northern India, including states where the BJP juggernaut crushed the opposition alliance in 2019.

The biggest winner of the recent election is undoubtedly Indian democracy, which has come under increasing strain during Modi's decade in power. This is reflected in the beating India has taken on global indices. Freedom House has now downgraded India from "free" to "partly free," while the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute has reclassified it as an "electoral autocracy." With the BJP in charge, India has become a prime example of "democratic de-consolidation" around the world.

Likewise, India now ranks 111th out of 125 countries in the Global Hunger Index, and 159th out of 180 in the World Press Freedom Index. The German foreign ministry has expressed concerns about declining press freedom, while the British government questioned the banning in India of a BBC documentary on Modi's role in the 2002 anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat, where he was chief minister.

Others have raised related concerns. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom is worried about the treatment of minorities, and the US State Department has sounded the alarm over human-rights abuses more broadly. The World Health Organization took issue with the BJP government's unconvincing Covid-19 mortality figures, and the World Bank pushed back against India's rejection of its human-capital index.

Fortunately, these trends are now set to be reversed. India's opposition is determined to continue fighting to restore an older vision of India, in which, to quote the immortal words of the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore, "the mind is without fear and the head is held high."

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Subscription:
01711623906

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Is more research funding the answer?

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SYED SAAD ANDALEEB

Drawing upon data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, a recent report by the *Bonik Barta* highlighted the state of research *funding* in Bangladesh. The amount of such funding was shown as 0.3 percent of GDP (roughly equivalent to $628 million). According to the report, the highest amount of spending was in agriculture (appropriately so because hunger has serious political ramifications) at $330 million. The lowest spending was in the industry and technology sector, which comes as a surprise. The "entire" education sector, in second place, was allotted about $88 million. For perspective, recent research funding for Johns Hopkins University alone was $3.42 billion while that for the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) was $1.77 billion.

According to one source the global economic giants spend a greater share of their "far greater" GDPs than Bangladesh on research (especially on cutting edge research). The USA spends more than 3 percent of its GDP on research. The BRICS nations' research expenditures according to one source are as follows: Brazil (1.16 percent), Russia (1.04 percent), India (0.65 percent), China (2.2 percent), and South Africa (0.83 percent). The USA and China outpace research spending by far, globally. The two countries are also economic and military giants. Comparatively, research spending by Bangladesh is miniscule. Nevertheless, the amount is not insignificant. Properly managed, even the current level of research expenditures can provide measurable output and impact.

The article in the *Bonik Barta* seems to suggest that increasing expenditures on research is an immediate need according to several "experts." My personal position is that greater attention needs to be directed to the management of the current expenditures, driven by a clear set of agendas and goals. For example, in the education sector, the UGC may be hard pressed to articulate what research goals are in its purview, how much has been allocated by sector to the different research projects, the status of each project (apparently there is no proper reporting system), research allocations to public and private universities, and the impact that any funded research has delivered. Lack of management and administration of research, a specialised skill, is sorely missing. Officials at the UGC also speak in hushed tones about the political realities of research.

The fact is, Bangladesh needs to implement a comprehensive set of measures to become competent and innovative like the research-driven nations. Some of the essential strategies to consider include *creating a supportive policy environment, strengthening research infrastructure, cultivating a culture of innovation, fostering industry-academia collaboration, improving research funding mechanisms, ensuring ethical research practices, leveraging existing data (across the various sectors),* and *monitoring, evaluation and regular reporting of progress in research.* Each of these areas are rife with deficiencies that have remained in place for decades. For the sake of space and brevity, I shall focus on three immediate action items if research is to begin playing a meaningful role in the affairs of the nation.

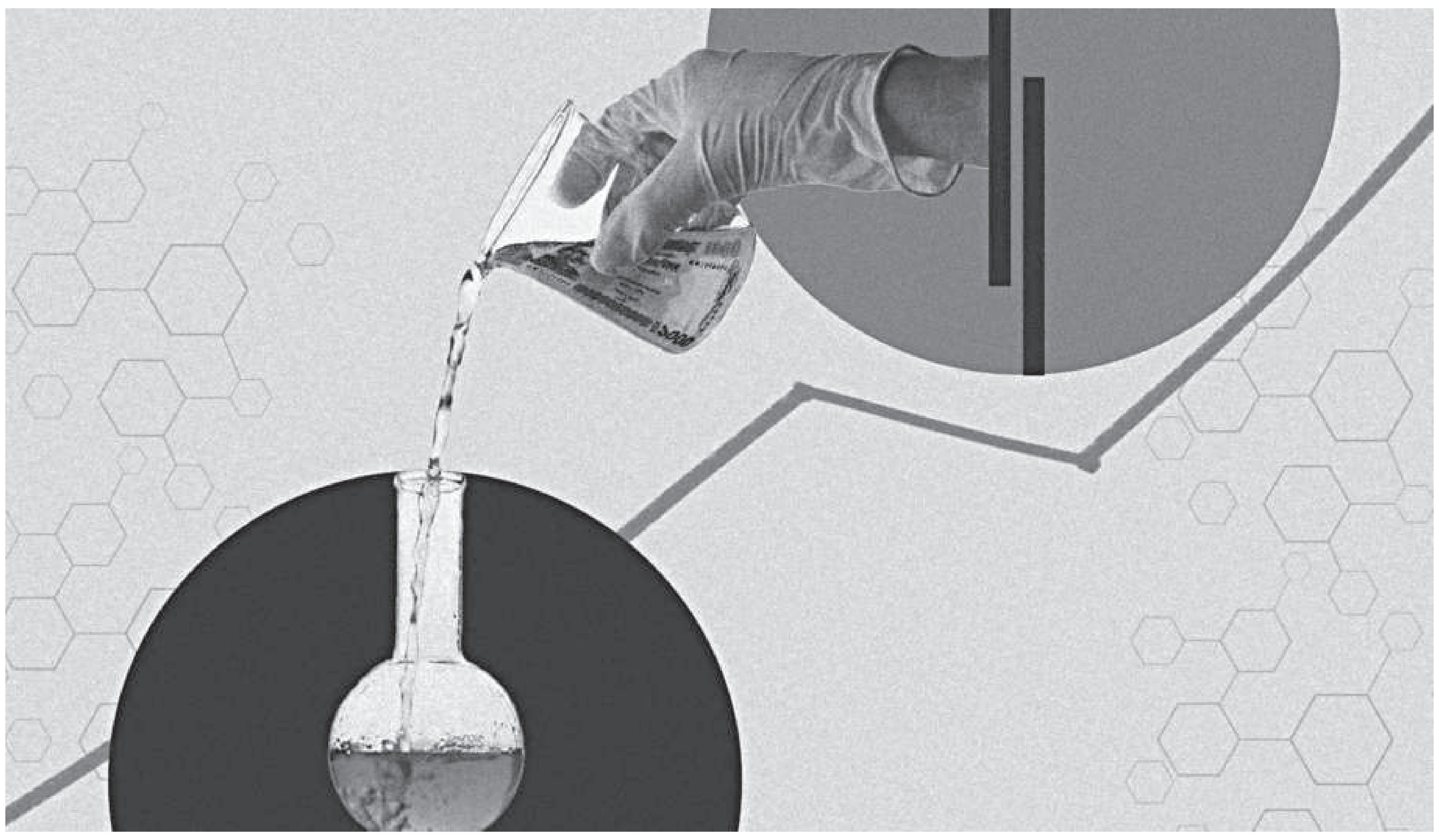
Creating a supportive policy environment

- There is a clear need for a National R&D Strategy with clear (sectoral) goals, priorities, and funding mechanisms which are implemented robustly through an efficacious command and control system. In the Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2018-2020, for example, there was a clear mandate to establish a National Research Council (NRC) to oversee and direct higher education research in phase-1 and extend its services to other sectors in later phases. No one seems to know how to prioritise and proceed on this strong and vital recommendation.
- Incentives are imperative for innovation: these include tax incentives (for industries to invest in and pursue their research agendas), substantial targeted grants (and eliminating trivial allocations for the sake of equity) and introducing subsidies for private sector investment in R&D in a PPP mode.
- Intellectual property rights must be strengthened to protect innovations and encourage investment in research.
- Recognition for good research is another vital tool for encouraging critical investigations. A *young researcher award* may be introduced to encourage neophytes and to imbue in them the culture and value of research.

An enduring buzz in academia is that it requires political connections to advance in one's career. This is a fundamental concern which saps the enthusiasm among academics from becoming creative and inquisitive researchers. Unless they are autonomous and free from political oversight and interference, research will not take off.

Strengthening research infrastructure

- Bangladesh is abysmally deficient in K-12 education. A large majority of the students are not even prepared for university education. Clearly, the proliferation of universities in the country is inconsistent with an ineffective K-12 output where progression in education is still based largely on rote memorisation, not creative or problem-solving modes of learning. Unless the K-12 base is strengthened, with a focus on STEM/STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) fields, it will not help create research mindsets. Also, where are the teachers who can implement this transformation? This community must be strengthened first. A good step is to make the academic field a sought-after career, not as the choice of last resort, by "upgrading" the status and remuneration of those who choose to serve in this noble profession. It is worth mentioning that those who enjoy a higher status have been blessed in some way by their educators.



VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

- For state-of-the-art research to flourish, specialised programmes and curricula must be developed that strengthen exposure to research methodologies and critical thinking skills. Two issues research students face even in the recognised institutions are: i) teachers do not want to share their knowledge of methodology and analytics; and ii) supervisors are not willing to give time; instead, they load unrelated work on the students to advance personal agendas.
- For research to proliferate, the ratio of PhD to non-PhD faculty must be strengthened and continuous professional development opportunities must be availed to researchers to stay updated with the latest advancements in knowledge and methodologies in their fields.
- To build world-class research institutions, their laboratories must be fully equipped, state-of-the-art facilities provided, and competent personnel selected to run their affairs. At the same time, the researchers must have access to modern technologies and resources for advanced research.
- A digital infrastructure to support data collection, analysis, and dissemination of research findings would be the icing on the cake.

Monitoring and evaluation

It's important to establish a robust set of metrics to track approved research projects. These metrics should capture various aspects of a project, from inputs and processes to outputs and impacts. Additionally, a dedicated entity should be established (e.g., the proposed NRC) to oversee the monitoring process, ensuring compliance, and facilitating comprehensive and reliable data collection and analysis.

Inputmetrics such as R&D expenditures, percentage of GDP allocated to R&D, public vs. private sector investment in R&D, and quality of human resources as researchers (especially their qualifications) should be regularly monitored. *Process metrics* include the number of ongoing research projects, interdisciplinary and collaborative research initiatives, as well as training and development (number of workshops and participation rates in professional development activities). *Output metrics*, to be made public, include theses and dissertations at the post-graduate level, publications (in peer-reviewed journals with impact factor and citations), and patents and innovations. *Impact metrics* are research specific: job creation; improvements in public health, education, and environmental sustainability; international collaborations; and rankings in various global indices.

Conclusion

An enduring buzz in academia is that it requires political connections to advance in one's career. This is a fundamental concern which saps the enthusiasm among academics from becoming creative and inquisitive researchers. Unless they are autonomous and free from political oversight and interference, research will not take off.

The UGC also needs to be completely reimagined because the people who run its affairs can make the difference. Instead of placing its governance under people nearing their retirement, serving only for a short duration (the revolving door phenomenon), and those who are deemed politically appropriate, the time has come for the UGC to be run by professionals who understand the importance of research and are competent in administering competitive research grants that make clear impact. These professionals must be selected competitively after meticulous scrutiny, not "recommended" by government officials or the political brass.

Thereafter, it is important to implement a holistic approach (not just funding) whereby Bangladesh can begin to create the right ecosystem for research and innovation. Fundamentally, however, education at K-12 requires a complete overhaul. Until then, increasing research budgets can make impact only through very selective and well-funded research.

Importantly, research in all sectors must be coordinated for synergy at some appropriate governmental level (the Planning Commission or the PMO) that has the political will and authority to drive innovation and change. For far too long, this important activity with ramifications for nation building has been allowed to drift without a clear purpose and a creative and demanding leadership.

What are we doing wrong in attracting FDI?

AN OPEN DIALOGUE

Dr Abdullah Shibli
n economist and works for Change Healthcare, Inc., information technology company. He also serves as senior research fellow at the US-based International Sustainable Development Institute (ISDI).

ABDULLAH SHIBLI

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is the holy grail of this century. Every country seeks to draw FDI and increase its share of this rare commodity. Readers need no reminder that FDI is a limited resource and is traded in a competitive market since all countries, including the significant players—Ireland, India, China, and the USA—are contenders in this chase.

Vietnam, which broke out of the clutches of foreign control only in 1975, has emerged as an economic powerhouse thanks to the influx of FDI. We can learn a lot from the path it charted out for itself since Bangladesh is strategically located in the same region with the potential to leverage not only its domestic market potential but also its proximity to India and China to become the next hub of the international supply chain, including electronics, textiles, IT, and pharmaceuticals. Once they relocate to Bangladesh, these industries could export from here, serving global markets in pharmaceuticals, technology services, medical devices, food and beverages, and financial services.

The question on everyone's mind is whether the recent troubles in our economic front will hurt our chances of attracting FDI. The recent budget has incorporated no new measures to make FDI more attractive to investors. The Fitch ratings downgraded Bangladesh's sovereign credit rating (SCR) to B+ from BB-. That will impact FDI, in addition to driving up the cost of borrowing.

VISUAL: **SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR**

The SCR downgrade did not surprise anyone, but I wanted to know what factors caused this downgrading. Does it matter to us? And how consistent have the ratings been in identifying the potential risk to investors? I wanted to find out if these credit rating agencies have considered all the information available, including political, social, economic, environmental, and financial issues. As I was exploring, I discovered that a lot of emphasis, or weight as they call it in technical jargon, is assigned to the foreign exchange balance, financial stability, and, of course, the mood of the investors in the country itself. It is also known that building stronger FDI links with the local economy through supplier development programmes and FDI linkage initiatives help decrease information gaps for investors and boosts local business opportunities.

The US Department of State, in its 2023 Investment Climate circular on Bangladesh acknowledges that the country "seeks foreign investment and offers a range of investment incentives under its industrial policy and export-oriented growth strategy." The country has already taken several measures to streamline sanctioning foreign investment. Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) has been coordinating reform initiatives to improve Bangladesh's ranking on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index. BIDA has been working in collaboration with Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) to host trade shows abroad.

Unfortunately, the US has also raised the issue of anti-union activities in our industrial sector. Our own Centre for Policy Dialogue said the political economy dynamics of Bangladesh have frequently impeded substantial reforms, even when the stakeholders have acknowledged their needs.

International Finance Corporation (IFC) and other international lenders are pushing for a recognition of reforms and the development of a foundational framework to support FDI. There are three main pillars of the investment life cycle. The first pillar is investment attraction and facilitation, aiming at seizing new opportunities; the second pillar is investment retention to decrease the probability of divestment and to foster existing expansion and reinvestment of retained earnings of FDI, and the third pillar is creating FDI links with the local economy to increase the development dividend of FDI. Having said that, we need investment, or rather draw the FDI that is constantly looking for new and fertile territories. Our performance in this regard could be stronger.

"Greenfield" FDI, which involves the establishment of new production facilities and thus the creation of many new jobs, has been in consistent decline as a share of total investment. While annual announcements of new greenfield projects (that is, the future pipeline of investments) averaged more than 100 percent of gross FDI flows to developing countries before the global financial crisis, the ratio had dropped to one-half of gross flows by 2020.

Many factors attract FDI and are well-known. However, it is better said than done. In Bangladesh, several factors are favourable, including cheap labour, a welcoming government, and our well-educated young urban workers. However, last year (FY 22-23), Bangladesh attracted only $3.6 billion in FDI, which was lower than FY 21-22, a 5.5 percent decline. To put it in context, Bangladesh needs $6-10 billion of FDI annually to meet its investment needs.

Growing climate change impacts, rising interest rates, and policy changes in advanced countries—such as incentives for green investments and localisation of supply chains for critical technologies—have also had far-reaching implications for the allocation of investment across the globe.

An IFC report, "Changing Foreign Direct Investment Dynamics and Policy Responses," provides a granular analysis of shifts in FDI flows and policy trends. It suggests policy responses that developing countries may consider to reverse the decline in FDI and enable more private capital to support their development needs.

What can we do better? Why is Vietnam successful and not us? Investors feel encouraged by the political stability of a country. A business's prosperity is based on a government's favourable legislation and political goodwill. This includes having (and maintaining) a good transport and infrastructure network to help transport products and raw materials to marketplaces. The IFC report identifies the proactive initiatives by Vietnam, including a dispute resolution mechanism and other measures to improve the investment climate.

Finally, favourable tax rates will also promote investments as investors look for nations with lower corporate taxes. Ironically, a weak exchange rate is ideal for foreign investors because it is cheaper for investors and companies to buy assets.

Impact of household cleaning products on asthma

Comparing traditional, green, and disinfecting wipes

The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology recently published a study that examined the effects of various household cleaning products on asthma. Previous research had already shown a connection between uncontrolled asthma and the use of harsh cleaning chemicals such as bleach and ammonia. Now, researchers wanted to see if "green" cleaning products and disinfecting wipes had similar effects.

In the study, 37,000 people participated in an online survey. Among them, about 1,700 had their asthma under control, while around 500 struggled with uncontrolled asthma. The researchers found that using cleaning products frequently—between 4 and 7 days a week—was mildly associated with controlled asthma but had a much stronger link to uncontrolled asthma.

The findings revealed that people using green cleaning products were 2.4 times more likely to have uncontrolled asthma. Those who used cleaning sprays were 2.7 times more likely, while those using traditional irritant products like bleach and ammonia were 2.8 times more likely. The risk was highest for disinfecting wipes, with a 3.5 times greater chance of having uncontrolled asthma.

Additionally, the study highlighted that individuals who did all their own cleaning without any household help were particularly vulnerable to these effects.

WORLD
FOOD SAFETY DAY
JUNE 07

FOOD SAFETY
prepare for the unexpected

STAR HEALTH DESK

On June 7, 2024, World Food Safety Day brought attention to food safety incidents. The theme for this year emphasised the significance of preparedness for food safety incidents, regardless of their severity.

Food safety incidents are situations where there is a potential or confirmed health risk associated with food consumption. A food incident can happen, for example, due to accidents, inadequate controls, food fraud, or natural events. While being ready to manage food safety incidents requires dedicated efforts from policymakers, food safety authorities, farmers, and food business operators, consumers can also play an active role.

Every day, on an average, 1,600,000 people get sick due to unsafe food contaminated with bacteria, viruses, parasites, or chemical substances. It affects all countries.

The United Nations General Assembly established World Food Safety Day in 2018 to raise awareness of the importance of food safety. Food safety incidents that require intervention to protect the health of consumers can range from minor events to major crises. And because hazards have no regard for the lines humans draw on maps, an increasingly interconnected global food supply means that the risks posed by unsafe food have the potential to rapidly evolve from a local problem to an international emergency.

In 2004, FAO and WHO jointly created the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), a global network of national food safety authorities, to facilitate the rapid exchange of information across borders and between members, recording hundreds of food safety incidents every year.

Call for actions:

Governments:

- Develop and regularly update national food safety emergency response plans and use "lessons learned" from food safety events to identify gaps and limitations.
- Ensure a coordinated approach across government agencies and national authorities, including mechanisms for the rapid exchange of information.
- Provide rapid, accurate, and open information to stakeholders during food safety events and report international emergencies to the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN).

Food operators:

- Establish and regularly update food safety management plans.
- Know how to avoid food safety incidents by following good hygiene practices.
- Provide regular staff training.

Consumers:

- Practice safe food handling at home and follow the WHO's Five Keys to Safer Food: keep clean, separate raw and cooked foods, cook thoroughly, keep food at safe temperatures, and use safe water and raw materials.
- Know how to keep food safe before, during, and after emergencies, such as floods, fires, natural disasters, or the loss of power.
- Know how to report poor hygiene standards and misleading food labelling.

Source: *World Health Organisation*

HAVE A NICE DAY

The impact of nitpicking

DR RUBAIUL MURSHED

A nitpicker is a person who finds faults, however small or unimportant, everywhere they look. After meeting someone, a nitpicker lists every tiny thing s/he did not like about the encounter. When discussing people, they often focus on seemingly minor flaws, even if they are insignificant. This chronic complaining style represents a negative mindset, a lack of gratitude, and a sense of helplessness. It can also damage relationships with others, especially when they criticise people behind their backs, which can be exhausting for those who hear it.

Some nitpickers are just highly arrogant types who think they know what is best for everyone. Others are anxious and troublesome, nitpicking because they need to feel some sense of control. Some are never satisfied. They do not need solutions; instead, they need problems. If someone tries to solve their problems, it undermines their ability to complain, which in turn irritates them.

Nitpickers could be chronic complainers who need listeners, not problem solvers. These chronic complainers tend to ruminate on problems and focus on setbacks over progress. Some research suggests that making a habit of complaining can "re-wire" the brain so that these particular thinking patterns become deeply ingrained.

Complaining can often stem from bad moods or personality traits, but in some cases, it can also be a tool that helps people bond and regulate their emotions. Thus, sometimes people complain with the hope that venting their feelings will lessen the severity of their distressing emotions. However, too much complaining can worsen one's mood, make one feel helpless, and lead to a negative outlook on life.

Frequent complaints weakens the immune system, raising the risk of various illnesses. It even makes people more susceptible to high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and stroke.

E-mail: rubaiulmurshed@shomman.org

EMPOWERING LIVES

The importance of menstrual hygiene management

DR ROZIA AFROZ RANA

Menstrual hygiene management is one of the most important saviours for women in this century. Saving lives by preventing infection and reducing the cost of hospital stays and medicine expenses, thus reducing mortality rates. If women and girls could get proper sanitation facilities with all the hygiene management needs, their overall lives would be better. On the contrary, productivity in working places would create a positive impact, which would strongly emphasise women's empowerment.

Most of the girls and women do not have access to clean water soap, and they do not even have a private space in a toilet to change and dispose of their used sanitary products in low-income countries. Most of the women in rural areas still cannot afford a sanitary pad or napkin due to high expenses. Understanding the situation with care is a strong mental support that can help a mother's daughter feel comfortable. We should know and remember that menstrual health is a fundamental aspect of human rights, dignity, and public health.

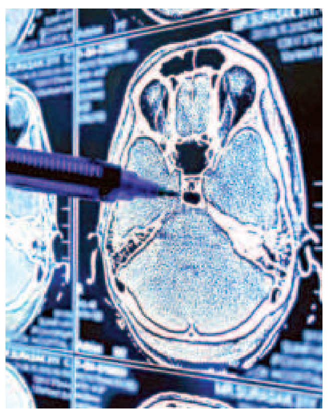
To create awareness and share knowledge to break taboos, May 28 is dedicated to observing World Menstrual Day. Just like other countries, Bangladesh also celebrated this day with full spirit. This year, 2024, the theme was *Together for a Period-Friendly World.*

In order to promote menstrual health hygiene, women and girls require the following:

- » Appropriate menstrual product materials (pads, clothes)
- » Additional supportive materials, like a soap water bucket or bin, are needed for storage, washing, and drying.
- » Basic menstrual health education
- » Access to safe and private toilet and bathing facilities with water for changing, washing, and drying menstrual products.
- » Disposal options for menstrual waste should be convenient and private.

The illnesses and health issues women typically encounter as a result of inadequate facilities are:

- » Urinary tract infections
- » Bacterial Vaginosis
- » Fungal Infection
- » Pelvic Inflammatory Diseases
- » When women get infected with any of these diseases, their burden on medical expenses increases. Hospital stay, medicine bill, doctor visit, and absence from work are all affected. Health and finances both face a critical crisis. This is also to understand that menstrual hygiene management is not the same from different groups perspectives. Try to follow these steps.
- » Do not forget to wash your hands before and after using a menstrual pad.
- » Remember to change your menstrual product regularly, every 4–6 hours.
- » Always try to wear loose, breathable, clean clothes for comfort.
- » Clean and wash your undergarments with soap and clean water; dry them in sunlight and open air.
- » Keep your private parts clean.
- » If possible, take a shower every day.
- » Eat healthy, fresh food, and keep yourself hydrated.
- » In conclusion, I would like to mention that our government policymakers can think about prioritising these issues.
- » Ensuring quality WASH facilities
- » Subsidising local sanitary pad production
- » Train teachers in a gender-sensitive curriculum
- » Ensure more awareness campaigns through behavioural change communication media, such as poster leaflets



Contribution of AI in diagnosing and treating cancer

Cancer of unknown primary sites often causes pleural and peritoneal effusions, and cytological analysis by pathologists using traditional methods can be inaccurate. Researchers in China used advanced artificial intelligence (AI) methods to study 57,000 cases of fluid buildup in the chest and abdomen, where the origin of the cancer was initially unknown but later identified.

They tested the AI system on nearly 30,000 additional samples to see if it could accurately distinguish between benign (non-cancerous) and malignant (cancerous) cells and determine where the cancer started. They found the AI to be highly accurate, matching the skill level of experienced pathologists and outperforming less experienced ones. When junior pathologists reviewed their diagnoses after seeing the AI's results, their accuracy improved significantly.

Using AI predictions in treatments also showed promising results. Patients whose treatments matched the AI's tumour origin predictions lived longer (27 months on average) compared to those whose treatments did not align with the AI's suggestions (17 months).

In summary, AI technology not only helps pathologists make more accurate diagnoses but also improves patient outcomes by guiding more effective treatments.

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Consultant
Dr. M. A. Zulkifl
FCPS, FRCS (England)
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• BMG Urethroplasty
• Anastomotic Urethroplasty
• Penile prosthesis surgery
• Hypospadias and Epispadias
Minimally Invasive Procedures
• Laparoscopic surgery
• TURP, TURBT (Cystoscopic surgery)
Kidney Stone Treatments
• Lithotripsy
• PCNL (Percutaneous nephrolithotomy)
• Ureteroscopy
• RIRS (Laser Stone Surgery)
Onco Urological Surgeries
• Nephrectomy & Nephroureterectomy
• Cystectomy with Urinary Diversion
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What to WATCH

Nagorik TV and Star Sports 1,2,3
T20 World Cup
West Indies vs Uganda
Live from 6:30 am

India vs Pakistan
Live from 8:30 pm
Oman vs Scotland
Live from 11:00 pm
Live from 1:15 am

(Monday)
Sony Sports 5
French Open
Men's final
Live from 6:30 pm

PLANNING, EXECUTION, PROCESS coming together for Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

PHOTO: **AFP/BCB**

Quite a few aspects like planning, execution, and process – things that Bangladesh players resort to while stating their expectations ahead of a game -- came through in their thrilling two-wicket win over Sri Lanka at the Grand Prairie Stadium in Dallas yesterday.

While the bowlers largely took the stage in an impressive display to restrict the Lankans to 124, the batting unit, despite several hiccups, eventually stumbled over the finish line with an over to spare.

The Tigers deservedly have had to endure copious amounts of criticisms in their build-up to their tournament opener but appeared to have brushed it all aside come game time and produced a mighty impressive display, particularly while fielding in the first innings.

A switch seemed to have suddenly turned the Tigers on as they were aggressive in their approach while fielding and rarely put a foot wrong as a unit in the lion hunt in Dallas. Najmul Hossain Shanto's troops were buzzing like bees from the onset and looked like a team hell-bent on pulling off a result in their favour.

PACERS SIZZLE

Bangladesh initially struggled to keep a lid on things despite getting the ball to beat the Lankan batters on several occasions. The Tigers conceded nine fours and a six as the Lankans raced off to 53 for two at the end of the Powerplay, with opener Pathum Nissanka in full groove. But Mustafizur Rahman used his expertise to great effect to dismiss the right-handed opener for a 28-ball 47 with a delivery angled across. That particular wicket pulled things back for the Tigers as it significantly slowed down the rate of scoring. Before that, he got the better off Kamindu Mendis in the Powerplay after Taskin Ahmed had sent back Kusal Mendis in the third over. The Fizz scalped another one at the death to cap off an impressive evening as he returned three for 17.

His pace partners Taskin and Tanzim Hasan Sakib also shone in different phases of play, with the former picking up two for 25 while Sakib showed masterful execution at the death, nailing his yorkers as well as slowers to further merit his inclusion in the eleven.

X-FACTOR RISHAD

One of the aspects that stood out was the faith shown in leg-spinner Rishad Hossain by the team management as well as the captain. He bowled one over in the first 10 and three in the next, including an over in the last five. The leggie is not known for turning the ball, but on the night, managed to give it a rip more than anyone else. The meters displayed that he extracted 3.6 degrees of turn -- the most in that regard in the tournament so far. The 21-year-old played to his strengths, relying on drift and accuracy and when he had the addition of the ability to turn the ball, Rishad turned the match on its head by dismissing Charith Asalanka and Wanindu Hasaranga in the same over, leaving the Lankans five down for 103 after 15. In his final over, the 17th of the innings, he bowled a ripper to outfox Dhananjaya de Silva.

LITON SHOWS COMPOSURE, AND HRIDOY UNLEASHES HIMSELF

A dismal Powerplay may have sent jitters in the Tigers' camp but Liton Das stood tall. His tally, a 38-ball 36, might not reflect the gravity of the knock but it demands appreciation in the context of the game. The right-handed batter tackled Sri Lanka's Pandora's box with graceful ease and held up one end expertly in the chase in a 63-run stand with Towhid Hridoy, who smacked a 20-ball 40. Hridoy conjured up a tornado in the 12th over against Hasaranga as he powered three maximums to potentially seal the match for the Tigers as they required 34 off the last 48 balls. However, he left the job undone, perishing in the same over after which the match swung like a pendulum and turned into a thriller.

MAHMUDULLAH AT IT AGAIN

With the match still in the balance, Mahmudullah was gifted a juicy full toss by Dasun Shanaka in the penultimate over and the veteran batter responded promptly. He had to weather through a turbulent few overs, watching partners at the other end throw it away, and also rode his luck in a run-out situation but held his nerve and got the job done in the end.

A rare 'high-voltage' treat in store

AFP, QUEENS

At the cultural crossroads of the world, New Yorkers will experience a thrilling first on Sunday -- a World Cup cricket match hosted in a US city between Asian powerhouses: rivals India and Pakistan.

However, roughly 10 miles from the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, a pop-up stadium at Eisenhower Park on Long Island, fans interviewed in the bustling Little India neighborhood of Queens said they won't be able to attend the game in person, as tickets on the resale market are going for at least $800, with the 34,000 seats in the stadium sold out for months.

Beyond the Indian and Pakistani communities, the face-off is eagerly anticipated by immigrants from other South Asian countries where cricket is popular.

Many of the businesses and restaurants in Little India are run by Bangladeshis, many of whom lined up behind Pakistan, from which Bangladesh gained its independence in 1971.

"Even if I am not Indian, not Pakistani, I am going to watch it because this is a high-voltage match," said Faros Ahmed, a 58-year-old restaurant manager of Bangladeshi origin, who supports Pakistan and will broadcast the game for his customers.

Although both countries are cricket powerhouses, head-to-head matches are rare between the nations.

The two sides do not meet outside of official competitions of the ICC, the international cricket federation, and the last test match between them was in 2007.

Sunday's meeting is crucial for Pakistan, who risk elimination in the first round after a surprising loss on Thursday to the United States, ranked 18th in the world.

New York-based Pakistani journalist Wajahat S. Khan said he had "never been more excited or terrified about a cricket match at the same time."

The US win over sixth-ranked Pakistan has boosted interest in cricket in the country, where the sport remains well outside the mainstream.

"India-Pakistan is the game everyone would like to watch, and... it's happening in our backyard," Ajith Shetty, president of two local cricket leagues, told AFP.

This first cricket World Cup hosted in the United States is in the T20 format. Beyond the month-long tournament, Shetty hopes it brings "better infrastructure" for players in the New York area.

In the past eight T20 World Cups, India and Pakistan have faced each other seven times, with India emerging victorious in five of those encounters. One match ended in a tie, which India won through a bowl out in the 2007 inaugural edition.

Overall, in 12 T20 Internationals, India have defeated Pakistan eight times.

Their most recent T20I meeting was at the 2022 T20 World Cup, which witnessed a memorable match-winning innings by Virat Kohli at the packed Melbourne Cricket Ground in Australia.

Alcaraz eyeing history against Zverev

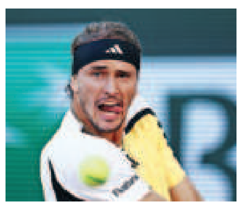
AFP, PARIS

Carlos Alcaraz says he is hoping to join the long list of Spanish French Open champions when he bids to become the youngest man to win Grand Slam titles on all three surfaces in the final against Alexander Zverev on Sunday.

The 21-year-old defeated Novak Djokovic to win Wimbledon last year and also lifted the US Open trophy as a teenager in 2022.

Alcaraz downed incoming world number one Jannik Sinner in five sets in the semi-finals and will be a slight favourite against Zverev, who is still yet to win a Grand Slam tournament.

He is aiming to emulate his childhood hero and 14-time Roland Garros champion Rafael Nadal -- who won his first French Open when Alcaraz was only two years old -- by lifting the trophy, as well as his coach Juan Carlos Ferrero.



Alcaraz has been widely tipped as one of the successors to the reigns of Nadal, Djokovic and Roger Federer at the top of men's tennis since he broke onto the scene as a teenager. He is comfortably living up to that mantle.

Sunday will see the first new winner of the title since Djokovic in 2016, and it will be the first showpiece match in Paris with two first-time finalists since Nadal won his maiden crown against Mariano Puerta in 2005.

RASHID HAILS 'one of the greatest performances'

REUTERS

Afghanistan captain Rashid Khan praised the team's collective display after they claimed an emphatic 84-run victory over New Zealand in the Twenty20 World Cup on Friday.

Openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz (80) and Ibrahim Zadrau (44) combined for 103 runs to power Afghanistan to a total of 159, before Rashid and Fazalhaq Farooqi took four wickets apiece as New Zealand were skittled out for just 75.

"One of the greatest performances from us in T20I cricket against a big team. It is a great team effort," Rashid said after the win at the Providence Stadium in Guyana.

"Great win for Afghanistan and it is a privilege to be leading this side and winning against New Zealand ... It started from the batting, with how Ibrahim and Gurbaz were running.

"We have to give 100% effort, losing or winning does not matter (to me). That is how we prepare. If we don't give 100%, we will be missing something. I don't care about the result a lot but it is about the effort."

Gurbaz, named player of the match, echoed his captain's sentiment, adding: "Nothing is more special.

"We were waiting for this victory for three years. We finally beat them. The trust and the belief was there from the very start. We have the belief that we can beat any team on this surface."

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson admitted that his side had been outplayed "in all facets", but stressed that they could not afford to dwell on the result.

"To get a total like that on a fiddly surface, they kept wickets in hand and played it beautifully," Williamson said.

"Not good enough from us. Quick turnaround, we have to regroup quickly and onto the next challenge. The boys were focussed and were working hard in preparation for this game but it was not our best performance."

New Zealand next face co-hosts West Indies on June 12, a day before Afghanistan take on Papua New Guinea.

Iga Swiatek was over the moon after extending her French Open reign yesterday, sealing a third successive clay court Grand Slam title, as the world No.1 thrashed Jasmine Paolini 6-2, 6-1 in the final which saw only 68 minutes of action at the Roland Garros Complex in Paris.

PHOTO: **AFP**

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Will Tigers cash in on lucky break?

ASHFAQ-UL-ALAM

"If I get in the zone, I'll go for it."

The stump microphone caught Mahmudullah Riyad saying this to his partner Shakib Al Hasan in Bangla right before taking stance against off-spinner Dhananjaya De Silva to face the final ball of the 16th over in Bangladesh's chase against Sri Lanka in their ICC Men's T20 World Cup match in Dallas yesterday.

The required rate was below five runs per over at the time and the team was already five wickets down, meaning there was no real need to go for an extravagant shot, but Mahmudullah had already made up his mind.

Mahmudullah, however, could not "go for it" at the time but he finally got one "in the zone" in the first ball of the 19th over, when medium pacer Dasun Shanaka dished out a full toss which he dispatched to the stands,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Mahmudullah Riyad clenches his fist after guiding Bangladesh to a thrilling two-wicket victory against Sri Lanka in their Twenty20 World Cup Group D match at the Grand Prairie Cricket Stadium in Texas yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

LEGALISING BLACK MONEY

It encourages corruption

SANEM says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The opportunity to legalise undisclosed money with no questions asked will discourage compliant taxpayers and encourage corruption, said the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM).

The non-profit research organisation made the observation in its analysis of the proposed national budget for 2024-25 fiscal year at a media briefing at the capital's BRAC Centre Inn yesterday.

"The budgetary provision for legalising black money will encourage corruption. We appeal to the lawmakers to oppose the provision proposed in the finance bill," said Selim Raihan, executive director of SANEM.

According to the proposal, taxpayers, including companies and firms, will get the opportunity to legalise their undisclosed income in the next fiscal year without having to face any questions from the authorities concerned about the sources.

No authority will raise questions if a person pays a 15 percent tax on cash, bank deposits, financial securities, or any other forms of wealth. Amnesty will be granted to those who would invest their undisclosed income in properties such as land, buildings and flats. They will have to pay tax at specific rates, depending on the size and location of the properties, according to the Finance Bill-2024.

Raihan, also a professor of economics at Dhaka University, said that there is no reflection of a proper assessment of the economy in the proposed budget.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

POST-POLLS INDIA

Rahul nominated as leader of opposition

'BJP allies to get 6 posts in new cabinet'

AGENCIES

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's chief rival Rahul Gandhi was nominated to lead India's opposition in parliament yesterday after an election result that rescued his party from the political wilderness.

Modi will be sworn into office for a third term this weekend following a poll that deprived his ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of a majority, forcing it to rely on coalition allies to govern.

Gandhi defied analysts' expectations and exit polls to help his Congress party nearly double its parliamentary numbers, its best result since Modi was swept to power a decade ago.

A meeting of the Congress leadership yesterday voted unanimously to recommend Rahul Gandhi's election as India's official opposition leader, a post that had been left vacant since 2014.

"All participants unanimously passed the resolution that Rahul Gandhi should take the position of leader of opposition in the parliament," Congress general secretary KC Venugopal told a news conference afterwards.

The nomination was set to be put before a meeting of lawmakers belonging to a Congress-led opposition alliance later in the day.

Rahul is the scion of the dynasty that dominated Indian politics for decades and is the son, grandson and great-grandson of former prime ministers, beginning with independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru.

If elected, as expected, he will be recognised as India's official opposition leader when the new parliament sits, which local media reports suggest will happen as soon as

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Cop shoots another cop dead in Baridhara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A police constable was shot dead by his colleague near the Palestinian embassy in the capital's Baridhara around 11:45pm last night.

Police detained constable Kawsar Ahmed in connection with shooting constable Monirul dead.

They also cordoned off the area.

Both the policemen were on duty in front of the embassy.

"We are investigating the incident," Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (Detective Branch) of the DMP, told reporters at the spot around 1:00am today.

A passerby and a driver working for an embassy also sustained gunshot wounds and were taken to a nearby hospital for treatment, said, Mazharul Islam, officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station.

Hasan Ahmed, a journalist, told The Daily Star, "On our way home from work, we saw a policeman lying on the road near the Palestinian

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

Israel kills 210 Gazans to rescue 4 hostages

Abbas calls for emergency UNSC session on 'bloody massacre'

REUTERS, *Jerusalem/Cairo*

Israeli forces rescued four hostages held by Hamas since October in a raid in Gaza yesterday while over 200 Palestinians were killed in airstrikes in the same area, according to Hamas officials, in one of the bloodiest Israeli assaults of the war.

It was not immediately clear if the hostage rescue and the Israeli air assault were part of the same operation but both took place in central Gaza's al-Nuseirat, a densely built-up and often embattled area in the eight-month-old war between Israel and Hamas, the Palestinian territory's ruling Islamist group.

An Israeli military spokesperson said the hostage rescue operation unfolded under fire in the heart of a residential neighbourhood, where he said Hamas had been hiding captives among Gaza civilians under guard by armed militants.

Israeli forces returned fire, including with airstrikes, added the spokesperson, Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari. An Israeli special forces commander was killed during the operation, a police statement said.

Israel named the rescued hostages as Noa Argamani, 26, Almog Meir Jan, 22, Andrey Kozlov, 27, and Shlomi Ziv, 41. They were taken to hospital for medical checks and were in good health, the military said.

- Witnesses say airstrikes targeted marketplace, mosque
- Palestinian death toll in Gaza rises to 36,801
- Israel says rescued hostages all in good health

They were all kidnapped from the Nova music festival during the raid by Hamas-led Palestinian groups on Israeli towns and villages near Gaza on Oct 7.

Since then, Israel's bombardment and invasion of Gaza has killed at least 36,801 Palestinians, according to an updated tally by the territory's health ministry yesterday.

The rescue of the hostages was cheered by all across Israel.

A different picture unfolded back in Gaza, where Palestinian health ministry officials and local medics said that an Israeli military assault in Nuseirat had killed scores of people including women and children.

The ministry did not say how many of the fatalities were Hamas members.

The Hamas-run government media office in Gaza said later the death toll had risen to at least 210 Palestinians with many more wounded, after medics and health officials gave earlier tolls of up to 100 dead. There was no immediate confirmation of the highest figure from Gaza's health ministry.

After the bloodshed, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called for an emergency UN Security Council session on "the bloody massacre that was carried out by the Israeli forces" at the al-Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza.

Social media footage that Reuters could not immediately verify showed bodies spilling entrails onto bloodstained streets.

Swiatek wins 3rd straight French Open title

AFP, *Paris*

Poland's Iga Swiatek extended her French Open reign on Saturday as she thrashed Jasmine Paolini 6-2, 6-1 in the final to win her third successive Roland Garros title.

World number one Swiatek dominated Italian 12th seed Paolini, a first-time Grand Slam finalist, needing just 68 minutes to capture a fourth crown in five years in Paris.

Swiatek has now won all five Grand Slam finals she has contested. Her other victory came at the 2022 US Open.

She is the fourth woman

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Benazir's resort now under Gopalganj administration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gopalganj administration has taken control of Benazir Ahmed and his family's Savanna Eco Resort and Natural Park.

The development comes after Dhaka court on Thursday ordered appointment of administrators to look after the confiscated properties of the former inspector general of police and his family members.

The court asked the Anti-Corruption Commission to take charge of Benazir's four flats.

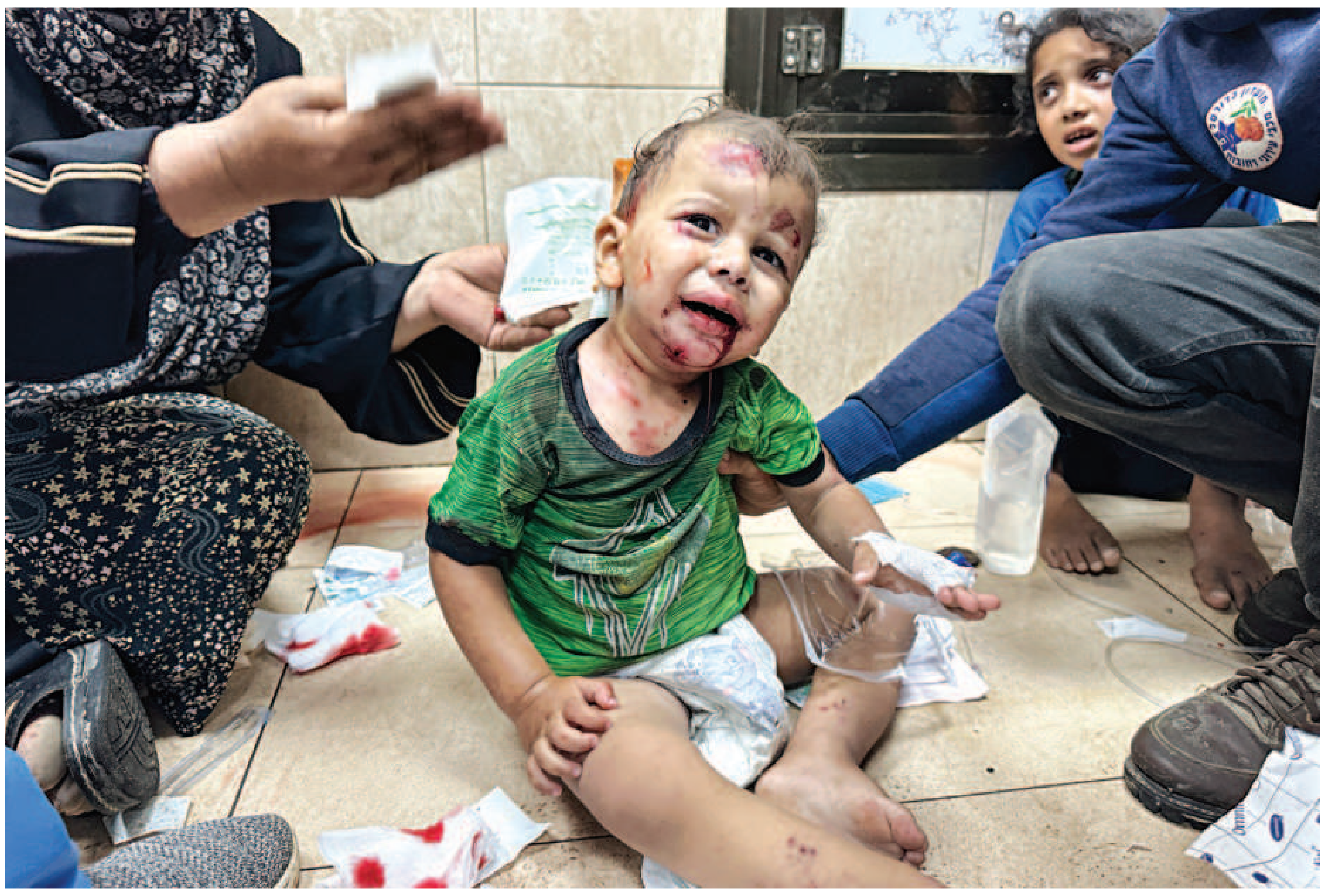
In Gopalganj, Deputy Commissioner Kazi Mahbubul Alam said the fisheries office was looking after fish enclosures, agriculture office the farm lands and the administration the resort.

Once a copy of the court order reaches Gopalganj administration, officials will form a committee to manage the properties and deposit the proceeds to a bank account, he added.

Meanwhile, the ACC filed a case accusing a Savanna employee of stealing fish from the confiscated park. The accused, Shafiqul Islam, is the fisheries officer of Savanna.

Booking manager of the resort Muhammed Sabbir said the resort had been closed since June 3 at the authorities' direction.

ACC sources said the court had not appointed administrators to look after the Gulshan flats on "humanitarian grounds" as Benazir and his family members live there.



A child, injured in an Israeli strike, is being assisted at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

123 illegal Bangladeshis detained in Malaysia

THE STAR/ANN

A total of 214 illegal immigrants, including 123 Bangladeshis, have been arrested by Malaysia's Johor Immigration Department during raids on workers' settlements near Kampung Belokok and Jalan Lingkaran Dalam in Johor Baru.

Immigration Deputy Director-General (Operations) Jafri Embok Taha said 140 officers and department personnel conducted the first raid at 12:45am (Malaysia time) yesterday.

He added that the department has also arrested two local men for harbouring illegal immigrants.

"The raid in Kampung Belokok was based on a public tip-off regarding illegal immigrants in the area. This was followed by two weeks of surveillance

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

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DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 10, 2024

REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 141 | JAISHTHA 27, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | ZILHAJJ 3, 1445 HIJRI | 24 PAGES : TK 15.00

TOP FRIDGE deals for your EIDCOMFORT

SAUDIA AFRIN

As the festive season of Eid-Ul-Adha approaches, electronics showrooms transform into vibrant hubs of activity, adorned with eye-catching posters and enticing offer cards hanging from the ceiling. This year, a plethora of deals on fridges awaits customers, with both international distributors and local manufacturers showcasing hundreds of models to cater to the diverse needs of all. From energy-efficient designs to spacious and stylish options, explore the myriad of special offers on fridges and find the perfect one to celebrate this joyous occasion.

SEE PAGE J2

ALSO, CHECK OUT THE 4-PAGE FRIDGE SPECIAL INSIDE THE PAPER!

এই ঈদে KONKA | HAIKO কিনে
KONKA
HAIKO
ঘষা দিলেই গোল্ড*

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গোল্ড জুয়েলারি ও 'Electro Mart Limited'-এর
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Digital Campaign 2024
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৩০ জনের পর এবার
কারা হবেন মিলিয়নিয়ার !!
রয়েছে কোটি কোটি টাকার নিশ্চিত উপহার
শর্ত প্রযোজ্য

ফ্রিজ কিনে
১০ লক্ষ টাকা
পেয়ে ৩১তম মিলিয়নিয়ার
ফ্রিজ কিনে
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For Details: 16267 08000016267 (Toll Free) waltonbd.com

FROM PAGE J1

BECOME A MILLIONAIRE

Walton bestows special benefits to customers during every major festival, and this year is no exception. Walton's 'Digital Campaign Season 20' has been running nationwide sinceMarch 1 in preparation for the upcoming Eid. Under this campaign, buyers have the opportunity to become non-stop millionaires.

"So far, 38 buyers from different regions of the country have become millionaires through this campaign, each receiving BDT 10 lakh in cash. Several buyers also received cash vouchers worth BDT 1 lakh. Every purchase of electronics guarantees gifts under this campaign," said Tahasinul Haq, Chief Business Officer, Walton Refrigerator.

SCRATCH TO WIN GOLD

Electromart's 'Ghosha Dilei Gold' presents an opportunity for customers to win prizes, including gold jewellery, TVs, air coolers, and other gifts, by scratching cards.

"The success stories are already rolling in, with 50 lucky winners having secured different types of gold jewellery across the country," shared Zulhaj Zubair from Electromart Electronics. The deal commenced last month and promises to keep the excitement going until June 30, ensuring ample time for customers to benefit from this offer. All models of Haiko and Konka fridges are covered under this offer. Purchasing any model of Konka online or in physical stores will benefit the customer with an additional flat 14% discount along with 'Ghosha Dilei Gold'.

WIN A 'HAMBA'

Minister's offer for the upcoming Eid, 'Fridge Kinun Hamba Jitun,' features a wide array of gifts including cash, gift hampers, home appliances, and even cattle, through scratching a card. As part of the campaign, on June 2, a customer residing in Mirpur won cattle by purchasing a Minister fridge. The prices of fridge products range from BDT 24,000 to over BDT 1 lakh 80 thousand.

"Although the offer started at the end of May, it has gained an immense response across the country. So far, we plan to keep the offer valid until Eid. If the demand persists, it may continue until the end of June," said K M G Kibria, Head of Brand and Communication, Minister - Myone Group.

TRADE UP AND HIT THE JACKPOT

Transcom Digital's 'Dream Exchange Offer' allows people to get a range of advanced-featured refrigerators and freezers from world-renowned brands including Hitachi, Samsung, Whirlpool, Haier, and its own brand Transtec, catering to every segment of customers.

For those looking to upgrade their appliances, Transcom is providing generous discounts of up to Tk. 60,000 through its refrigerator exchange offer. The jackpot offer includes exciting prizes with every purchase through a scratch card. "Customers can enjoy significant cash discounts of up to 45% on selected models," said an expert from Transcom. Customers will receive complimentary gifts with their refrigerator purchase, along with the convenience of free home delivery services.

TWICE THE JOY

Given the upcoming Eid, Jamuna Electronics' 'Double Khushi Offer' promises to boost happiness with every purchase. Customers can enjoy a generous cash discount of up to 30% on Jamuna refrigerators with this offer.

SEE PAGE J3

Eid Mubarak
!?
Siplob

Global brands AT YOUR DOORSTEP

RITESH RANJAN
Head of Business, Transcom Electronics Ltd.

As Qurbani Eid approaches, the demand for large and stylish refrigerators soars. To meet all your refrigeration needs, visit the Transcom Digital showroom, where you will find a vast collection of refrigerators and deep freezers from world-renowned brands such as Hitachi, Samsung, Whirlpool, Haier, and our own brand, world-class Transtec.

Transcom Digital offers a comprehensive range of advanced-featured refrigerators and freezers, catering to every segment of customers. Whether you are looking for budget-friendly options or exclusive Made-in-Japan series, we ensure a perfect fit for all needs and preferences. Our stylish and spacious refrigerators are designed to meet increased storage demands during the festive season, with the capability to maintain optimal cooling even at temperatures up to 60 degrees Celsius.

This Eid-ul-Adha, Transcom Digital presents the "Dream Exchange Offer," the best offer in the country, including:

- Up to BDT 25,000 cash discount
- Up to BDT 50,000 exchange offer
- Up to 15% bank discount
- A chance to win big through our scratch & win jackpot
- An exclusive priority card offering 24-hour service, a 10% discount on air tickets, and 0% EMI for 36 months

Don't miss out on these exclusive offers. Visit Transcom Digital and be the first to take advantage of these incredible offers.

> **Our stylish and spacious refrigerators are designed to meet increased storage demands during the festive season, with the capability to maintain optimal cooling even at temperatures up to 60 degrees Celsius.**

সময়ের পথ-পরিক্রমায় বিদেশী ব্র্যান্ডকে পিছনে ফেলে যমুনা রেফ্রিজারেটর ক্রেতাদের কাছে একটি শক্তিশালী অবস্থান তৈরি করেছে।

এ বছর ফ্রিজের চাহিদা কেমন ? আপনাদের ব্র্যান্ড কেমন সাড়া পাচ্ছে ?

বছরের এ সময়টা সাধারণত ফ্রিজের চাহিদা বহুলাংশে বৃদ্ধি পায়। সারা বছর দেশে যে পরিমাণ ফ্রিজ বিক্রি হয় তার একটা বড় অংশ এ সময় বিক্রি হয়। রেফ্রিজারেটর বা ফ্রিজ বর্তমানে আমাদের প্রাত্যহিক জীবনের খুবই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অনুষঙ্গ। শহর থেকে গ্রাম সর্বত্র যমুনা রেফ্রিজারেটরের ক্রেতা রয়েছে। সাশ্রয়ী মূল্য, গুনগতমান ও টেকসই পণ্য, দেশের মানুষের চাহিদা আর এ দেশের আবহাওয়া উপযোগী পন্য হওয়ার কারনে যমুনা রেফ্রিজারেটর আজ কোটি মানুষের আস্থায় ধন্য।

অত্যাধুনিক প্রযুক্তির ইন্টেলিজেন্ট ইনর্ভাটার টেকনোলজির স্মার্ট ডাবল ডোর, টি-ডোর, ক্রস ডোর রেফ্রিজারেটর বাজারে ব্যাপক সাড়া ফেলেছে।

ঈদুল আযহা সামনে রেখে আপনারা কি কি অফার দিচ্ছেন?

ঈদের খুশিকে বেশি বেশি করতে যমুনা ইলেকট্রনিক্স নিয়ে এসেছে ডাবল খুশি অফার। সম্মানিত ক্রেতা সাধারণ এই ঈদে আমাদের যমুনা প্লাজা, ডিলার শপ কিংবা অনলাইনে যমুনা রেফ্রিজারেটর বা অন্যান্য হোম অ্যাপ্লায়েন্স কিনে রেজিস্ট্রেশন করলে জিতে নিতে পারেন মোটরসাইকেল, ফ্রিজ, এসি, স্মার্ট টিভি, মাইক্রোওয়েভ ওভেনসহ অসংখ্য হোম অ্যাপ্লায়েন্স। এছাড়া সর্বোচ্চ ৩০% নগদ ডিসকাউন্ট তো থাকছেই।

কেন যমুনা ফ্রিজ সেরা ?

যমুনা ফ্রিজ সাশ্রয়ী মূল্য, দীর্ঘস্থায়িত্ব, বিদ্যুৎ সাশ্রয়ী, আকর্ষনীয় ডিজাইন, উন্নত কম্প্রেসর, ওয়ারেন্টি, বিক্রয়োত্তর সেবা এবং অত্যাধুনিক প্রযুক্তির পণ্যটি সরবরাহ করছি। সে কারনেই দেশের মানুষের কাছে যমুনা রেফ্রিজারেটর ১ নাম্বার চয়েজ। ৮৫ এমএম ফোমিং ডেনসিটি, ফাইভ ওয়েজ ইভাপোরেটিভ কুলিং সিস্টেম, তাই বিদ্যুৎ বিভ্রাটের এ সময়ে দীর্ঘক্ষণ পর্যন্ত খাবার থাকবে সতেজ ও ফ্রেশ।

আপনার কোম্পানীর ফ্রিজের কী কী বৈশিষ্ট্য এবং সুযোগ-সুবিধা রয়েছে?

আমরা চাই ক্রয়ক্ষমতার মধ্যে জনগণের দোরগোড়ায় সেরা পণ্যটি পৌঁছে দিতে। সে লক্ষ্যে দেশের শীর্ষস্থানীয় শিল্পগোষ্ঠী যমুনা গ্রুপের অঙ্গ প্রতিষ্ঠান যমুনা ইলেকট্রনিক্স এন্ড অটোমোবাইলস লিঃ ২০১৪ সালে বৃহৎ পরিসরে ইলেকট্রনিক্স হোম অ্যাপ্লায়েন্স উৎপাদন শুরু করে। আধুনিক যন্ত্রপাতি, অত্যাধুনিক প্রযুক্তি, দক্ষ জনবল, উন্নত কাঁচামাল ও প্রতিনিয়ত উদ্ভাবনী উৎকর্ষতা সাধনের ফলে যমুনা আজ দেশের ১ নম্বর কোয়ালিটি রেফ্রিজারেটর ব্র্যান্ড।

আমরা সংখ্যাতত্ত্বে বিশ্বাসী নই বরং গুনে ও মানে সেরা হতে চাই। আমাদের রেফ্রিজারেটরগুলোর বিক্রয়োত্তর সার্ভিস প্রায় নেই বললেই চলে (০.০১%)। প্রতি ৫ বছরে কম্প্রেসর পরিবর্তনের হার প্রায় ১%-এর নিচে যা বাজারে প্রচলিত রেফ্রিজারেটর থেকে অনেক কম। সিলিকন জেল মানব দেহের জন্য ক্ষতিকর এবং খাদ্যমান নষ্ট করে। বাংলাদেশে একমাত্র যমুনা রেফ্রিজারেটর-ই তার উৎপাদন প্রক্রিয়ার কোথাও সিলিকন জেল ব্যবহার করে না। আমাদের ফ্রিজগুলোতে R600a গ্যাস ব্যবহৃত হয় যা পরিবেশ বান্ধব ও মানব দেহের ক্ষতি করে না। অত্যাধুনিক প্রযুক্তি ব্যবহারের ফলে খাবারের মান ঠিক থাকে সাথে বিদ্যুৎ খরচ ৭০% কম হয়। আমরা দ্ব্যর্থহীনভাবে বলতে চাই, রেফ্রিজারেটর উৎপাদন প্রক্রিয়ায় যমুনা যে কাঁচামাল, উদ্ভাবন ও অত্যাধুনিক প্রযুক্তি ব্যবহার করে তা দেশের আর কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানের নেই। তাই যমুনা ইলেকট্রনিক্স তার সেরা পণ্যটি গ্রাহকের হাতে তুলে দিচ্ছে।

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We prioritise RELIABLE COOLING TECHNOLOGY

MONIKA ISLAM
Group Director, Jamuna Group

Jamuna refrigerators are a beacon of innovation in the ever-evolving realm of smart home appliances. They are our gateway to the latest advancements in refrigerator technology, offering insights into connectivity, energy efficiency, and cutting-edge features designed to enhance the modern home. Jamuna Electronics is utilising the latest technological advancements to meet market demand and consumer preferences. Our brand payoff line is 'Innovation for a Smarter Life'. Our highly experienced and dedicated R&D team is always active in achieving technical excellence and continuous improvement. Jamuna Refrigerators offer various models to cater to different consumer needs.

We use modern machinery, state-of-the-art technology, skilled manpower, and advanced raw materials to produce the best quality refrigerators in the country. Jamuna refrigerators are available in different sizes, designs, capacities, and prices to suit the purchasing power of all types of buyers. Our latest refrigerator models incorporate advanced technology to enhance food preservation, food safety, user convenience, and energy efficiency. We prioritise reliable cooling technology and energy-saving features, ensuring the freshness of food while minimising electricity consumption, aligning with the growing demand for eco-friendly appliances.

Without reluctance, we can say that the evolution of Jamuna refrigerators' features is not just about keeping your food fresh; it's about elevating your kitchen's functionality and style. While maintaining global standards, our production costs are higher than others, but despite that, we deliver international-standard Jamuna refrigerators and freezers at affordable prices compared to other brands in the market. Jamuna has created a significant and unique place among consumers as a domestic brand amid various foreign brands.

Innovative designs and customisable features in Jamuna Refrigerators cater to diverse lifestyles and kitchen aesthetics as well.

High-quality refrigerators at an AFFORDABLE PRICE

M A RAZZAK KHAN RAJ CIP
Chairman, Minister-Myone Group

At Minister Electronics, we understand the unique needs of Bangladeshi households. Keeping your food fresh and your electricity bills manageable is our top priority. That's why we design our refrigerators with unwavering dedication to reliability, efficiency, and cutting-edge innovation, providing high-quality refrigerators at a very affordable price.

Every Minister refrigerator undergoes rigorous testing to ensure long-lasting performance and optimal cooling, perfect for our country's warm climate. We use high-quality materials for superior insulation, leading to significant energy savings – up to 66% compared to traditional models! Because we're committed to a greener Bangladesh, we utilize eco-friendly R600a refrigerant gas, and all our refrigerators come with built-in stabilizers. Minister also utilizes high-tempered glass doors, which do not break even under extreme pressure. Additionally, the designs are aesthetically pleasing, making the refrigerators trendy.

We're constantly pushing boundaries, developing features like our industry-leading fast cooling system. We're also exploring the future of food preservation, with features like smart connectivity and intelligent temperature control on the horizon. By focusing on both core functionality and cutting-edge technology, we ensure Minister refrigerators remain reliable, efficient, and at the forefront of keeping your food fresh and your wallet happy. With the high-quality innovation, we are planning to go global as soon as we have received very good responses from local buyers over the years.

> **Every Minister refrigerator undergoes rigorous testing to ensure long-lasting performance and optimal cooling, perfect for our country's warm climate.**

FROM PAGE J2

But that's not all—beyond the standard discount, customers stand the chance to win exciting prizes such as refrigerators, AC units, Smart TVs, microwave ovens, and a variety of other home appliances.

"Promotions such as the 'Double Khushi Offer' capture the attention of potential buyers and also serve to stimulate purchasing decisions," said Salim Ullah Salim, Director of Marketing, Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Ltd.

TAILORED PAYMENTS

Easy monthly instalment (EMI) options are available throughout the year, offering a convenient solution for customers to manage their finances. Their popularity soars during the festive season, as they provide a helpful way for jobholders and individuals with lower incomes to comfortably afford larger purchases amidst rising expenses.

Many electronics companies extend discounts for purchases made using credit cards from selected financial institutions with which they partner. Purchasing through credit cards benefits the customer with additional EMI facilities, discounts, and attractive cashback offers. Moreover, to enhance savings, it's worthwhile to explore debit card options as well.

There's an opportunity to avail up to a 15% discount when making payments with bank cards at Transcom Digital, with the facility of 0% interest for up to 36 months. Credit and debit cards from 35 banks can be used to buy Konka fridges. Minister, Walton, and Jamuna also offer EMI facilities through credit cards from various banks.

SHOHOJ KISTI

The Shohoj Kisti instalment option offers a flexible solution for individuals seeking financial assistance without a credit card. With instalment payments spanning from 3 to 12 months, it provides the convenience needed. To qualify for this financing opportunity, the applicant must be employed, whether as a salaried worker, businessperson, landlord, or in any other occupation, subject to terms and conditions with a minimum net income. "It's important to note that not every retail shop offers easy instalment options," said Tahasinul Haq, Chief Business Officer, Walton Refrigerator. Brands such as Transtec, Walton, Jamuna, and Vision provide this offer only in their flagship stores.

A wide array of home appliance manufacturers and distributors, including Transcom Digital, Walton, Electromart, Jamuna, Minister, and Vision, provide EMI options for purchasing fridges. There are two types of EMI currently offered by these companies: one through credit cards and the other via cash, often referred to as 'Shohoj Kisti'.

EMI VIA CARDS

"The flexible payment plans of EMI make it more manageable and affordable by allowing customers to spread the cost of their purchase over several months," said an expert from Transcom Digital.

SHOHOJ KISTI

		DOWN-PAYMENT
TRANSCOM	No extra charges incurred if the payment is settled within the 12-month period.	Tailored to each customer's condition.
WALTON	Zero interest with easy instalments of 6 months and a maximum instalment facility up to 36 months.	Tailored to each customer's condition.
ELECTROMART	Monthly instalments available up to 12 months.	25% is determined based on financial evaluation.
MINISTER	No extra charges incurred if the payment is settled within the 36-month period.	Tailored to each customer's condition.
JAMUNA	Interest-free instalments up to six months.	20% is determined based on financial evaluation.

TRANSCOM DIGITAL
বিশ্বমানের ফ্রিজ ও ডিপ ফ্রিজ-এ
দেশসেরা DREAM Exchange OFFER
SCRATCH & WIN JACKPOT
নিশ্চিত DISCOUNT*
এক্সচেঞ্জ DISCOUNT*
EXTRA 15% BANK OFFER*
EXCLUSIVE PRIORITY CARD*
BREAKTHROUGH ENERGY SAVING
Hitachi Priority Card Partner
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Original Product Guaranteed

COOL & CONVENIENT

We aim to enter EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN MARKETS

MD. NURUL AFSER

Deputy Managing Director, Electro Mart Limited Group

We have been selling Konka products in Bangladesh since 1998. Initially, we imported our products from China. When we began, we were the first company to offer a 5-year warranty period for our products. We built a relationship of trust with our customers by ensuring quality products at reasonable prices. In 2004, we commenced assembling our products locally in Bangladesh. By 2015, we initiated a joint effort to establish a factory in Sonargaon, Narayanganj, which became operational in 2018. Local production ensured that our products and designs were compatible with the country's environment. Additionally, we focused on research and development to meet the demands of our consumers and expanded our operations, further strengthening the trust our consumers had in us.

We have already introduced some new technologies and innovations in the field. Konka refrigerators can cool storage quicker, reduce electricity consumption by 71 percent, and maintain the quality of food items. Our products also guarantee that different types of items can be stored together without concerns about odor transfer or bacterial contamination.

> **We ensure that our products are environmentally friendly. Our materials are FDI-approved, and we adhere to European standards to preserve food quality.**

Furthermore, we ensure that our products are environmentally friendly. Our materials are FDI-approved, and we adhere to European standards to preserve food quality.

We plan to expand and cater to the demands of the entire market, with the eventual goal of exporting our products abroad. We have already begun working towards this goal, starting with neighbouring countries. Ultimately, we aim to enter the markets of Europe and America, branding our products as "Made in Bangladesh".

We conduct over 70 TESTS BEFORE DELIVERY

TAHASINUL HAQUE

Chief Business Officer, Walton Refrigerator

Walton has one of the largest Research & Innovation centres in this industry, with over 800 highly talented and experienced engineers focused on reliability. Over time, we continuously update the design and features of our refrigerators to align with technological advancements and the evolving needs and preferences of customers in both domestic and international markets. We ensure over 70 tests before delivering a single product.

We develop products tailored to the weather patterns and consumer behaviours of our country. This commitment is evident in the innovative features we incorporate into our products. For instance, our wide range of offerings includes features such as wide voltage range support and overvoltage protection technology, catering to the specific needs of our customers. Furthermore, our Research and Innovation (R&I) division is dedicated to continuous research aimed at enhancing the energy efficiency of our products.

We manufacture products according to the standards of Europe and America, making them suitable for developed countries worldwide. As a result, we have successfully exported to more than 40 countries.

Producing energy-efficient and environmentally friendly refrigerators is our top priority. By including eco-friendly design, adopting foaming technology, and using R600a refrigerant, Walton refrigerators use MSO Plus (Matrix Seeped Optimization) inverter technology, which saves up to 75% electricity. This technology, based on the Artificial Intelligence of Things (AIoT), automatically ensures the highest internal cooling performance of the refrigerator at the lowest electricity cost according to the outside temperature. Walton is the first in Bangladesh to manufacture and market refrigerators with a 5-star energy rating from BSTI.

Walton has introduced AIoT refrigerators to Bangladeshi consumers, enabling users to control their appliances remotely via smartphones, providing convenience and flexibility from anywhere in the world. Our cloud-based monitoring system enhances the consumer experience.

DID YOU KNOW?

ANCIENT ICEHOUSES OF PERSIA

In 400 BC, Persia's Dasht-e Lut desert birthed the Yakhchal, a precursor to modern icehouses. Despite the scorching heat, this massive stone marvel kept its interior cool, with a straw-covered pit forming ice for crop preservation.

WARMEST PART OF THE FRIDGE

The warmest spot in a fridge is its door, while the coldest is typically at the bottom shelf towards the back.

FROM REFRIGA TO REFRIGERATOR

'Refrigerator' stems from the Latin 'refriga', meaning "to make cool", aptly reflecting its primary function.

INTRODUCTION OF FREEZER

Originally, refrigerators only had one compartment for storing food. Freezer compartments were later introduced in the 1940s, providing a dedicated space for frozen items.

MOST EXPENSIVE FRIDGE

Meneghini's 'La Cambusa', an Italian luxury fridge, tops the market at over $41,500, boasting features like brass handles, a steam oven, and a Miele coffee system.

EINSTEIN'S FRIDGE BREAKTHROUGH

Albert Einstein and Hungarian Physicist Leo Szilard collaborated in the 1930s to advance refrigerator technology. Their innovation eliminated mechanical pumps, opting for an electromagnetic field to compress refrigerant gas, a breakthrough in fridge engineering.

RESEARCH: ZUBIAN KARIM THAKUR

ফ্রিজ কিনুন
হাম্বা
জিতুন
minister
মিনিস্টার ফ্রিজ কিনে পেতে পারেন
গরু, ফ্রিজ ফ্রি, নগদ মূল্যছাড় সহ
নিশ্চিত আকর্ষণীয় উপহার
ফ্রিজ কিনে হাম্বা জিতেছেন
অভিনন্দন
ফ্রিজ কিনে হাম্বা জিতেছেন
অভিনন্দন
জনাব মো: শাহজাহান
মিরপুর-১, ঢাকা, বাংলাদেশ
ফ্রিজ কিনে হাম্বা জিতেছেন
অভিনন্দন
মোসা: জোহরা বেগম
তালবাড়িয়া, যশোর সদর
ফ্রিজ কিনে ফ্রিজ জিতেছেন
অভিনন্দন
দূর্গাপুর, রাজশাহী
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অভিনন্দন
আপনিও হতে পারেন
পরবর্তী বিজয়ী
*শর্ত প্রযোজ্য
১২ বছরের
কম্প্রেসার গ্যারান্টি
R600a
গ্যাস
বিদ্যুৎ সাশ্রয়ী
বিল্ট ইন ভোল্টেজ স্ট্যাবিলাইজার
রিয়েল টেম্পার্ড গ্লাস ডোর
www.ministerbd.com
09606700700

Intelligent Cooling

Smart Features in Today's Refrigerators

TAZRI MARWA AHMED

In today's world, a refrigerator is more than just a household necessity—it's a hub of innovation. Like other cutting-edge electronics, modern fridges in Bangladesh are now equipped with some smart features that elevate comfort, convenience, and energy efficiency to new heights. Thanks to AI (Artificial Intelligence) and IT (Information Technology) advancements, these smart fridges are designed to serve you seamlessly for years to come.

Join us as we explore how to make the perfect fridge purchase this Eid and beyond and discover the world of smart fridges and the remarkable features they offer to transform your kitchen experience.

One of the latest smart features incorporated into refrigerators called the intelligent Inverter Technology has been adopted by all renowned electronic companies such as Gree, Jamuna, Minister Hi-Tech, Transcom, Walton, and more.

This technology employs a sophisticated process to regulate the refrigerator's speed, ensuring optimal energy efficiency and precise temperature control. By adjusting the compressor speed in response to cooling demands, this technology maintains a constant temperature, reduces energy consumption, and operates more quietly.

Smart features enable users to further minimize energy use by tailoring consumption to their needs, resulting in significant energy savings and longer-lasting freshness for stored food.

Moreover, refrigerator manufacturers have incorporated the environmentally friendly R-600 refrigerant gas in their products, showcasing their commitment to eco-friendliness. This gas boasts zero Ozone Depletion Potential and reduced toxicity, particularly in compressors. This particular eco-friendly attribute underscores the industry's dedication to sustainable practices.

GREE

ACTIVE CARBON DEODORIZER

Different foods stored in the fridge have different smells and flavors. The Active Carbon Deodorizer feature prevents different food odors from blending. It diffuses bacteria that cause smells to mix, keeping food fresh and odor-free for longer.

GARDEN FRESH TECHNOLOGY (VITAMIN FRESH FEATURE)

This feature integrated into the refrigerators keeps vegetables fresh for up to 15-16 days. Typically, veggies wilt within 2-3 days after being placed in the fridge, but Garden Fresh Technology maintains their freshness, ensuring they stay green and crisp. This particular feature is also considered a 'green feature' in refrigerators.

HUMIDITY CONTROLLER MODE

According to Md. Julhak Hossain, National Sales Manager at Electromart Ltd., Gree's refrigerators include a Humidity Controller Mode in the vegetable box. Unlike many other fridges, this feature allows you to adjust the humidity, keeping veggies at the optimal temperature and extending their freshness.

DOOR ALARM

The Door Alarm feature ensures the fridge is properly closed. If the door is left ajar, the alarm will sound, alerting you to close it and preventing the loss of cool air and potential spoilage of food.

One of the latest smart features incorporated into refrigerators called the intelligent Inverter Technology has been adopted by all renowned electronic companies such as Gree, Jamuna, Minister Hi-Tech, Transcom, Walton, and more.

JAMUNA

SMART MUSIC SYSTEM INSIDE (BUILT-IN SPEAKERS)

"Our refrigerators come with a built-in music system that allows you to enjoy your favorite tunes directly from the fridge. Music can be easily played through Bluetooth, enabling a seamless connection with your smartphone or other Bluetooth-enabled devices," said Salim Ullah Salim, Director of Marketing at Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Ltd.

TOUCH SCREEN CONTROL

Jamuna refrigerators feature touchscreen controls that allow you to easily adjust the temperature settings with a simple touch. This user-friendly interface provides precise control over the cooling environment, ensuring your food stays at the optimal temperature.

APPS CONTROL

The Tuya Smart app, available on the Google Play Store, allows you to control your refrigerator remotely using your Android mobile device. With the help of this app, you can adjust settings, monitor performance, and receive notifications for optimal convenience and efficiency.

MINISTER HI-TECH

BUILT-IN STABILIZER

According to K M G Kibria, Head of Brand and Communication at Minister - Myone Group, Minister was the company that introduced built-in stabilizers inside refrigerators, which is a key smart feature. Previously, users would have to buy stabilizers separately for their fridges, resulting in more hassle.

NANO HEALTH CARE TECHNOLOGY

The Nano Healthcare technology keeps food fresh and nutrient-rich. Every smart fridge currently usually has a NANO Healthcare sticker on it.

"Minister has plans to specifically integrate the Voice Control Mode and smartphone app functionality into future fridge models and is working on them at present, to enhance user experience and become smarter in terms of technology," said K M G Kibria, Head of Brand and Communication at Minister - Myone Group.

TRANSCOM

ECO MONITORING SENSOR

This sensor in the fridge detects whether someone is near the refrigerator and automatically activates or deactivates the energy-saving mode accordingly.

INVERTER X DUAL FAN TECHNOLOGY

Separate cooling fans for both fridge and freezer parts cool separately as per the requirement of each compartment, ensuring energy saving and powerful cooling. The inverter can operate the compressor as per the required cooling demand.

FROST-RECYCLE COOLING SYSTEM

"The Frost-Recycle Cooling System operates when the compressor is in sleep mode, recycling the chilled air produced from the evaporator's frost and distributing it to all compartments. This process not only maintains a consistent cooling effect but also contributes to energy savings," said Saikat Azad, Category Head at Transcom Electronics Ltd.

OTHERS

All components in the Transcom refrigerators are fully free from chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), ensuring a sustainable and eco-conscious choice for consumers.

WALTON

METAL & DUO COOLING

Metal Cooling ensures balanced cooling among food preserved in the refrigerator while efficiently retaining the temperature inside the refrigerator. The Duo Cooling+ technology is an innovative way to resist the blending of smells between cabinets by using independent cooling circuits for each cabinet.

E-SAVE MODE

The E-Save mode allows for maintaining the required temperature for the safe preservation of foods while saving a significant amount of energy in Walton refrigerators.

TURBOCOOL MODE

"We conducted extensive research on the requirements of our customers and their usage patterns, and the TURBOCOOL Mode is one of the outcomes of that. This mode accelerates the cooling speed of the refrigerator and allows it to achieve the set temperature in a very short time," said Tahasinul Haq, Chief Business Officer at Walton Refrigerator.

DIGITAL DISPLAY

Walton's Digital Display feature enhances user experience by allowing them to see and set the precise temperature level they desire with only a mild touch. It also consists of features like a child lock and a smart alarm system that activates when the door is kept open for too long. The child lock in it can be activated or deactivated by pressing it for 3 seconds.

WIFI-CONNECTIVITY

The innovative feature is a combination of enhancement of user experience and safe operation of the appliance. It allows the user to monitor, adjust, and control the refrigerator through an app even if they are miles away from home.

OTHERS

In some of Walton's flagship models, multiple modes and features have been implemented, going up to several as 8 - for the users' convenience. To name a couple of them -- the Ultra Fresh Mode allows users to convert the frozen food compartment to a refrigerator cabinet, while the Holiday or Vacation Mode allows users to take a vacation away from home, turning the refrigerator part off while the frozen food compartment remains operational.

When purchasing a refrigerator for your home, it's important to consider several factors to ensure long-lasting satisfaction and a smooth buying process. Consider the fridge's size, capacity, style, energy efficiency, and warranty besides looking into smart features. It's also wise to invest in a high-quality refrigerator, even if it means spending more initially, to avoid the hassle of frequent replacements.

Refrigerator MAINTENANCE

A must for a stress-free Eid-Ul-Adha

Maintaining a clean fridge is crucial for preserving the freshness of your food, preventing the buildup of germs that can cross-contaminate food, and avoiding unsightly mold and messes. As Eid-Ul-Adha approaches, follow these straightforward steps to ensure your refrigerator is clean and ready for a healthy and stress-free celebration.

When preparing for Eid-Ul-Adha, ensuring your refrigerator is in top condition is crucial. An efficient refrigerator is essential for storing meat and delicious food, making it a key element of your celebration. Keeping your fridge in optimal health is vital to maintaining the freshness and nutritional value of your food. Here are some tips to maintain your refrigerator and ensure its efficiency, longevity, and ability to keep your food fresh.

REGULAR CLEANING

It's important to clean your refrigerator monthly to prevent ice build-up, which can reduce the available space and hinder the cooling process. Avoid using harsh chemicals, and instead, opt for soft, cotton cloths soaked in clean water for cleaning the interior. Regular cleaning also helps in maintaining hygiene and preventing food contamination.

RESTING PERIOD AFTER MOVING

When you move your refrigerator, whether to a new house or another room, it's crucial to let it rest before reconnecting to power. After moving, allow the refrigerator to rest for at least three hours; for new purchases, wait for six hours. This resting period allows the internal gases to settle, ensuring efficient cooling when restarted.

POSITIONING AND VENTILATION

Place your refrigerator at least one foot away from the wall to allow proper air circulation. Avoid locations with high humidity or restricted airflow, especially during the rainy season, to prevent sweating and water droplets from forming on the fridge. "To avoid overheating, make sure the refrigerator is not placed under direct sunlight or close to heat sources," adds Salim Ullah Salim, Director, Marketing, Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Ltd.

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE

Schedule an annual maintenance check with a professional technician. A thorough inspection and tune-up can help in identifying potential issues early and keep your refrigerator running efficiently. Most of the country's renowned companies such as Walton, Transcom, Minister etc. offer great after-sales services which can make this task easier. "We have 300+ service centers all over Bangladesh with dedicated employees who are ever-ready to extend their helping hands to our customers," says K M G Kibria Sohel, Head of Brand and Communication, Minister - Myone Group.

CLEAN THE CONDENSER COILS

The condenser coils, located at the back or bottom of your refrigerator, are responsible for dissipating heat. Over time, these coils can become clogged with dust and debris, reducing the efficiency of your fridge. Use a condenser coil brush or vacuum attachment to clean the coils every six months to a year.

CHECK THE DOOR SEALS

Ensuring a tight seal or gas casket around your refrigerator door is crucial for maintaining optimal temperature and preventing cool air from escaping. "Make sure the gasket is properly aligned, check for damage, and clean it on a regular basis using a mild soap and water solution. If the problem is severe, you might need to think about changing the gasket to keep the seal working well and saving energy," shares Salim Ullah from Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Ltd.

AVOID OVERLOADING

Do not overload your refrigerator as it can obstruct air circulation, making it difficult for the fridge to maintain the set temperature. Store food in a way that allows air to circulate freely, ensuring even cooling throughout.

PROPER ORGANIZATION

Store food in appropriate compartments according to their type. "Storing foods without a box or container may cause loss of moisture and taste of food. So, it's always the best practice to keep foods in closed containers," shares Tahasinul Haque, Chief Business Officer, Walton Refrigerator.

TEMPERATURE SETTINGS

Set the refrigerator temperature between 2 to 5 degrees Celsius and the deep freezer between -18 to -24 degrees Celsius to keep your food fresh. Regularly check and adjust these settings, especially during summer and winter, to maintain optimal performance.

AVOID FREQUENT DOOR OPENING

Minimize the frequency of opening the refrigerator door to prevent warm air from entering, which can raise the internal temperature and cause condensation. Ensure the door seals properly to maintain the set temperature.

COOLING DOWN FOOD

Allow hot food to cool to room temperature before placing it in the refrigerator. This practice helps in maintaining the internal temperature and reduces the refrigerator's workload, saving energy.

ODOR PREVENTION

Regular cleaning and using odor filters can prevent bad smells. Ensure that any spoiled food is promptly removed to prevent odors from spreading. "Use lukewarm water with lemon drops to remove any bad odors," shares Md. Julhak Hossain, National Sales Manager, Electromart Ltd.

BLOCKED DRAIN LINES

Food residues can occasionally block drain lines, leading to water leakage inside the refrigerator. Regularly check and clean the drain hole to prevent such issues.

By following these guidelines, you can ensure that your refrigerator runs efficiently, keeps your food fresh, and has a longer lifespan. Regular maintenance, proper usage, and careful storage practices are key to optimal refrigerator performance.

HOW TO CLEAN Your Refrigerator

EMPTY THE FRIDGE:
Start by unplugging the refrigerator to avoid electric damages and remove all food items from your fridge. Dispose of any expired or spoiled items to make sure you're only keeping fresh food.

CLEAN SHELVES AND DRAWERS:
Remove all removable parts, such as shelves and drawers. Soak them in warm, soapy water to loosen any grime and make cleaning easier. Scrub the soaked shelves and drawers with a sponge or cloth. Rinse them thoroughly and ensure they are completely dry before reinserting them into the fridge.

CLEAN THE INTERIOR:
Use a mixture of baking soda and water (2 tablespoons of baking soda to 1 quart of water) to wipe down the interior. Focus on corners and crevices for a thorough clean.

WIPE DOWN DOORS AND GASKETS:
Clean the door seals, or gaskets, with warm soapy water to remove any buildup. Wipe the exterior doors with a mild cleaning solution for a polished look.

REPLACE SHELVES AND DRAWERS:
Once dry, replace all the shelves and drawers back into the fridge. Ensure they are securely positioned and properly arranged.

DISINFECT AND DRY:
Mix equal parts water and white vinegar in a spray bottle and spray the interior and exterior of the refrigerator. Allow it to sit for 10-15 minutes to disinfect and deodorize before thoroughly wiping with a microfiber cloth.

ORGANIZE AND RETURN FOOD ITEMS:
Return the food to the fridge, using containers to organize and keep similar items together. This helps maintain order and makes items easier to find.

BY SARAH BINTAY SHAKAHWAT

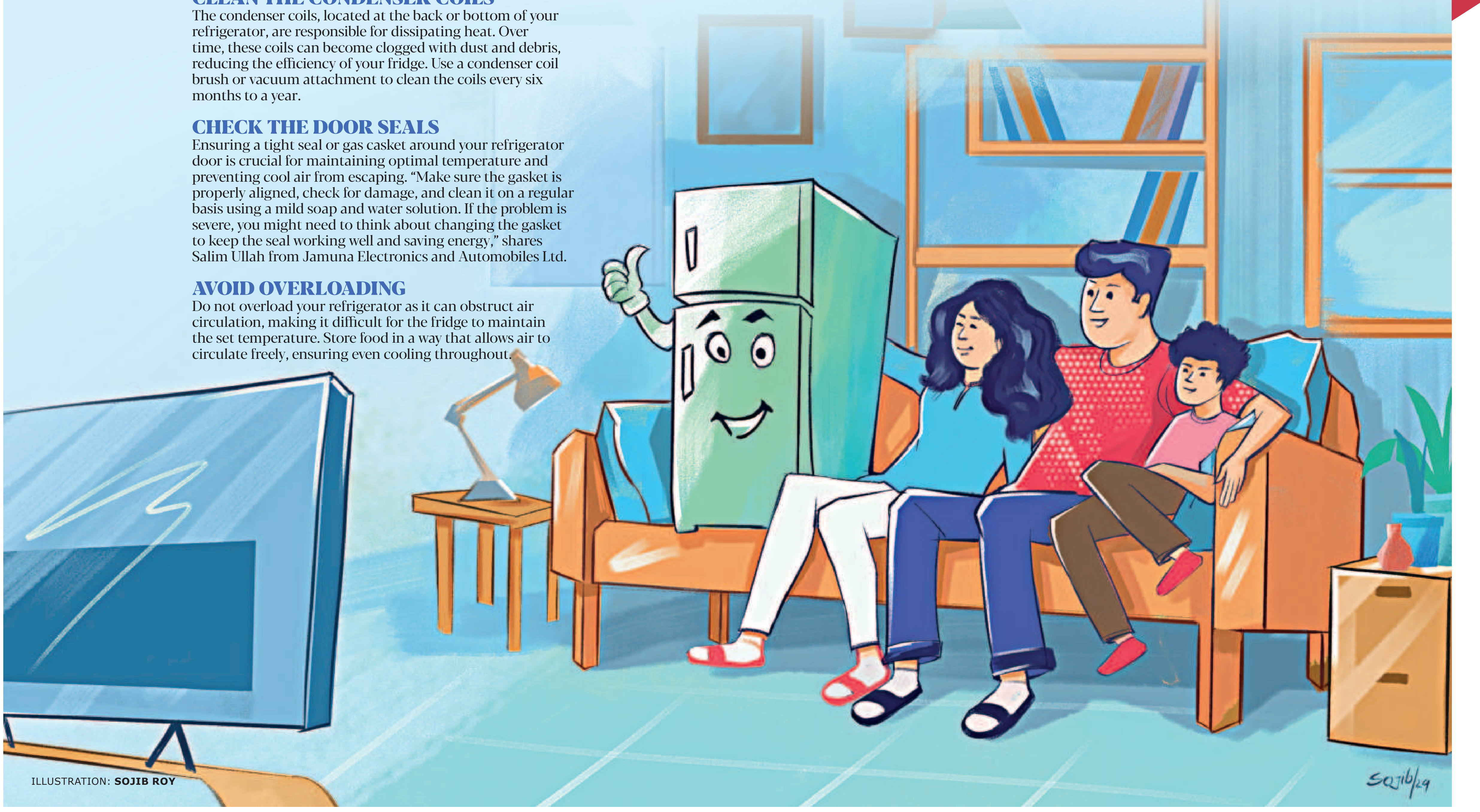


ILLUSTRATION: SOJIB ROY

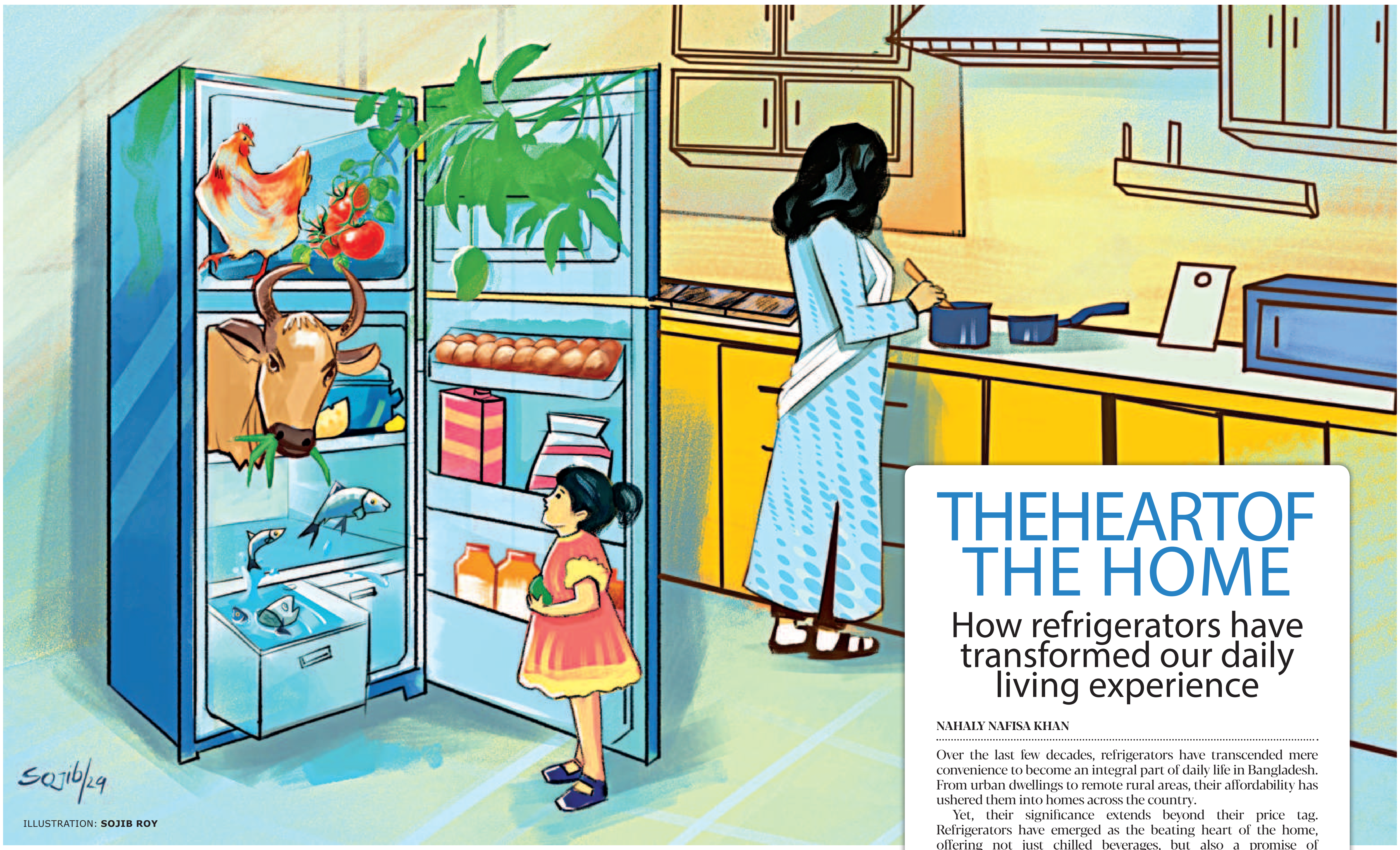


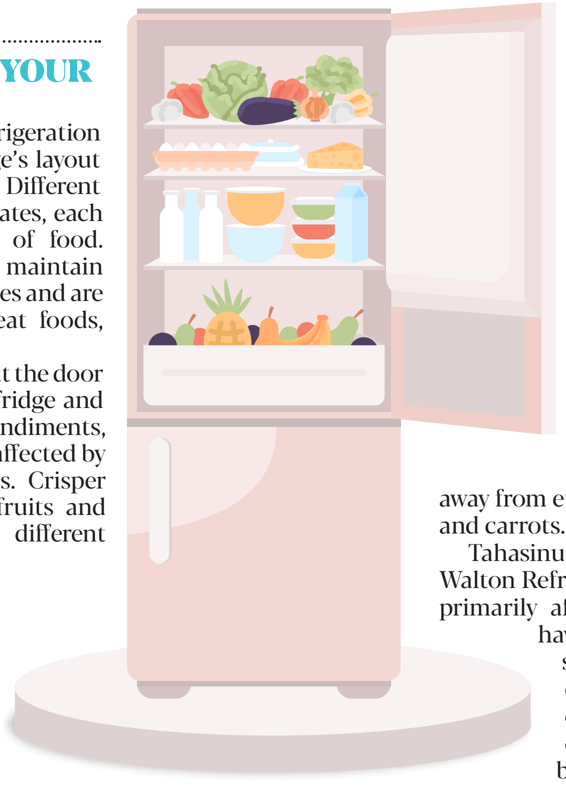
ILLUSTRATION: **SOJIB ROY**

KEEPINGITFRESH

Healthy and effective food preservation in the refrigerator

Imagine returning home after a relaxing weekend getaway, expecting to face the usual post-vacation blues. You open your fridge to find that the produce and leftovers you stored before leaving are still in peak condition, vibrant and fresh as if bought yesterday. Surprisingly, this isn't just a happy coincidence but the result of employing the right techniques for preserving food in your refrigerator. Effective fridge management extends the shelf life of your groceries and ensures they retain their nutritional value and taste.

AYMAN ANIKA



UNDERSTANDING YOUR FRIDGE'S LAYOUT

The first step to effective refrigeration is understanding your fridge's layout and temperature zones. Different sections have different climates, each suitable for various types of food. For example, upper shelves maintain more consistent temperatures and are ideal for drinks, ready-to-eat foods, and herbs.

It is important to note that the door is the warmest part of the fridge and should be reserved for condiments, juices, and other items less affected by slight temperature changes. Crisper drawers are designed for fruits and vegetables and can have different humidity settings.

PROPER AIR CIRCULATION

Good air circulation is vital. Try to avoid overpacking, as overcrowded shelves can block airflow, leading to uneven cooling and increased temperatures, which can affect the food's shelf life. A well-organised fridge not only ensures better air distribution but also helps you keep track of what you have, reducing the chance of overbuying and wastage.

In this regard, Salim Ullah Salim, Director of Marketing at Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Ltd, adds, "We use food-grade virgin plastic material instead of silicone, which helps keep food fresh. Our refrigerators incorporate Nano Health Care technology to maintain a hygienic environment."

PROPER FOOD PREPARATION

How you prepare your food before storing it can impact its shelf life. Saikat Azad, Category Head - TD Category at Transcom Electronics Ltd., informs, "Our models are equipped with state-of-the-art technology such as the Vacuum Sealed Compartment, Aero-care Vege Compartment, and Moisture-Guard Vegetable Compartment. Each feature is meticulously crafted to maintain optimal conditions within the fridge, ensuring your groceries remain fresh and nutritious for longer periods."

For long-term storage, blanch vegetables by briefly boiling them and then plunging them into ice water. This method kills bacteria and preserves color and texture. Moreover, portion out large quantities of food before storing. This reduces the need to open and close containers frequently, which can lead to contamination and spoilage.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Handling produce can be tricky due to their diverse storage needs. For example, some fruits, like apples, emit ethylene gas that speeds up ripening in nearby produce. Keep them away from ethylene-sensitive items like lettuce and carrots.

Tahasinul Haque, Chief Business Officer at Walton Refrigerator, highlights that humidity primarily affects fruits and vegetables. "We have included humidity controller sliders in some of our models on the vegetable box cover that can be adjusted based on the contents. Other models feature built-in design elements to prevent excessive moisture accumulation or the drying out of vegetables," he says.

Additionally, specially designed bags for vegetables and fruits help regulate air exposure, extending shelf life. Some items, like potatoes, onions, and tomatoes, fare better outside the fridge, as cold temperatures can change their texture and flavor.

REGULAR MAINTENANCE

Keeping your refrigerator clean and functioning optimally is crucial for maintaining the freshness and safety of your food. Begin by removing all items, which allows you to clean all surfaces thoroughly and check for expired or spoiled foods.

Wipe down shelves and drawers with a mild disinfectant and promptly address spills to prevent bacteria and mold growth. Regularly inspect all food items for signs of spoilage and discard anything that is expired or unsafe to eat.

Mastering your refrigerator's use can dramatically improve how long your food lasts and how nutritious and tasty it remains. By fine-tuning your storage practices – from correct placement to cleanliness and proper food wrapping – you can turn your fridge into a tool of culinary preservation, ensuring that every time you reach for a bite, it's as fresh and healthy as possible.

THEHEARTOF THE HOME

How refrigerators have transformed our daily living experience

NAHALY NAFISA KHAN

Over the last few decades, refrigerators have transcended mere convenience to become an integral part of daily life in Bangladesh. From urban dwellings to remote rural areas, their affordability has ushered them into homes across the country.

Yet, their significance extends beyond their price tag. Refrigerators have emerged as the beating heart of the home, offering not just chilled beverages, but also a promise of convenience, freshness, and food safety.

Indeed, the refrigerator has woven itself seamlessly into the fabric of Bangladeshi life, touching every aspect of daily existence and enhancing our quality of life in ways both subtle and profound. It is a testament to the transformative power of innovation, and a silent yet indispensable companion in our homes, shaping our routines and rituals with every cool breath it exhales.

COOKING MADE EASY!

Imagine coming home after a long day of work and commuting. Cooking your dinner from scratch feels like the biggest burden. This is where a refrigerator has become our everyday companion. With a fridge, our families can buy more groceries for longer periods, store leftovers from meals, and reduce the number of shopping trips.

TRANSFORMING WOMEN'S LIVES

Refrigerators have also helped shape and transform traditional gender roles. A new Université de Montréal study, titled "Household Technology: Was it the Engine of Liberation?", reveals that modern appliances such as washing machines and refrigerators had a profound impact on 20th-century society. Plug-in conveniences transformed women's lives and enabled them to enter the workforce, says Professor Emanuela Cardia from the Department of Economics of the University. Bangladeshi women have similarly reaped the benefits of refrigerator technology.

> **A new Université de Montréal study, titled "Household Technology: Was it the Engine of Liberation?", reveals that modern appliances such as washing machines and refrigerators had a profound impact on 20th-century society.**

PREVENTING FOOD SPOILAGE

In a place like Bangladesh, where humidity levels are high and temperatures sometimes reach 40 degrees, food spoilage poses a critical issue. The solution came in the form of refrigerators, which help prolong the life of perishable items such as vegetables, fruits, meat, and dairy products. This not only limits food waste but also ensures a steady supply of fresh food.

Additionally, families can now purchase food in bulk at cheaper prices. Refrigerators have also made storing seasonal fruits and vegetables much easier. Thanks to them, some seasonal produce is now available throughout the year, whereas previously it would only be available during certain seasons.

PRESERVING HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Beyond just keeping food cold, the refrigerator has a profound impact on our health. Fresh produce, dairy, and proteins are kept safe to consume, preserving not just food but also our well-being. With the fridge, we can plan balanced meals that nourish our bodies and keep our immune systems strong.

FEASTS AND FUNCTIONS

As a nation that is always celebrating something, whether it's the countless Eid invitations or the occasional family functions, all food-related planning has been made easier with refrigerators. We can now cook some dishes, mostly desserts, ahead of the actual event and store them in the fridge. We now have the option to store the leftovers from these hefty feasts to save a few days of cooking as well. During Eid-ul-Adha, fridges serve us tremendously in storing the meat for later use or distribution.

KEEPER OF PRECIOUS MEMORIES

A fridge is often the hub of a home, where family members congregate multiple times a day. In a metaphorical sense, fridges are also a keeper of our fondest family memories that get passed on from one generation to the other.

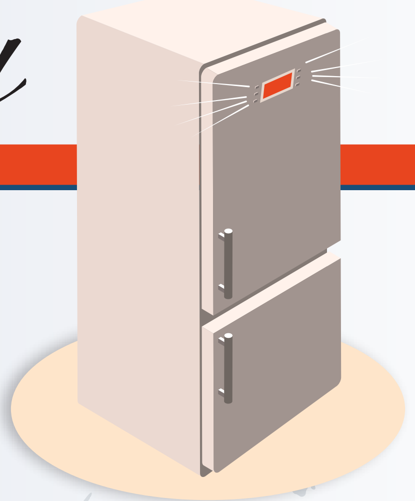
The front is often adorned with children's artwork, magnets from family vacations, and schedules of busy lives. Each time we reach for something inside, we're greeted by a collage of family moments and milestones. It's a gallery of our lives, ever-changing and always growing.

It's amazing how quickly an object can become like family. Indeed, there isn't a day that goes by when we don't need a fridge.

1920's
1930's
1940's
1950's
1960's
1970's
1980's
1990's
2000's

A Journey Through REFRIGERATOR history

ZUBIAN KARIM THAKUR



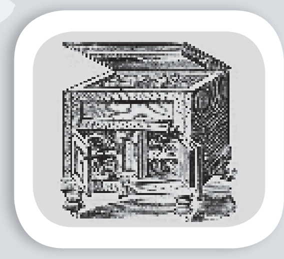
BEFORE THE 1800s

Before mechanical home refrigeration systems became common, people relied on natural underground storage options, such as cold cellars, for refrigeration.

1748

In 1748, Scottish professor and physician William Cullen pioneered one of the earliest forms of artificial refrigeration. While he didn't put his technique into practical use, he demonstrated how rapidly evaporating a liquid into gas could create a cooling effect.

1802

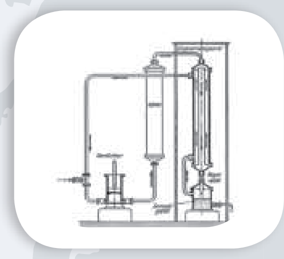


American farmer and cabinetmaker Thomas Moore invented the icebox which is essentially a non-mechanical design consisting of insulated metal or wooden cabinets with a compartment for a big block of ice. Those ice blocks were delivered straight to households along with their ice boxes.

1834

Jacob Perkins, also known as the 'Father of the Refrigerator' invents the first vapor compression system for refrigerators.

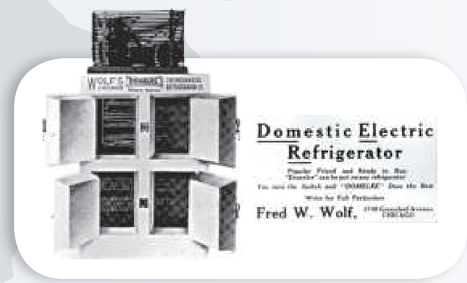
1876



Carl von Linde patents a revolutionary new process for liquefying gases used in artificial refrigeration.

1913

Fred W. Wolf invents the first home electric refrigerator.



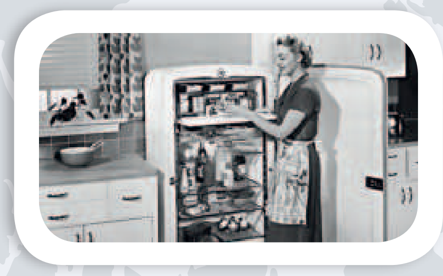
1918

William C. Durant begins mass-producing the first home refrigerator with a self-contained compressor. The initial price of a household refrigeration unit ranged from $500 to $1,000, or around $6,575 to $13,150 in modern currency. Thus, during the early years of its use, household refrigerators were seen as a luxury items.

1927

General Electric introduced the "Monitor-Top" refrigerator, priced at $525, featuring the first all-steel cabinet, designed by Christian Steenstrup.

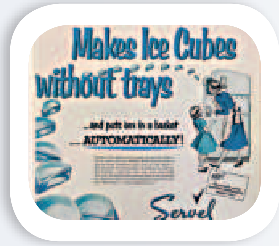
1944



85% of American households owned a refrigerator by 1944. Consumers began using their refrigerators' cold compartments to store frozen food. This era also marked the mass adoption of refrigerators.

1953

Servel Company was an American manufacturer of heating and cooling appliances, who were the first to introduce automatic ice makers.


Makes Ice Cubes without trays
...and puts ice in a basket AUTOMATICALLY!
Servel

1969

General Electric introduced the first through-the-door ice and water dispenser in 1969 in a custom model.

2000

LG introduced the first smart refrigerator, wowing their customers with its Internet connectivity. Nowadays, refrigerator companies continue to modernize fridge designs by adding sleek features such as LEDs, touch-sensitive commands, and smart features that allow users to control their fridge with their phones.

POST 2000

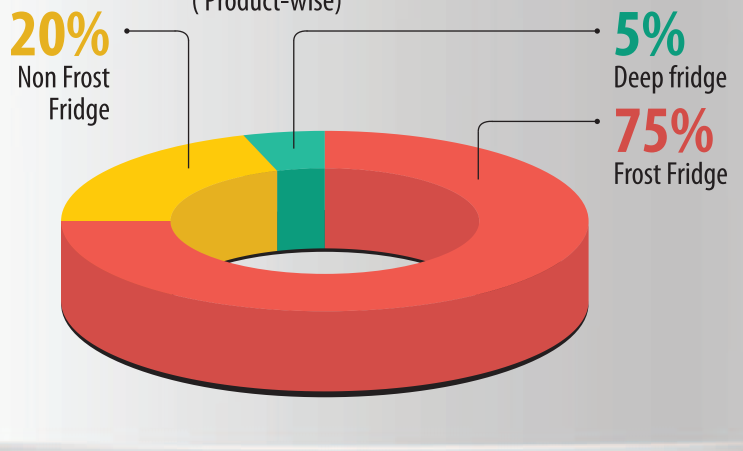
With the new generation, fridges are integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into their upcoming models. This, in turn, enhances the service provided by the fridge and improves users' experience. AI implementation in fridges is capable of identifying different food items through AI-image software and providing recipes based on those items.

BANGLADESH FRIDGEINDUSTRY

ATAGLANCE

FRIDGE DEMAND

(Product-wise)



Expected Revenue in 2024: US$**2.30**bn.

Growth Rate: **15-20** percent.

Annual Sales (unit): **25** lac

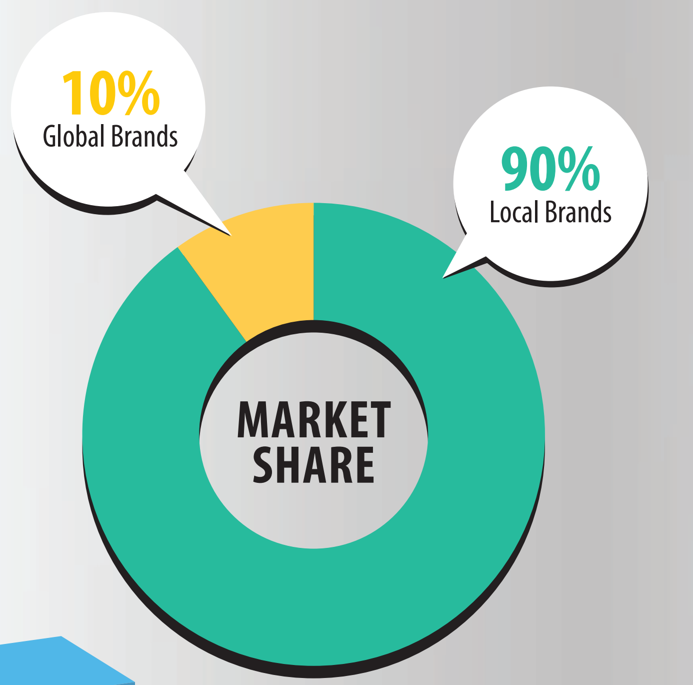
Import 2021-22: Tk **1006.90** crore

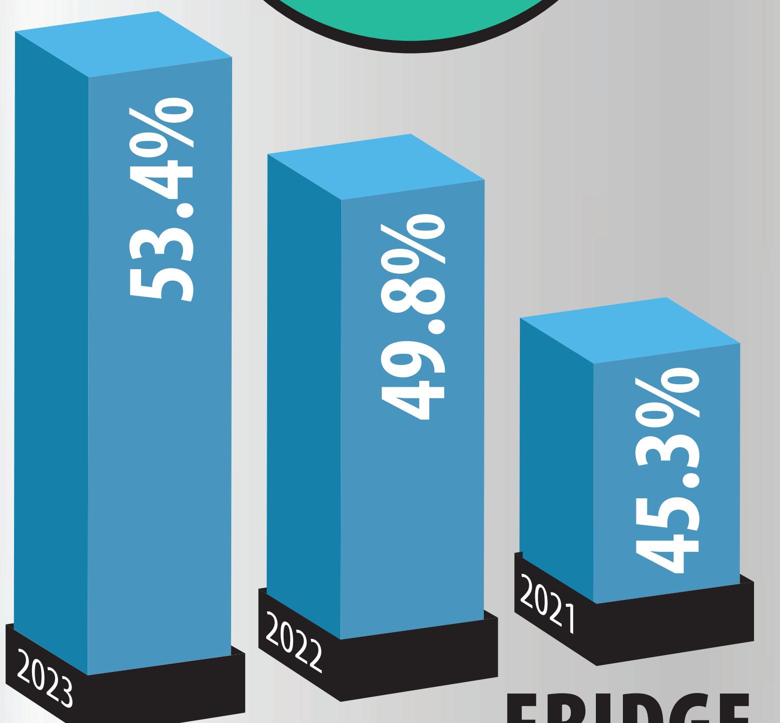
Market Size: Tk **10,000** crore.

Annual Production (unit): **30** lac

Export 2021-22: Tk **284.69** crore

Directly involved workforce in fridge industry: **1.5** lac people





FRIDGE
PENETRATION RATE

SOURCE: BBS REPORT 2023, STATISTA.COM AND INDUSTRY INSIDERS

SHIMMERING BEAUTY
ROSA
BEYOND BEAUTY

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 10, 2024

REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 141 | JAISHTHA 27, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | ZILHAJJ 3, 1445 HIJRI | 24 PAGES : TK 15.00

KSRM
শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

How many Saiduls will die before Ctg drains are fixed?
P3

Ukraine hits Russian Su-57 jet for first time
P7

Things to learn about universal health coverage from the world
P8

Upbeat Tigers look to carry momentum
P11

IMPORT DUTY CUT FOR LDC GRADUATION

Long way to go for readiness

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The government has proposed removing and reducing import duties and supplementary duties on 282 products in fiscal year 2024-25 as it continues its efforts to prepare the nation for its graduation out of the Least Developed Country grouping.

Experts, however, say the moves are inadequate and the government is leaving a lot to do before the country graduates in 2026.

In the current fiscal year, it withdrew import duties on 191 products and supplementary duties on 234 products.

Next year, it wants to withdraw supplementary duties on 19 more products and reduce supplementary duties on 172 and withdrawal duties on 91 others.

Once Bangladesh graduates in November 2026, it may lose yearly $8 billion worth of exports to erosion of trade preferences.

Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, chairman of Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID), said the measures for dealing with the post-graduation challenges were inadequate.

He said the government was cutting supplementary duties, regulatory duties and has recommended further duty cuts on a few products and their number was not big.

Razzaque, however, said the government was not withdrawing or reducing customs duties.

Since Bangladesh's average customs duty is one of the highest in the world, more than 28 percent, many major trading partners would feel discouraged to sign a free-trade agreement with the

- Tariff on 400 products either cut or recommended for cut
- Bangladesh may lose yearly $8 billion worth of exports after LDC graduation
- Bangladesh's average customs duty one of the highest in world, over 28pc

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

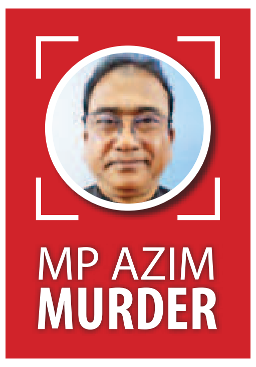
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, with heads of state and government, poses with Indian President Droupadi Murmu and Narendra Modi, who was sworn in as the prime minister of India for the third consecutive term yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

AL leader Babu secretly met one of the killers

DB says in report to Dhaka court

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER**



An Awami League leader of Jhenidah met one of the killers of lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar to learn about the details of the abduction and murder, police said.

Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, the relief and social welfare affairs secretary of Jhenidah AL, on May 17 met with Amanullah inside a vehicle by Dhaka-Bhanga expressway in Faridpur and viewed photos of the crime scene, and they talked about how much money had changed hands over the assassination.

This was mentioned in a report on the progress of the investigation police submitted to a Dhaka court yesterday.

Babu, known in his hometown as Babu,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

999 calls surge, reflect reliability

Approved as separate unit; capacity to be increased

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

After realising her five-year-old child was raped by her neighbour in Bagerhat's Brahmankathi area, a mother called the National Emergency Helpline-999 at March 3 noon.

Sub-inspector Mehedi Hasan Mamun received the call and later directed the local police to take immediate lawful actions.

Soon enough, a police team went to the spot and arrested 40-year-old Labu Sheikh on charges of rape.

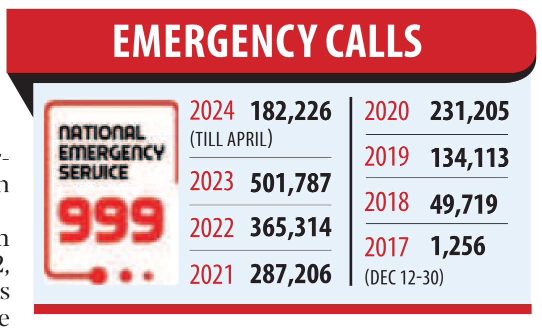
Since its launch on December 12, 2017, the helpline has gained nationwide popularity for emergency help in cases of accidents, child marriage, fire incidents, trafficking and violence. It also gets calls for help in recovering lost items and rescuing wild animals.

So far, it succeeded in preventing 27,409 child marriages till February this year.

According to the helpline's database, it received around 17,52,826 emergency calls till April 30 this year. Through those calls, people sought assistance from police, firefighters and ambulance services.

In 2018, it received only 49,719 calls for emergency services.

However, within a year, the number of calls rose to 1,34,113, and in 2020, it hit 2,31,205. Since then, it has kept going up.


NATIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICE
999

EMERGENCY CALLS

2024 (TILL APRIL)	182,226	2020	231,205
2023	501,787	2019	134,113
2022	365,314	2018	49,719
2021	287,206	2017 (DEC 12-30)	1,256

In the first quarter of this year, the helpline already received 1,82,226 calls.

On March 24 this year, the helpline got a call from Patuakhali to recover a fishing cat stuck in the locality. The caller requested immediate rescue so that people do not get the chance to harm the animal.

On information, local police rushed there, rescued the cat and then handed it over to the forest department.

On March 27, Saudi expatriate Momin Sheikh, 45, lost his bag with his passport

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

COP KILLS COP

Detectives have no clue about motive

CCTV footage shows victim being shot almost at point blank

SHAHEEN MOLLAH *and* **MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN**

Close-circuit television camera footage revealed details of an on-duty police constable killing another cop near the Palestinian embassy in the capital's Baridhara Saturday night.

The footage shows Constable Kawsar Ahmed, 41, and his colleague Monirul, 27, engaging in an altercation. At one stage, Monirul appears to show Kawsar a duty notebook. Almost instantly, Kawsar is seen shooting Monirul.

Monirul immediately fell on the road from the pavement. Then Kawsar was seen firing several more shots, almost at point-blank.

Kawsar did not try to flee. At first, he did not allow anyone to get close to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Modi sworn in as India PM for third term

Faces coalition challenges; top ministers in previous govt also sworn in

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *New Delhi*

Narendra Modi was yesterday sworn in as India's prime minister for a record-equalling third consecutive term. He will lead the 71-member BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government.

President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath of office to Modi at a grand ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

The event was attended by an estimated 8,000 dignitaries, including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, accompanied by her daughter Saima Wazed, and other top leaders of seven South Asian countries, Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan and billionaire industrialists Gautam Adani and Mukesh Ambani.

Modi, 73, is only the second person after India's independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru to serve a third straight term as the prime minister.

Main opposition Congress party President Mallikarjun Kharge was present at the ceremony, but its key INDIA bloc constituent Trinamool Congress stayed away from the event.

Modi secured his third term in elections that concluded on June 1 with the support of 14 regional parties in his BJP-led alliance.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Benazir's family skips ACC quizzing

Commission reschedules it for June 24

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has rescheduled the interrogation of former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed's wife Jissan Mirza and two daughters in connection with allegations of amassing wealth illegally.

The new date is June 24 after the trio sought 15 days' time to appear before the commission, said ACC Public Relations Officer Akhtarul Islam.

They were supposed to appear yesterday, but the interrogation could not happen as they did not show up, he said, adding that they had written to the ACC seeking time.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that Benazir's family sought 15 days for appearing before the commission.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

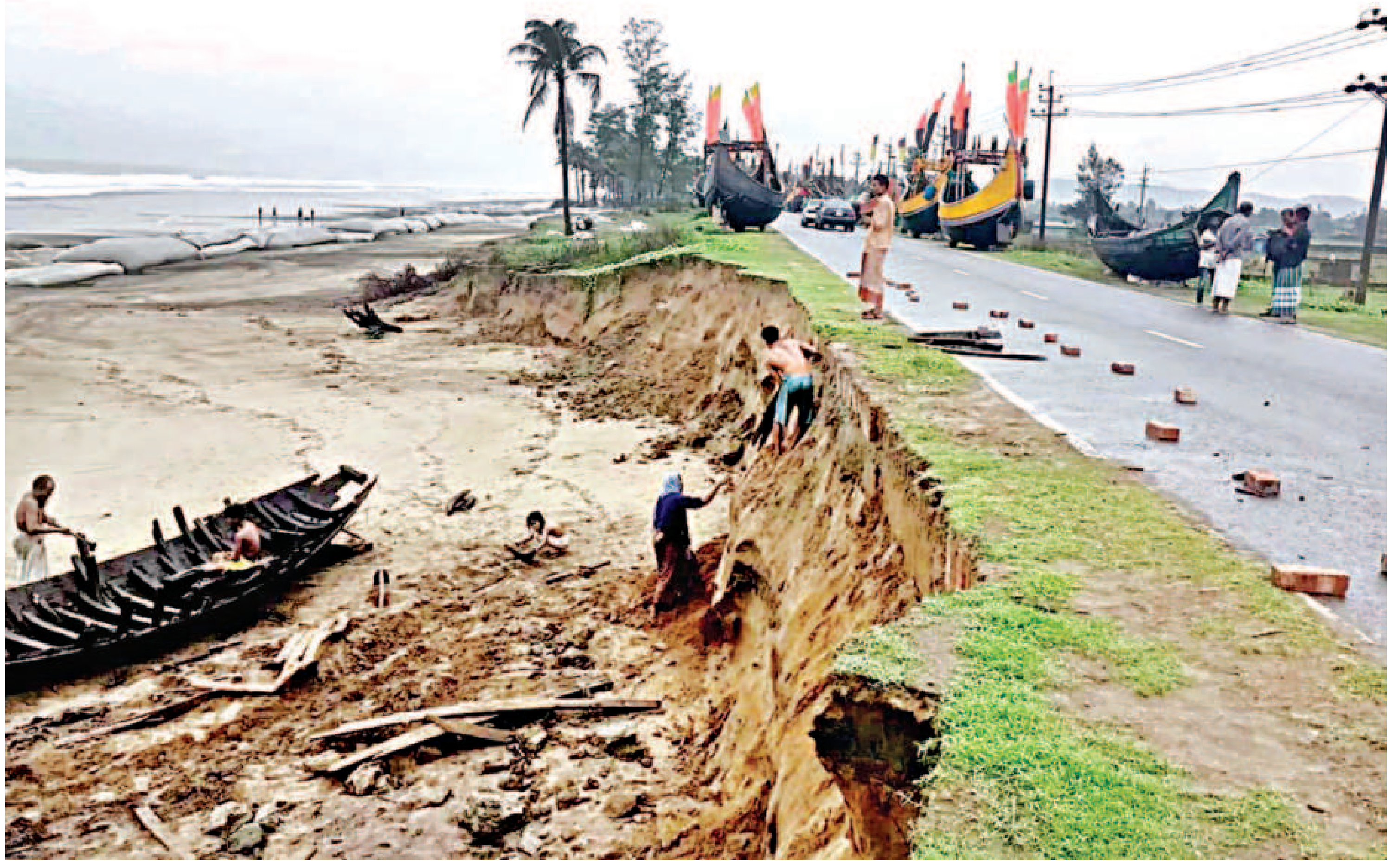


PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Erosion by the sea is threatening a big portion of the Marine Drive in Mundardail area of Teknaf in Cox's Bazar. Waves slamming against the edge of the road since Friday evening caused the erosion. The photo was taken yesterday.

GETTING NID WITH FAKE INFO

Ex-army chief Aziz's 2 brothers to face EC probe

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission is going to investigate the allegations that the two brothers of former army chief General (retd) Aziz Ahmed obtained national identity cards "using false information".

The commission's NID wing yesterday got approval to form a three-member committee to see how Haris Ahmed and Tofael Ahmed, who goes by the alias Joseph, got NID cards using false information.

Anisur Rahman, an election commissioner, yesterday confirmed the development.

Joseph

Haris

The US on May 21 imposed sanctions on Aziz Ahmed and his immediate family members for what it said was his involvement in significant corruption.

Aziz was the chief of army staff between June 2018 and June 2021. He led Border Guard Bangladesh between 2012 and 2016.

Aziz is the eldest of five brothers. His brothers Tofael, Haris and Anis Ahmed hogged headlines during the 1990s and the 2000s for murder, extortion, and possession of illegal firearms.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

MY DHAKA

PHOTO: COURTESY, STAR

LETTERPRESS PRINTING near death of a trade

RBR

The sound of printing in a letterpress machine has a certain rhythm to it. The ink, which is evenly spread on the platen or the flat platform of the press; the wheels running while copies of an image are produced by repeated direct impression -- all have a nostalgic pull to this near obsolete technology.

Halim Hossain's "Ekota Letter Press" on the dark, dingy ground floor of Banija Bitan Super Market in Nilkhet, is probably one of the last few letterpress machines in operation.

Hossain has been in the printing business since 1989. He initially worked in a similar press at Lalbagh. When he decided to start his own business, the machine he works with now was bought some 20 years ago from a second-hand dealer with an investment of Tk 70,000.

In the dimly lit small room that houses the old letterpress, there is hardly any space to manoeuvre and Hossain is the only man working. He learned all the nuances of the printing trade when he came to the capital as a teen. Today, he is so skilled that the printer even does all his maintaining and repairing work himself!

"The business of letterpress printing was booming up until there came a point where skilled printers like myself became redundant and were replaced by people -- no matter how unskilled -- who could run automated photographic and offset press," Halim says.

His primary clients were banks and NGOs but the pandemic made him lose big contracts. He could not recover fully.

"I do print money receipts, visiting cards, question papers, and warranty cards but orders are few and far in between. At one point I was printing not only books but also cigarette labels, election posters, and more."

For me letterpress means posters for liberation from the British or the Pakistanis; it means posters of Ekushey February. Right now, Halim needs to be recognised as an artisanal printer because letterpress printing is more of a utilitarian art, trade, or craft.

Such prints do add an old-world charm and people who can afford and lean towards the retro feel can make unique wedding/gaye holud cards; fine handmade, limited-edition books; artists' books; high-end greeting cards and single-sheet publications.

Giving Halim Hossain a few such work orders can keep his old trade going and keep the old machine running.

St Martin's Island cut off from mainland

Multiple trawlers were shot at by criminals from Myanmar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

All types of water transport have been halted between Saint Martin's Island and Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar for the last three days since Friday due to several firing incidents on boats by Myanmar criminals, triggering a food crisis on the island.

Abdur Rashid, president of the Trawler Owners' Association on this route, said multiple trawlers were shot at on Thursday and Friday.

"On Friday, criminals from Myanmar fired at my boat. The crew narrowly escaped unharmed."

He could not confirm whether it was the Border Guard Police of Myanmar or the rebel Arakan Army shooting at them.

The incidents took place at the estuary of the Naf River, and this is the only way to St Martin's Island, he said, adding that the other way would be through the sea, which is rough and perilous.

134 Myanmar troops sent back

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

A total of 134 members of the Border Guard Police (BGP) and the junta of Myanmar who crossed the border and took shelter in Bangladesh to escape the fighting between the junta and the Arakan Army, were sent back to their homeland yesterday.

In exchange, 45 Bangladeshis imprisoned in Myanmar have returned home from the neighbouring country.

Around 12:30pm, Bangladeshi ship Karnaphuli Tug-1 carrying the 134 Myanmar nationals left the BIWTA jetty in Nunyarchhara in Cox's Bazar town.

They would return on a Myanmar Navy ship stationed in Myanmar waters in the Bay of Bengal.

Earlier around 7:00am, they were brought to BIWTA jetty under tight security of BGB in four buses.

Later, around 9:50am, 45 Bangladeshis returned home from Myanmar after serving a long time in prison. The Bangladeshis were brought back by the same Bangladeshi ship from Myanmar Navy ships stationed in Myanmar waters.

Confirming the matter, Cox's Bazar Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Yamin Hossain, said that the process of handing over Myanmar citizens who have taken refuge in Bangladesh and Bangladeshis imprisoned in Myanmar has been completed.

Ex-army chief

FROM PAGE 1

Joseph alone was accused in 10 cases filed in connection with extortion and possession of illegal firearms. Joseph was sentenced to death and Haris and Anis to life in prison in a murder case in 2004.

Aziz got media attention after Joseph got clemency in the murder case in 2018 and Haris and Anis in 2019.

Al-Jazeera on February 1, 2021, aired a documentary titled "All the Prime Minister's Men" in which it claimed that Aziz exerted influence to help his three convicted brothers get various contracts.

The army headquarters and the foreign ministry refuted the allegations made by Al-Jazeera, labelling it "false" and "slanderous".

Both Haris and Joseph are now believed to be abroad.

EC sources said several media reported that in Joseph's mother's application for remission of his sentence, she mentioned Abdul Wadud and Renuja Begum as the parents of Joseph.

But Haris took a NID (national ID) card under the name Mohammad Hasan using the names Suleman Sarkar and Rahela Begum as his parents. He also changed his photo in the NID card in 2019. The then army chief General (retd) Aziz Ahmed made the recommendations for changing the photo.

Tofael Ahmed alias Joseph, another brother of Aziz Ahmed, has two NIDs. Tofael had an NID card with names of parents as Abdul Wadud and Renuja Begum and another NID card using his name as Tanvir Ahmed Tanjeel, with names of parents as Suleman Sarkar and Rahela Begum.

According to the National Identity Registration Act-2010, a person can be punished with one year in jail or slapped a fine of Tk 20,000 or both for providing false or distorted information or concealing information to get an NID card.

A person can be sentenced up to seven years in prison or fined up to Tk 1,00,000 for forging an NID card or carrying a forged one knowingly. If any person helps in forging NID cards, he or she will also face the same punishment.

Benazir's family

FROM PAGE 1

On May 28, the anti-graft body wrote to Benazir, requesting his presence at the ACC headquarters on June 6. Benazir's wife, Jissan Mirza, and their daughters Farheen Rishta Binte Benazir and Tahseen Raisa Binte Benazir were asked to appear on June 9 and make statements regarding the graft allegations.

Benazir also failed to show up for the interrogation on June 6 and sought time. His quizzing was deferred to June 23.

On April 18, the ACC initiated an enquiry into Benazir and his family members in connection with allegation of amassing wealth illegally.

Long way to go for readiness

FROM PAGE 1

country, he said.

The global average customs tariff hovers around 7.5 percent. India's average is 14 percent, the USA's 2.5 percent, and the EU's 4 percent, said Razzaque.

For instance, Bangladesh is negotiating with Japan for an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) to retain the duty-benefits after it graduates. If the EPA goes through, Bangladesh will have to cut duty on 90 percent of the products being considered.

The duty could be gradually cut like over a 10-year period, but it has to be done for a trade deal and the products in question for Bangladesh is nearly 14,000, he said.

The government in its budget said it was trying to sign free-trade agreements with major trading partners like Japan, India, and China to retain duty benefits after it graduates.

But so far, it has signed only a preferential trade agreement (PTA) with Bhutan.

Currently, the customs department fixes a minimum import price on products. Since Bangladesh is in LDC, developed and developing countries do not argue over the matter in the World Trade Organisation.

But after the graduation, the government would not be able to fix the minimum price under the WTO rules.

The government has now decided to gradually abolish the system of minimum import price by 2026.

To prepare for the graduation, the government formed a committee to deal with the challenges. The committee is led by the principal secretary to the prime minister. The committee has seven sub-committees.

Since businesses won't be able to have direct cash subsidies after the country graduates from LDC, the government has come up with some alternatives to improve competitiveness of local exporters.

A senior official at the customs department, requesting anonymity, said the duty cuts were not adequate but the process has started. The process is slow as the government needs to generate revenue and consider the interest of the local industries. So far, duties on more than 400 products have either been cut or have been recommended for cuts.

Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), echoed Razzaque.

He said the government has at least used a sub-section in the proposed budget on LDC graduation. In the next budget, a major chapter might be dedicated to the graduation and there might be big challenges to address.

He acknowledged that the government had taken a lot of major measures to make the local business competitive in the global market when Bangladesh graduates.

999 calls surge, reflect reliability

FROM PAGE 1

and tickets inside while traveling to Dhaka on Dhumketu Express from Bangabandhu Bridge East Railway Station.

Once the information reached 999, the call tracker informed the railway police control room and Tangail railway police outpost. A woman named Hazera Begum, 40, found the bag, and informed the police, who then handed it over to Momin.

Inspector Anwar Sattar, spokesperson for the helpline, told The Daily Star, "People now have confidence in 999, and that's why we are getting calls more than ever before. For instance, few would complain about loud noises late at night because they would have to go to a police station. Now anyone can report it just by calling this toll-free number.

"We also have an enquiry feedback section where people can file complaints if they are not satisfied with our service."

He added that so far, they have received 40,59,604 calls in the feedback section. "Based on the validity of the complaints, we take appropriate actions."

6 SERVICES SOUGHT MOST

According to recent data from the helpline, there has been a significant rise in calls across six service categories: sound pollution, fire incidents, medical emergencies, physical violence or fights, violence against women and accidents.

Most of the calls were related to fights over land disputes, money lending and other social feuds, mainly from rural areas.

In 2023 alone, the helpline received 94,135 calls regarding such disputes. In 2022, the number was 73,084. The trend continues with 37,273 such calls already logged in the first quarter of this year.

Medical emergencies and ambulance services follow closely behind, with 30,285 calls recorded in 2023; 27,624 in 2022, and 11,872 calls in the first quarter of this year.

Fire emergencies rank third with 30,160 reported calls in 2023, up from 24,460 the year before. The first quarter of this year received 14,311 such calls.

Sound pollution complaints, especially during festive seasons and wedding celebrations, garnered the fourth-highest volume of calls, totaling 30,021 in 2023 and 20,561 in 2022.

Instances of various forms of violence against women, including dowry-related issues, domestic abuse, sexual or other kinds of harassment, also remain high, with 25,090 calls reported in 2023, reflecting an increase from 20,251 the year before.

The first quarter of this year witnessed 9,287 calls.

Meanwhile, calls to report accidents finished the list with 22,604 reported incidents in 2023 and 22,125 in 2022. The first quarter of this year saw 8,649 accident-related calls.

IMPROVING SERVICES, INCREASING CAPACITY

At present, the 999 helpline has 100 workstations and can receive 120 calls at a time.

"We've already gotten the approval to set up another 100 workstations in Purbachal and received an allocation from the home ministry," Mohammad Tabarak Ullah, additional deputy inspector general of police, also the chief of the national emergency helpline, told The Daily Star.

"We are hopeful about completing the setup within the next fiscal year, and then we will be able to provide services to more people."

Additionally, separate phones were installed in 294 police stations as part of improving services and increasing capacity. "This way, we can reach local police stations without delay. We'll gradually install the phone line in all the 600 police stations across the country."

Tabark Ullah further said the government recently approved 999 as a separate unit of Bangladesh Police with a manpower of 549.

"The public administration ministry already approved the helpline as a separate unit. We now await the final approval from the finance ministry. Once approved, we will have our separate force, place and administration with a deputy inspector general as the chief."

He said the helpline will become more efficient with updated software soon after becoming a separate unit, and will be able to provide up-to-date services to the people.

Detectives have no clue

FROM PAGE 1

him. He was later arrested by Gulshan police from the scene.

SM Jahangir Hasan, additional deputy commissioner of police, said, "Kawsar has not disclosed anything yet. He is acting like a mentally distressed person. But we are hoping to learn everything in later interrogations."

"In primary interrogation, we did not find any previous conflict between the two constables. We quizzed Kawsar, who was punctual in his duty as per the record of the last couple of months," said Kh Mahid Uddin, additional commissioner (crime and operations).

"We are yet to ascertain what initiated their altercation," he added.

The police officer said they would be able to know more by interrogating the suspect within a day or two after he settled down mentally.

Asked whether the constable was overworked or not getting leave for the Eid holidays, Mahid Uddin replied in the negative.

"He was not stressed or overworked, as there was no pressure on duty... Besides, our force members now get adequate leaves," he said.

Meanwhile, the victim's elder brother, Mahbubul Haque, also a police constable, filed a case with the Gulshan Police Station.

Kawsar was shown arrested in the case and produced before a Dhaka court, which placed him on a seven-day remand.

Mahbubul told this newspaper, "My brother was very gentle, and had no enmity with anyone."

Monirul got married after he joined the force in 2018. He has a 19-month-old boy.

"I did not know how to console his wife and my parents as they broke down after learning about the incident," he added.

His body is expected to be buried at his family graveyard in Netrakona today.

The incident happened at 11:41pm on Saturday near the Palestine Embassy in Dhaka.

A driver of an embassy vehicle, Sajjad Hossain, was also injured in the shooting and is now at United Hospital.

According to police reports, 22 bullets and 34 bullet casings were recovered from the spot. The shots were fired from Kawsar's service weapon -- an SMT9 sub-machine gun.

Monirul's body bore some 18 bullet wounds (including entry and exit wounds) on his head, chest, and stomach, said sources at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital's morgue.

AL leader Babu

FROM PAGE 1

also had a WhatsApp conversation with Amanullah, who goes by the alias Shimul Bhuiyan, around 10:30pm the previous day, said the report by Senior Assistant Commissioner (DB) Mahfuzur Rahman, who is investigating the case.

Police arrested Babu in the capital's Sayedabad area on Saturday, taking the number of arrestees in the case to four. A court yesterday placed him on a 7-day remand.

Babu is also a cousin of Aktaruzzaman, one of the masterminds behind the murder.

Amanullah earlier admitted before a court that he was the coordinator among the people who took part in the killing of the Jhenaidah-4 lawmaker.

A top officer of DB, requesting anonymity, said, "Babu deleted most of the online conversation he had with Aktaruzzaman and Amanullah. We have evidence suggesting that he was involved with the planning of the abduction and murder."

Three other arrestees, Celesty Rahman, Amanullah, and Tanvir Bhuiyan, have made confessional statements and are in jail.

West Bengal CID arrested Jihad Howlader and Siam Hossain.

But Aktaruzzaman, who used to run a gold and narcotics smuggling racket with Azim, is believed to be in the US.

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and stayed at his friend Gopal Biswas' house for a night. He left the following day, saying that he would visit a doctor. On May 22, India and Bangladesh police said the lawmaker was murdered.

Meanwhile, the West Bengal CID yesterday recovered bones, suspected to be of the lawmaker, from the bank of a canal in the Kashipur area of South 24 Parganas district.

The recovery was made after CID officers interrogated Siam, who is now on a 14-day remand. Siam was brought to Kolkata after he was arrested in Nepal.

"We have recovered some bones. Prima facie, it appears to be human bones. We are sending them for forensic analysis," said A K Chaturvedi, inspector general of police (IG), West Bengal CID.

"The bones appear to be that of the human rib cage and arms. The skull was yet to be recovered."

West Bengal CID officials said that the spot from where the bones were recovered on the bank of the canal is about 15km away from the New Town apartment where the MP was killed and his body was dismembered.

"We have been searching this area for over two weeks based on the information provided by another accused Jihad Hawaldar, a butcher, arrested on May 23. Siam gave the specific location during interrogation," said another CID officer.

Earlier on May 28, some remains were recovered from a septic tank of the New Town apartment.

DRAIN OF DEATH

How many Saiduls will die before Ctg drains are fixed?

SIFAYET ULLAH

Life throws its fair share of curveballs. Apart from death, there is not much one can consider as inevitable in this world.

But for residents of Chattogram, there's another grim reality -- the ever-present threat of disappearing into the city's open drains.

One such open drain of Chattogram claimed its latest victim on Saturday, a 7-year-old boy named Saidul Islam.

Saidul vanished while playing near an uncovered drain right outside his home at Goshaildanga of Agrabad in the port city.

After a desperate search, his body was recovered yesterday from the Nasir Canal. Locals claimed he fell into the drain.

Saidul's death is just the latest in a string of such tragedies. In the past four years alone, at least 11 people have met their demise in a similar way -- children, university students, even the elderly -- all swallowed by the city's neglected infrastructure.

The Daily Star, on April 3 this year, published a report titled "Deaths in unprotected Ctg drains: Who is next?"

It seems yesterday, we received the answer. It was Saidul.

Nasima Akter, Saidul's speech-impaired mother, sat wailing in front of her house, surrounded by neighbours who tried in vain to console her.

Tears streamed down her face as she couldn't express her grief in words.

"Nasima's entire world revolved around her son," said Soheli Begum, a neighbour.

Saidul's sister, Akhi Akter Mim, said she and her brother live with their mother and grandmother.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

10 CHATTOGRAM

THE DAILY STAR, APRIL 3, 2024

DEATHS IN UNPROTECTED CTG DRAINS

Who is next?

The body of Saidul Islam, 7, was recovered from this canal yesterday after he vanished while playing near an uncovered drain right outside his home on Saturday. Nasima Akter, his speech-impaired mother, sat wailing in front of her house, while neighbours tried in vain to console her. In the past four years alone, at least 11 people have met their demise by falling into the open drains and canals of Chattogram. The Daily Star has published multiple reports on this issue, the last being on April 3 this year, titled "Deaths in unprotected Ctg drains: Who is next?"

PHOTO: COLLECTED

DU students protest quota reinstatement

HC verdict to remain effective till July 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University students yesterday staged a protest against a High Court verdict to reinstate a 30 percent quota for the freedom fighters' children in recruitment for first and second class government jobs.

Several hundreds of students, including some alumni, brought out a procession from the university's central library around 11:00am and assembled at the base of the Raju Sculpture, demanding the cancellation of the quota system.

They warned of going for an all-out movement if the quota was not removed by the end of June.

"We demand cancellation of all quotas in government jobs. If the government resumes the quota system, we will go for a tougher movement," Asaduzzaman, a master's student, told The Daily Star.

Moajjam Hossain, a job seeker, said, "The prime minister cancelled quotas in government jobs following our demands for reforming the quota system in 2018. If

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Private univs to be allowed to offer PhD

UGC forms committee to draft policy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following much debate and discussion, the University Grants Commission (UGC) is planning to allow private universities to introduce PhD programmes.

The university regulatory body has already formed a committee to draft a policy to facilitate the initiative, Prof Muhammed Alamgir, UGC's acting chairman, told The Daily Star.

"The plan is still in the primary stage. The committee has already been assigned to work on it. But to finalise the draft policy, we will discuss it with relevant stakeholders," he added.

According to UGC, currently, only the 56 approved public universities in the country offer PhD programmes, while none of the 114 private universities is permitted to offer the degree.

In recent years, some private universities in the country have shown their qualities in education and research through their placements in the QS World University Rankings.

According to the latest UGC report, private university authorities have been spending a lot in the research sector, as 84 of them allocated an average of Tk 1.53 crore of their budget only for research.

For instance, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh allocated Tk 96 crore, BRAC University allocated Tk 58.83 crore, Daffodil International University Tk 15 crore, United International University Tk 11 crore, American International University-Bangladesh Tk 10.57 crore, and North South University allocated Tk 8.85 crore on research.

On the other hand, Dhaka University had allocated the highest Tk 15 crore for research among public universities.

In this context, there has been a long-standing demand to introduce PhD programmes at capable private universities.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

বাংলাদেশ মঞ্জুরী কমিশন
বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

> **The plan is still in the primary stage. The committee has already been assigned to work on it. But to finalise the draft policy, we will discuss it with relevant stakeholders.**
>
> **PROF MUHAMMED ALAMGIR**
> Acting chairman, UGC

Monitor gender budget: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A strong monitoring system is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the gender budget across 44 ministries of the government, in order to eradicate gender inequality, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

They also stressed that child marriage prevention and female student dropout rate received attention in this year's budget, but needs more investments moving forward.

The remarks were made at an event titled "Investing in Gender Equality: Proposed Budget 2024-25", organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Sharmind Neelormi, professor of Department of Economics at Jahangirnagar University, said the gender budget has acknowledged that girls are falling behind in secondary and higher education. It has identified child marriage, displacement, and poor school sanitation as key reasons. While some ministries have taken steps to address these issues, many challenges still exist.

Dr Maleka Banu, general secretary of Mahila

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

> **If the goals of the women's movement are not consistent with the goals of the gender budget, there will be no expected progress.**

Bangladesh second in freshwater fish production

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has risen from third to second place in the world for freshwater fish production, surpassing China, which has now dropped to third. India remains at the top of the list.

This information comes from the "The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture" report published on Saturday by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The country held the fifth position consecutively for five times before 2020.

The report, which is released every two years, used data from 2022.

The ranking is based on fish harvested from open waterbodies such as rivers, lakes, and wetlands. However, Bangladesh has dropped from third to fifth place in terms of fish harvested from ponds and other enclosed waterbodies.

In 2023, Bangladesh produced a total of 48 lakh tonnes of fish, including 32 lakh tonnes from fish farming and 13 lakh tonnes from open water bodies. Half of the fish from open water bodies were hilsa, with a total production of 6.5 lakh tonnes of hilsa in 2023.

Dr Md Zulfiqar Ali, director general of Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute, said the country's efforts to conserve open waterbodies and ban fishing during the hilsa breeding season have led to increased fish production.

BFRI scientists have developed artificial breeding and advanced farming techniques for 40 out of the 261 fish species found in Bangladesh's open waterbodies. These methods are helping increase fish production in ponds, lakes, and rivers.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh is 14th in marine fish production and ninth in crab farming.

Around two crore people in the country are involved in fish farming and related businesses. The per capita fish consumption has risen from 7.5kg in 1990 to 30kg now.

FAO's report shows that Bangladesh produces 13.22 lakh tonnes of freshwater fish, accounting for 11.7 percent of the global total, up from 11 percent in the previous report.

India leads with 18.9 lakh tonnes while China comes after Bangladesh with 11.66 lakh tonnes.

Myanmar, Indonesia, and Uganda are next on the list.

The 2022 report notes that global fish production hit a record 223.2 million tonnes, valued at $313 billion, a 4.4 percent increase from 2020.

- Bangladesh surpasses China to take the second spot
- India tops the list
- Bangladesh held 5th place five times in a row before 2020
- The report based on data from 2022
- Bangladesh produced 48 lakh tonnes of fish in 2023

লেজার পাইল্‌স, ফিস্টুলা অপারেশন, কোষ্ঠকাঠিন্য, পলিপ, কোলোনস্কপি, কোলন, রেকটাম ক্যান্সার ও ল্যাপারোস্কপি

পেটের খাদ্যনালী ও মলদ্বারের (Colon, Rectum and Anus) বিভিন্ন সমস্যা যেমন- মলত্যাগের পর রক্ত যাওয়া, মলদ্বারের বিভিন্ন সমস্যা, ফিস্টুলা, এনালফিশার, রক্ত আমাশয় (Ulcerative Colitis), লেজার পাইল্‌স অপারেশন, সর্বাধুনিক লংগো পদ্ধতিতে পাইল্‌স অপারেশন, মলদ্বারে বারে বারে অপারেশন ব্যর্থ হওয়ার কারণ, বাধাগ্রস্থ মল ত্যাগের জন্য (Obstructed Defecation) STARR অপারেশন, পেটের ভেতর খাদ্যনালীর ক্যান্সার (Colon Cancer), Colonoscopy, পায়ুপথ ক্যান্সারে (Rectum Cancer) মলদ্বার না কেটে অত্যাধুনিক ষ্ট্যাপলিং পদ্ধতিতে পেটে ব্যাগ না লাগিয়ে অপারেশন, ল্যাপারোস্কপিক পদ্ধতিতে পেট না কেটে কোলন ক্যান্সার অপারেশন, শিশুদের পায়খানার সাথে রক্ত যাওয়া ইত্যাদির অত্যাধুনিক ও বিশ্বমানের চিকিৎসা সম্পর্কে জানতে হলে বইটি পড়ুন।

পাইল্‌স, ফিস্টুলা ও কলোরেক্টাল ক্যান্সার

বইটি লিখেছেন বাংলাদেশ এবং উপমহাদেশের পাইওনিয়ার কলোরেক্টাল সার্জন

[illegible]

অধ্যাপক ডাঃ এ. কে. এম. ফজলুল হক
এমবিবিএস, এফসিপিএস, এফআইসিএস
ইন্টারন্যাশনাল স্কলার (যুক্তরাষ্ট্র), ফেলো, কলোরেক্টাল সার্জারী (সিংগাপুর)
প্রতিষ্ঠাতা চেয়ারম্যান (অবঃ), কলোরেক্টাল সার্জারী বিভাগ,
বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিব মেডিকেল ইউনিভার্সিটি।

সম্পাদনায় ঃ ডাঃ আসিফ আলমাস হক
এমবিবিএস (এসএসএমসি), এফআরসিএস (এডিনবরা)
এফসিপিএস (সার্জারী), এফআরসিএস (গ্লাসগো)
এফআরসিএস (ইংল্যান্ড), এফএসিএস (যুক্তরাষ্ট্র)
এফএএসসিআরএস (যুক্তরাষ্ট্র)
কনসালট্যান্ট ল্যাপারোস্কপিক, লেজার ও কলোরেক্টাল সার্জন

ডাঃ ফজলুল হক কলোরেক্টাল হসপিটাল লিঃ
৮৬ (নতুন), ৭২৬/এ (পুরাতন), সাত-মসজিদ রোড, ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা-১২০৯। ফোন: ০২-৪১০২৩১৫৫-৬৮,
মোবা: ০১৭৫৫-৬৯৭১৭৩, ০১৭৫৫-৬৯৭১৭৪, ০১৭৫৫-৬৯৭১৭৫-৬
www.profdrakmfazlulhaque.com
www.facebook.com/Prof.AKM.Fazlul.Haque

Dengue claims another life

UNB, *Dhaka*

One more death was reported from dengue in 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising the number of fatalities from the mosquito-borne disease in Bangladesh to 38 this year.

During the period, 25 more patients were hospitalised with viral fever, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of them, seven patients were hospitalised in Dhaka.

Currently, 141 patients are receiving treatment at several hospitals.

Two cops hurt as AL

FROM PAGE 5

11:00pm yesterday and arrested an accused named Mozammel.

Shakila Soltana, deputy commissioner (port zone) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP), told reporters that when police arrested the suspect, the ruling party activists interrupted them. At that time, Anwara Upazila Chairman Kazi Mozammel Hoque appeared at the scene. Due to his presence, the activists snatched the suspect from police custody.

The DC said OCs of Anwara and Karnaphuli police stations and some others were injured in the attack. OC Jahir sustained serious injuries to his hand and several parts of his body from the brick attacks.

To control the situation, police fired five to six blank shots, the DC added.

However, the correspondent could not reach Kazi Mozammel for his comments, despite repeated phone calls.

Monitor gender budget

FROM PAGE 3

Parishad, said the gender budget is not a separate budget, but part of the overall budget. This year's budget has promised to form a monitoring committee involving civil society to assess the impact of the gender budget in eliminating inequality.

Mahila Parishad President Dr Fauzia Moslem said since 2009, the position of the government and the women's movement has been clarified. Emphasis has been placed on working together in the proposed gender budget. However, if the goals of the women's movement are not consistent with the goals of the gender budget, there will be no expected progress.

100 hectares of arable land waterlogged for 10 years

SAHIDUL ISLAM NIRAB, *Jamalpur*

For over a decade, nearly 100 hectares of fertile land in Jamalpur municipality have been submerged in water, rendered useless and overgrown with water hyacinths and other aquatic plants.

The root of the problem lies in the gradual disappearance of the Goba and Baniabazar canals, which once served as vital drainage channels. Encroachment upon these canals has significantly reduced their capacity to carry excess water away.

The unchecked filling of the canals has led to a vicious cycle: rainwater cannot be effectively drained, leading to waterlogging that worsens with each monsoon.

Villages like Sheikhervita, Chandra, Bogabait, Monirajpur, Kazirag, Shantinagar, Khupibari, Hatchadra, Dewpara, and Jogirkhupa, once known for their bountiful harvests, now face a bleak agricultural future. The waterlogged land is unsuitable for cultivation, leaving farmers with barren fields and lost income.

The problem worsened after the Roads and Highways Department constructed a bypass road to ease the town's traffic movement between BSCIC intersection and Mirza Azam intersection, said locals.

The bypass road passes through crop lands in an unplanned way instead of being connected with a bridge over the canal, thereby causing waterlogging in the adjacent areas as it is acting as an embankment and preventing excess water from receding through the canal.

Also, a culvert built in Sheikhervita area is unable to drain off receding water from the area as some locals blocked it by filling up with soil to construct structures on the culvert, without permission from the municipality authorities.

"Before the bypass road was constructed, at least some lands were arable and produced crops regularly. Now all lands have turned into enclosed waterbodies," said Delowar Hossain, a local farmer.

Abdul Khalek, a farmer from Monirajpur village, said, "Once I used to cultivate paddy, jute, sugarcane and vegetables in my lands here. Now I can no longer cultivate anything for past 10 years due to waterlogging."

Many others echoed them.

Kamrul Hasan, a resident of Shantinagar area, said, "Every time it rains, knee-deep water enters our houses and inundates the surrounding areas."

Jahangir Salim, president of Poribesh Rokkha Andolon, said, "We urged the municipality mayor to take steps to mitigate the waterlogging problem, but in vain. With most of the culvert being blocked, the whole town may face severe waterlogging in coming monsoon."

Rafiqul Islam, executive engineer of Water Development Board in Jamalpur, said they are planning to send a proposal to the authorities concerned to excavate Goba canal.

Sultan Mahmud, executive engineer of the Department of Public Health Engineering in Jamalpur, could not be reached over phone for his comment.

Zakia Sultana, deputy director of the Department of Agricultural Extension in Jamalpur, said, "If the existing situation cannot be resolved, the around 100-hectare waterlogged lands may be brought under fisheries projects if the landowners show interest."

Faisal Ahmed, assistant engineer of Jamalpur Municipality, said they are now working with a master plan to address waterlogging issues and have submitted a proposal for a Tk 6 crore project.

Jamalpur Mayor Sanowar Hossain Sanu said they are taking steps against illegal encroachers.

Drains of death

FROM PAGE 3

On Saturday, around 6:00pm, Saidul left the house. He didn't return. She said she heard from the neighbours that Saidul had fallen into a drain.

This correspondent did not see any slab covering the drain where Saidul fell when visiting the spot yesterday.

Even the canal where Saidul was found was left unguarded.

"Several children have fallen into the canal over the last two years," claimed Mohammed Ali, a local.

Similarly, there are no slabs or retaining walls in numerous drains and canals throughout the port city.

A Chattogram City Corporation survey in 2021 identified 5,527 spots in drains, canals and footpaths as risky.

The situation worsened when the Chattogram Development Authority began renovating the city's drains and canals in 2017.

In that year, Shilbrata Barua, a retired government officer, fell into an open drain while heading to a wedding in Bakalia. His body was found near a canal the next day.

Saleh Ahmed, a vegetable vendor, fell into a canal in the Muradpur area in 2021 and is still missing after nearly three years.

His family, now without its main provider, struggles to make ends meet and remains in grief and despair.

Sadek Ullah Mahin, Saleh Ahmed's only son, described the accident as a tragedy that shattered their dreams and forced him to abandon his studies.

Both CDA and CCC, the main authorities responsible for alleviating public suffering, said they lack funds required to install protective slabs or retaining walls.

However, The Daily Star published a report on May 22 titled "Deadline extends, cost rises, but suffering continues", highlighting how despite four ongoing projects worth Tk 14,389 crore, waterlogging and the nightmare of open drains still persist.

Lt Col Ferdous Ahmed, the project director of the CDA mega project, said the installation of slabs on drains and building retaining walls by the canals was not part of the project. "However, we are constructing retaining walls along many canals on humanitarian grounds."

OC Monjur Quader of Bandar Police Station said locals rescued the body and informed police. "His body has been kept at the morgue for autopsy. The real reason of the death can be confirmed only after an investigation."

AL made us dependent

FROM PAGE 5

About the proposed national budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, he said there are no directions in the budget to address the problems being faced by people.

There is no measure in the budget to reduce inflation and taxes have been imposed on all imported goods and machinery that could have increased production.

Fakhrul said the education system has collapsed as a direct result of politicisation and the biased appointment of teachers based on their allegiance to the ruling party.

496 hectares of betel

FROM PAGE 5

In Patuakhali, 312 hectares of betel leaf plantations were damaged, causing total losses of around Tk 6 crore to 3,284 farmers, said Nazrul Islam, deputy director of DAE in Patuakhali.

A list of the affected farmers has been sent to the higher authorities for assistance, he added.

Meanwhile, the price of betel leaves has gone up in the local market by 20 to 25 percent amid a shortage of supply following damages caused by the cyclone, said Asim Sarkar, a wholesale trader of betel leaves in New Market area of Patuakhali.

The cost of one choli (38 pieces) of betel leaves has gone up from Tk 15 to Tk 20 in the retail market as well, he added.

DU students protest quota

FROM PAGE 3

the quotas are reinstated, a tougher movement will be announced after June 30."

Rakib Al Hasan, a former DU student who also participated in the protest, said, "We strongly protest the new order of quota reinstatement, as it's discriminatory."

A team of representatives of the protesters submitted a memorandum to the Attorney General's office, attaching their demands. They urged the government not to resume the quota system, said Hasnat Abudllah, a representative.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court yesterday upheld the HC verdict till July 4.

Justice M Enayetur Rahim, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC, sent a petition -- filed by the government challenging the HC judgement -- to its full bench for hearing on the matter on July 4.

Following a writ petition, the HC on June 5 declared illegal the government decision that in 2018 cancelled the 30 percent quota system for the freedom fighters' children in the civil service of the ninth to 13th grades.

Private univs

FROM PAGE 3

On June 4, UGC formed the six-member committee, headed by Prof Bishwajit Chanda, to produce a draft policy on it. The committee also includes other UGC members, officials, and private university teachers.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Biswajit, the committee's convener and in-charge of private university division at UGC, said they were told to develop PhD coursework or research-related modules appropriate for different academic disciplines or clusters through a panel of experts.

"We already had internal meetings regarding the matter. Hopefully, soon we'll have official meetings to produce a draft policy on introducing PhD programmes at private universities. Before that, we can't discuss any further," he added.

Only institutions that meet specific standards should be permitted to run these programmes, said UGC sources.

Would have

FROM PAGE 5

we would have been happier if 60 to 70 percent votes were cast," he viewed.

Meanwhile in Barguna, a mobile court yesterday sentenced a polling official to seven-day imprisonment for his involvement with electoral irregularities at Patharghata upazila polls.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 10

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Center of Excellence in Higher Education
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NSU Joint 1ST In Bangladesh THE 2024

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Summer 2024

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Course Begins: June 28, 2024
Course Duration: 4 months
Course Day: Friday
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Admission Deadline: June 26, 2024

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Coca-Cola Bangladesh Beverages Limited (CCBB) has been present in the Bangladesh since 2009, offering a wide range of high-quality, refreshing beverage options to Bangladeshi consumers. As a top emerging markets, CCBB has been witnessing exponential growth over the last few years, creating a strong foothold in the Bangladesh business landscape. In accordance with our business plan and to cater our first growing market, we are seeking to appoint a highly experienced, accomplished & result driven commercial expert to spearhead the transformation and integration project in Bangladesh.

Position Snapshot:
Position Name : Commercial Integration Lead
Level : Senior Level
Job Type : Temporary
Location : Dhaka, Head Office

Role Overview & Key Responsibilities:
An experienced leader to coordinate the pipeline of commercial integration initiatives, lead key Commercial projects in close collaboration with GO (Group Office) and other functions in Bangladesh as well as continuous improvement initiatives to contribute to operational excellence. The individual in this role will also be responsible for ensuring the Commercial capabilities are in place as per the CCI (Coca-Cola Icecek) standards and growth strategies can be realized by leveraging market opportunities, enhanced efficiency and discipline.
* Lead adaptation of CCI Commercial culture vision and develop necessary processes to meet the future needs of customers.
* Lead all change management efforts during process, organizational and digitization initiatives to improve existing operations. Map out resources, create timelines and coordinate with relevant departments (DT, HR, SC) to have deep and effective change management structure.
* Provide insights and progress tracking on Transformation projects and strategic priorities within up and out of the organization.
* Prioritize strategic initiatives to optimize investment between country and customer opportunities.
* Lead internal project teams that can invest business opportunities to accelerate the capacity and capability of the Commercial function and work closely for their transition.
* Drive execution by ensuring coordination and collaboration between GO and functions, CCI procedures, reporting, meetings, governance rhythm, costs, etc.
* Owner of the digital product: Uses automation and emerging technologies to eliminate manual operations in the process. Together with DT partner continuously improves the digital product and increase adoption.
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* Sets KPI to measure the success of the process, support CCI's growth algorithm to reduce cost, grow the revenue and share these KPIs with the field teams. Monitor the KPI performances through automated dashboards and use data analytics and predictions to be more resilient and agile.
* Embed sustainability into every action to reduce environmental impact in their process and report the progress.

Qualifications and Experience:
* Bachelor's degree in any subject
* 15+ years of experience in FMCG industry
* Previous experience of working in The Coca-Cola System will be added value

Skills and Competencies:
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* Building trust & value-based relationships with sustainable organization capabilities
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* Decision making & leading a successful team
* Thinking systemically & never accepting limits
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Salary and Benefits:
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If you feel that you are the right candidate, please email your application and detailed CV with photograph, quoting the position within 15 days to **ccbbhr@coca-cola.com.bd**. Only shortlisted candidates who match all the criteria above will be called for further selection process. **Diversity and inclusion are central to our culture, reflecting our purpose and values. As an equal opportunity employer, we welcome everyone to pursue a career with us, regardless of gender, physical abilities, religion, ethnicity, or social status. **

PALLI KARMA-SAHAYAK FOUNDATION (PKSF)
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Tel: 880-02222218331-33, 02222218335-39; Fax: 880-02222218341, 02222218343
e-mail: pksf@pksf.org.bd; Website: www.pksf.org.bd

Request for Application (RFA)
(Selection of Individual Consultant: National)

A.	**Basic Information (Procuring Entity, Assignment, Procurement Method, Source of Fund, etc) for the Consultant:**	
1	Name of the Organization	Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
2	Procuring Entity Name & Designation	AQM Golam Mawla, Deputy Managing Director
3	Name of the Packages	a) Selection of an Individual Consultant for Preparing a Strategy Paper on 'Transformation of Agroecological Farming (beyond Organic) for Ensuring Nutritious & Safe Food without Compromising Yield and Reducing Input Subsidies on Chemical Fertilizer and Pesticide in Bangladesh' of Rural Microenterprise Transformation Project (RMTP) of PKSF. b) Selection of an Individual Consultant for Preparing a Strategy Paper on 'Small Scale Fish Processing & Marketing in Bangladesh for Domestic Market' of Rural Microenterprise Transformation Project (RMTP) of PKSF. c) Selection of an Individual Consultant for 'Determining Prospects and Constraints and Developing Strategies for introducing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) in Bangladesh Livestock Sector' of Rural Microenterprise Transformation Project (RMTP) of PKSF.'
4	Ref. No.	a) 53.23.0000.001.03.076.24-67 b) 53.23.0000.001.03.077.24-68 c) 53.23.0000.001.03.078.24-69
5	No. of the Packages	a) PKSF/RMTP (2023-24)/SD-11 b) PKSF/RMTP (2023-24)/SD-12 c) PKSF/RMTP (2023-24)/SD-13
6	EOI Publishing Date	**10 June 2024**
7	Procurement Method	Individual Consultant Selection (ICS)
8	Source of Fund	GoB, PKSF, and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
9	Development Partner	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
10	Project Name	Rural Microenterprise Transformation Project (RMTP)
11	EOI submission closing date time, and place	**Date: 03 July 2024; Time: 2:00 PM**; PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
B.	**Key Information for the Consultant:**	
12	Brief description of the assignment	The detailed Request for Application (RFA) documents including Terms of Reference (ToR) of the above-mentioned packages are obtainable from the office of the undersigned during office hours: 9:30 am to 2:30 pm at free of cost. It will be also available at the PKSF website https://pksf.org.bd/tender/. Interested eligible applicants are requested to submit their applications along with all necessary documents in sealed envelopes to the office of the undersigned directly or by courier by **2:30 PM on or before 03 July 2024**.
13	Experience, resource, and delivery capacity required of the Consultant	
14	Other Details	
C.	**Procurement Entity Details:**	
15	Name of the Official Inviting EOI	**AQM Golam Mawla**
16	Designation of Official Inviting EOI	Deputy Managing Director
17	Address of the Official Inviting EOI	**Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)** PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
18	Contact Details of Official Inviting EOI	Telephone: 880-02222218331-33, 02222218335-39; Fax: 880-02222218341, 02222218343 e-mail: mawlapksf@gmail.com
The Procurement Entity reserves all the rights to accept or reject all applications.		

(AQM Golam Mawla)
Deputy Managing Director & PE

Two cops hurt as AL men snatch accused from custody in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

At least 10 people, including two officers-in-charge (OCs), were injured yesterday when a group of ruling party men attacked police personnel and vandalised their vehicles to snatch an accused in a case filed over a factional clash of Awami League in Anwara upazila of Chattogram on Saturday night.

Of the injured, Karnaphuli Police Station OC Jahir Uddin and Anwara Police Station OC Sohel Ahmed received treatment at Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

On Friday, a clash ensued between the followers of former land minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed and current State Minister for Finance Waseqa Ayesha Khan when the two groups brought out separate processions at the same place, welcoming the FY 2024-25 national budget in Anwara Center.

A case was later filed with Karnaphuli Police Station in connection with the incident.

OC Jahir told The Daily Star that the law enforcers from Karnaphuli and Anwara police stations launched a joint drive in the Chaturi-Chowmuhuni area around

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

PHOTO: STAR

Commuting has become an arduous task for residents across seven upazilas of Pirojpur district, as at least 1,873 kilometres of road network and around 1,600 bridges and culverts in the district have been damaged by Cyclone Remal.

Would have been happier with 60pc turnout

CEC on upazila polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 44 percent votes were cast in yesterday's upazila parishad elections, said Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal.

"We have got statistics from 235 out of 1,180 polling stations. Around 43.91 percent votes have been cast in these 235 polling stations," he said at the Election Commission secretariat yesterday.

Elections to 19 upazilas were held in the fifth phase yesterday. The first phase of this year's upazila election was held on May 8.

A total of 469 upazilas out of 495 have had elections over the five phases, said the CEC.

"Tenure for some of the remaining 26 upazilas are yet to mature, while elections in a few have been suspended due to court order. We will hold elections to these upazilas on time," he added.

"Six people have been arrested on charges of their involvement with electoral irregularities. Two of them are polling officers," said the CEC.

Four were injured in polling violence, but overall atmosphere was peaceful, he added.

Asked about the turnout, he said, "It is the responsibility of candidates to bring voters to polling stations. We are here to hold the election peacefully and fairly. We emphasised on that," the CEC added.

"Voting was held peacefully. We are happy for that. But

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

6,000 more doctors to be appointed

Health minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Dr Samanta Lal Sen told parliament yesterday that 6,000 more doctors will be appointed to fill vacant posts in different health institutions across the country.

Besides, the proposal for appointing 2,000 doctors in the first phase has already been sent to the Directorate General of Health Services, he said.

The health minister gave this information in a written statement in response to the notice given by multiple MPs in the Jatiya Sangsad.

Awami League MP from Barguna-2, Sultana Nadira, reserved seat MP Parveen Zaman and independent MP Sanowar Hossain gave notice to the health minister regarding the recruitment of manpower in the health complex of their respective constituencies.

Meanwhile, in a written statement, Environment Minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury said the Department of Environment (DoE) conducted 2,338 drives against brick kilns from January 2019 to April this year.

During the drives, DoE filed a total of 4,436 cases and sentenced 98 people to jail for various terms. It also collected Tk 111.50 crore as fine.

JOURNOS SHOULDN'T BE TREATED BADLY AT DMCH

Meanwhile, while talking to reporters at a programme yesterday, the health minister said there should be no discrimination against journalists at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

On June 4, the DMCH authorities asked its officials and employees not to talk to journalists without prior permission from the hospital authorities.

Signed by DMCH Director Brig Gen Md Asaduzzaman, the notice said, "All on-duty officials and employees of DMCH are requested not to give interviews or statements to any correspondents of print and electronic media without the permission from the authorities concerned."

Regarding the notice, the minister said, "I called the director this morning and talked to him about it. I told him not to treat journalists badly there."

CYCLONE REMAL

1,873km of roads damaged in Pirojpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pirojpur*

Cyclone Remal caused damage to at least 1,873 kilometres of road network and around 1,600 bridges and culverts in seven upazilas under Pirojpur district.

Of the paved roads, at least 68km were completely damaged while 449km sustained partial damage, according to sources at the Local Government Engineering Department in Pirojpur.

Also, 596km of earthen and brick roads were completely damaged while 760km of similar roads were partially damaged.

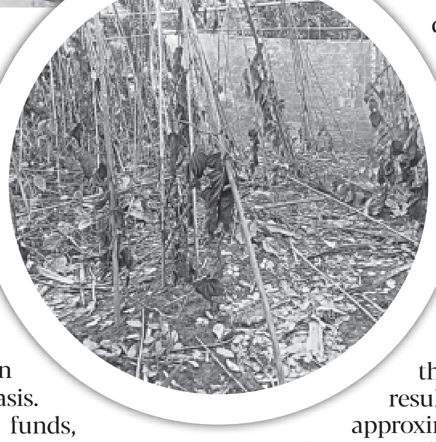
Besides, 417 bridges were completely and 302 were partially damaged. Moreover, the cyclone left 234 culverts completely damaged and 647 partially damaged.

The extensive damage has wrought havoc on residents of the area.

"The Indurkani-Bagolerhat road got damaged at different spots and has become unfit for commute," said Kabir Hossain from Indurkani upazila.

Abdul Khaleq Khan of Balipara village in the same upazila said, "The roads in our area washed away due to tidal water at different places, thereby becoming unusable."

Contacted, Pirojpur Sadar Upazila Engineer Harashit Sarkar said they are working to keep the roads usable by dumping earth on an emergency basis. "After getting funds, we will work on repairs and renovations properly," he added.



PATUAKHALI, BARGUNA

496 hectares of betel leaf plantations destroyed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Cyclone Remal caused extensive damage to 496 hectares of betel leaf plantations in Patuakhali and Barguna districts.

More than 6,700 farmers are now facing massive losses in the two districts, according to the Department of Agricultural Extension.

"I had invested Tk 4 lakh after taking a bank loan. The yield was good and I was expecting a profitable harvest. However, the cyclone damaged two of my three betel leaf plantations. How am I going to pay back the debt now?" said Md Tipu Sultan of Barguna Sadar upazila.

"Betel leaves in my 30 decimals of land got damaged due to cyclone and tidal surge. I am at a loss," said Shusen Sarkar of Patuakhali Sadar upazila.

Several other farmers echoed them.

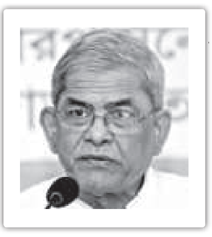
Abu Syed Md Jobaidul Alam, deputy director of DAE in Barguna, said betel leaves on 184 hectares of land in the district were damaged, resulting in a total loss of approximately Tk 11.5 crore to about 3,500 farmers.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

AL made us dependent on foreign nations

Says Fakhrul

UNB, *Dhaka*



BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that the Awami League government has made Bangladesh "dependent" on foreign countries by destroying its economy.

"Look at how they [govt] are selling the country for their own interests and staying in power. They have made it dependent on others. Everything is getting exposed from their statements," he said.

Speaking at a discussion, the BNP leader also said the government has completely destroyed the economy for the sake of foreigners. "They have turned a self-reliant nation into a dependent one."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

AL won't spare anyone involved in corruption

Says Quader

UNB, *Dhaka*

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said AL will not spare anyone regardless of party affiliations for involvement in corruption.

He said this at a joint meeting of the party at Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has saved the country from the reign of looting that was created during the BNP regime... No one will get away with looting now. BNP does not dare to punish its own people," he said.

"We must hold peace rallies to protect the lives and properties of people against the culture of arson terrorism introduced by BNP. You have to resist it. You have to be ready on the streets," he told party leaders.

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
সিনিয়র স্পেশাল জজ এর কার্যালয়, নওগাঁ

নিম্নবর্ণিত তপশিলের ০২নং কলামে বর্ণিত ব্যক্তির মালিকানাধীন ৩নং কলামে উল্লিখিত সম্পত্তি পারমিশন পিটিশন নং ০২/২০২৪ মামলায় মানিলন্ডারিং প্রতিরোধ আইন, ২০১২ এর ১৪(৩) বিধি মোতাবেক ক্রোকাবদ্ধ করা হয়েছে যা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য বিজ্ঞপ্তি আকারে প্রকাশ করা হলো।

সম্পত্তির তফসিল

ক্রমিক নং	দলিল গ্রহীতা (মালিক)	তপসিল পরিচয়
০১	১। ডালিম ২। জিয়া ৩। সাজেদুল সর্ব পিতা- মোঃ এনামুল হক ওরফে সেন্টু, সর্ব সাং ঘোলা দিঘী, থানা- পত্নীতলা, জেলা- নওগাঁ, বাংলাদেশ।	জেলা-নওগাঁ, থানা-পত্নীতলা, ইউনিয়ন-দিবর, ভূমি অফিসার নাম/বিবরণঃ- সহকারী কমিশনার (ভূমি) পত্নীতলা। মোকাম ও পোষ্ট-পত্নীতলা, মৌজা-দিবর, জেএল নম্বর-৪৭ (সাতচল্লিশ), খতিয়ান নম্বর-সিএস/এসএ/আরএস ৪১০ (চারশত দশ) প্রস্তাবিত খতিয়ান নম্বর ৫৬৯ (পাঁচশত উনসত্তর), দাগ নম্বর এসএ ১০৫৭, ১০৫৮, ১০৭৪, আরএস ১৩৫৮, ১৩৭৪, ১৩৯৫ সার্ভে আরএস ১৩৫৮ দাগে ধানী ৭৭ কাতে ০৮৬৩ একর আরএস ১৩৭৪ দাগ ধানী ৩৫০ কাতে ৩৯২১ একর, আরএস ১৩৯৫ দাগের ধানী ২৩৮ কাতে ২৬৬৬ একর/৭৪৫০ একর
০২	১। ডালিম ২। জিয়া ৩। সাজেদুল সর্ব পিতা- মোঃ এনামুল হক ওরফে সেন্টু, সর্ব সাং ঘোলা দিঘী, থানা- পত্নীতলা, জেলা- নওগাঁ, বাংলাদেশ।	জেলা-নওগাঁ, থানা-সাপাহার, ভূমি অফিসের নামঃ- সহকারী কমিশনার (ভূমি), মৌজা-সাপাহার, জে.এল নম্বর-১৩৪, খতিয়ান আরএস ৬৮ নং। সার্ভের হালঃ ২০৯ দাগের ডাঙ্গা ১.১১ শতকের মধ্যে ০৫ শতক।

মোঃ আবু শামীম আজাদ
সিনিয়র স্পেশাল জজ
নওগাঁ

GD- 970

Man hacked to death in Bogura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogura*

A man accused in 29 cases was hacked to death by miscreants in Bogura's Kahaloo upazila on Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as Md Brazil Islam, 34, from the Palsha area of Bogura. The attack occurred in the Porapara area of Muril Union around 11:00pm.

Officer-in-Charge Selim Reza of Kahaloo Police Station said, "Assailants pursued him on a motorcycle, attacked him with sharp weapons, and left ensuring he was dead."

"We still don't know why or who killed Brazil," OC Reza stated.

"While no formal complaint has been filed yet, the police are trying to identify the perpetrators," he said.

Brazil had 29 cases in different police stations against him in Bogura, including charges of arms, acid attack, and murder. These cases were under trial.

When asked about his bail status, OC responded that he was uncertain.

For the past few years, Brazil lived at his father-in-law's house in the Porapara area of Kahaloo upazila.

Sources said he was involved in Jubo Dal politics in Bogura for a long time. Recently, he was trying to join Awami League and was seen at various processions and meetings of the party.

> **I had invested Tk 4 lakh after taking a bank loan. The yield was good and I was expecting a profitable harvest. However, the cyclone damaged two of my three betel leaf plantations. How am I going to pay back the debt now?**
>
> **MD TIPU SULTAN,** a betel leaf farmer from Barguna Sadar upazila

রেজিস্ট্রার দপ্তর
যশোর বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
যশোর-৭৪০৮, বাংলাদেশ

Office of the Registrar
Jashore University of Science and Technology
Jashore-7408, Bangladesh

স্মারক নং-যবিপ্রবি/রেজিঃ/সংস্থাপন/১০০২/রাজস্ব জনবল/১০০২(৭)/২২-১১৬৮ তারিখঃ ০৯/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

যশোর বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নিম্নোক্ত পদগুলো পূরণের নিমিত্তে বর্ণিত শর্তসাপেক্ষে বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রঃ নং	পদের নাম, পদসংখ্যা ও বেতন স্কেল	সর্বোচ্চ বয়স	শর্তাবলী
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স্বাঃ/
প্রকৌশলী মোঃ আহসান হাবীব
রেজিস্ট্রার
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GD-969

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

'COP' SABILA stoked for her new role

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

> **As a co-actor, Apurba *bhaiya* is always good. He is excellent both as an actor and as a person. Moreover, he provided tremendous support to me in the 'Golam Mamun' series.**

In the world of Bangladeshi drama, the dynamic duo of Sabila Nur and Ziaul Faruq Apurba has consistently captivated audiences with their performances in a variety of roles, particularly in romantic narratives. However, their latest venture marks a significant departure from their usual fare. For the first time, the pair are teaming up for a murder mystery, titled ***Golam Mamun***, directed by Shihab Shaheen.

Set to premiere on Hoichoi on June 13, this series is a spin-off of the much-acclaimed series ***Buker Moddhye Agun***, directed by Taneem Rahman Angshu.

Reflecting on this new experience, Sabila Nur shared, "I have done many dramas with Apurba *bhaiya*, and the audience has always received them well. However, this is the first time we have acted together in a web-series."

This collaboration offers a fresh dynamic as the actors explore the OTT platform, expanding their reach to a global audience.

Speaking about her co-star, Sabila praised Apurba, saying, "As a co-actor, Apurba *bhaiya* is always good. He is excellent both as an actor and as a person. Moreover, he provided tremendous support to me in the ***Golam Mamun*** series."

Having worked extensively with director Shihab Shaheen, Sabila Nur holds him in high regard. "There is nothing new to say about Shihab Shaheen. Everyone knows how good of a director he is. His directed web-series and web-films have been widely discussed," she noted.

"I have done many dramas under Shihab Shaheen *bhai's* direction. This time, the three of us worked together on an OTT project. He is an incredibly good creator. I also received a lot of support from him."

In ***Golam Mamun***, Sabila Nur takes on a role unlike any she has portrayed before—that of a female police officer. This character is a significant departure from her previous roles and represents a bold new challenge in her acting career. "Audiences have seen me in various roles in my acting career. However, this is the first time I have acted as a female police officer," she remarked.

Playing a female police officer required extensive preparation and dedication. The actress shared her experience, stating, "I felt great playing the role of a female police officer. I prepared for a long time before shooting. And during the shoot, I received full support from the director."

When asked about her expectations for the series, the ***U-Turn*** famed actress expressed optimism, "Look, any work by Shihab Shaheen *bhai* is bound to be widely discussed. He does flawless work. I believe the series will also be widely talked about, and the audience will watch it. I am confident about that."

Despite the excitement surrounding the web-series, Sabila acknowledged the challenges of the role. "The role of the female police officer was quite challenging. I prepared for it accordingly. The rest will be judged by the audience after its release," she said.

Apart from the web-series, Sabila Nur is currently busy with the shooting of Eid dramas. "I will be seen in a few dramas during Eid. I am working less than before but focusing more on quality work. I now prioritise quality dramas, ones that will mesmerise the audience," she revealed.

As for her plans for the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha holiday, the actress has decided to stay in Dhaka. "I will be celebrating this Eid in Dhaka," she confirmed, indicating a break from her hectic schedule to enjoy the festive season at home.

PHOTO: **SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED**

Abul Hayat honoured with Raj Razzak Lifetime Achievement Award

Celebrated Bangladeshi actor Abul Hayat, Kolkata's theatre luminary Manoj Mitra, filmmaker Prabhat Roy, and producer Purnima Dutta have recently been honoured in a grand ceremony in Kolkata on June 8.

At a Bengal Film and Television Chamber of Commerce event, Abul Hayat received the Raj Razzak Lifetime Achievement Award, Manoj Mitra the Hiralal Sen Lifetime Achievement Award, Prabhat Roy the Debaki Bose Lifetime Achievement Award, and Purnima Dutta the BN Sarkar Lifetime Achievement Award.

The awards were presented at Kolkata's Spring Club, in the presence of Bangladesh Disaster Management and Relief State Minister Mohibur Rahman as the chief guest.

'Dark World' joins Eid release race

Mustafizur Rahman Manik's ***Dark World*** is set to release on Eid-ul-Azha. The production house confirmed the release date by unveiling a poster of the film on June 8.

Dark World is a crime thriller. The plot revolves around a gang spreading pornographic footage on social media, with the cops striving to dismantle the group.

The movie stars Munna Khan, Koushani Mukherjee, Deepa Khandakar, and Misha Sawdagar, among others. In addition to acting, Munna Khan also produced the film.

This Eid-ul-Azha, four movies have been announced: ***Dark World***, Raihan Rafi's ***Toofan***, Rashid Polash's ***Moyurakkhi***, and Mohammad Iqbal's ***Revenge***.

NEWS

UZ chairmen saw higher growth

FROM PAGE 12

candidates and the assets mentioned in their income tax returns.

About 84 percent of the candidates' affidavits differed from their income tax returns in terms of assets.

Wealth of 191 people, who have been elected chairmen in the sixth upazila polls, rose by 100 percent or more compared to 2019.

TIB's analysis said 30.41 percent of the elected chairmen have assets worth at least Tk 1 crore.

Around 40 percent of the candidates mentioned their income below Tk 3.5 lakh, meaning they do not have taxable income.

Immovable assets of 51 aspirants have gone up above Tk 1 crore over the last five years.

Addressing the event, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said public representation should be based on public interest, but it is absent in reality.

"Now it is a power-centric public representation. One gets the scope to increase their wealth if they stay in power," he said.

Iftekharuzzaman added that it seems unbelievable that the candidates have no taxable income.

BUSINESSPEOPLE DOMINATE THE SHOW

According to the TIB, the number of businesspeople contesting the polls rose by eight percent compared to the fourth upazila parishad elections.

Around 57.36 percent of candidates in the first four phases of the upazila polls are involved in business, the report said.

Around 69 percent of chairman aspirants are businesspeople. About 68.16 percent of the vice-chairman candidates and 28 percent of female vice-chairman contestants have mentioned business as their profession.

Of the elected, the rate of businessperson increased by 6.5 percent over the last five years. About 79 percent of the elected chairmen are businesspersons by profession.

LAND BEYOND LIMIT

According to the law, an individual can have more than 33 acres of land. Twenty-five candidates were found to have land beyond this limit.

Seven elected candidates have land beyond legal limits.

Owning 280 acres, Dewan Ashid Raza Chowdhury, chairman candidate of Sunamganj's Dowarabazar upazila, tops the list.

At least 930 are new faces among the 1,210 newly elected chairman, vice-chairmen, and female vice-chairmen in the recently concluded upazila polls.

Seventy-six female candidates ran for chairman post in this upazila elections. Fourteen won, the TIB report said.

Of the total elected representatives, 28.63 percent have bank loans, while nearly half (44 percent) chairman-elect have bank loans.

Official linked to embezzlement

FROM PAGE 12

to resume his duties in the same position in Moulvibazar.

On March 18, he filed an appeal with the Prime Minister's Office. In it, he pleaded for withdrawal of his dismissal, the gazette notification said.

Contacted, Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said that if the reinstatement is not supported by concrete evidence that the corruption allegations, based on which he was dismissed earlier, have been found in due process to be invalid and unjustified, it will be regarded as a highly controversial action "to say the least".

He added that such a decision contradicts the government's repeated commitments to zero tolerance against corruption.

"Questions will be asked whether this is an example of protection and promotion of corruption, which will only encourage further corruption in public institutions with unrestricted impunity."

Several officials of the ministry concerned, speaking on condition of anonymity, expressed their disappointment over the reinstatement.

"His restoration sends a wrong message to junior officials that despite being found guilty, he did not have to face punishment," an official said.

Another official said, "Officials of the ministry investigated this officer; everyone knew he was involved in the corruption, but he got back his job instead."

Free edn up to 8th grade

FROM PAGE 12

with 105 of them currently holding classes. Among these universities, there are vacancies in the positions for vice-chancellors (29), pro-vice chancellors (80), and treasurers (35)," Mohibul said.

In response to another question from MP Abdul Latif, the minister said a total of 4,613 educational institutions are currently not under the coverage of Monthly Payment Order (MPO).

Responding to Opposition Whip Mujibul Haque, the minister said that an agreement had been reached with BUET's ICT institute to identify fake Bangladesh Technical Education Board certificates and that the process was already being carried out by institute experts.

"Upon detection, all forged certificates will be revoked, and any additional measures deemed necessary will be taken based on the information provided by the certificate holders."

In response to MP Pankaj Nath, State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Rumana Ali said the country has 944 primary schools with fewer than 50 students.

Alcaraz wins maiden French Open

FROM PAGE 12

Garros crown to the Wimbledon title he won against Novak Djokovic last year and the 2022 US Open.

He will head to the Australian Open next year with the chance to become the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam.

Fourth seed Zverev, who settled a court case in Germany two days ago over domestic abuse allegations, is still waiting for a maiden major title.

He had also lost his only previous Slam final in five sets, when he blew a two-set lead against Dominic Thiem at the 2020 US Open.

Zverev had high hopes of finally getting over the line -- he has also lost six Slam semifinals -- but Alcaraz was too strong in the key moments as he levelled their head-to-head record at 5-5.

Alcaraz said before the final he wanted to join the list of men's players from his country, including his idol Rafael Nadal, to win the Roland Garros title, and he celebrated becoming the eighth Spanish champion by falling to the clay with his head in his hands in disbelief.

Zverev endured a miserable start, double-faulting on the first two points of the match en route to being broken in the opening game.

But Alcaraz was not immune to the nerves of a maiden French Open final, framing a regulation forehand into the stands and then also double-faulting as he gifted the break straight back.

The Spaniard did not take too long to find his groove, though, breaking to love in the fifth game on his way to pocketing the opener.

Having steadied himself, Alcaraz was serving for the third set at 5-3 before another dip allowed Zverev to take the lead in the contest, but the Spaniard raced through the next set despite a thigh issue and raised his game to prevail in the decider.

Modi sworn in as India PM for third term

FROM PAGE 1

This is the first time Modi is leading a coalition government after having been the PM for a decade when BJP enjoyed a commanding majority. Modi became the premier for the first time in May 2014 and returned with a bigger mandate in 2019.

Modi's council of ministers consists of 30 cabinet ministers, five ministers of state with independent charge and 36 ministers of state. It has representation from most parts of the country as well as social groups. It has 27 ministers from Other Backward Classes, 10 from Scheduled Castes, five from Scheduled Tribes and an equal number from minorities.

A record 18 senior ministers will be heading ministries, indicating that Modi has blended continuity and change to pick his new council of ministers.

Given BJP's critical dependence on its allies this time in the absence of majority on its own in the 543-member Lok Sabha where half-way mark is 272, the party's NDA partners got 11 ministerial berths -- five cabinet and six ministers of state in the third term of Modi.

Modi's previous council of ministers had two ministers of state from BJP's small-time allies Apna Dal (S) and Republican Party of India, but this time, there are two ministers of state with independent charge and four ministers of state.

Besides Hasina, the Maldives President Md Muizzu, Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay and Vice-President of the Seychelles Ahmed Afif attended the oath-taking ceremony.

In addition to political leaders and eminent persons from different walks of life, members from the transgender community as well as sanitation workers and labourers, who were involved in the construction of India's new parliament building constructed in Modi's second stint as PM, joined the event.

HASINA MEETS MODI

Hasina met her Indian counterpart Modi at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in the first interaction between them since their victories in general elections.

Hasina and Modi, both smiling, had a brief exchange of pleasantries after the former gestured "adaab" before the Indian PM went for a handshake, which was warmly reciprocated by Hasina.

The meeting between the two PMs took place on the podium after Modi and his 71 council of ministers took oath of office and secrecy at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The two premiers proceeded to the banquet hosted by the Indian president. Hasina was led into the banquet hall by President Murmu.

Missing UK journo found dead on Greek island: police

AFP, *Athens*

British diet guru and TV personality Michael Mosley was found dead yesterday on the Greek island of Symi where he went missing this week, police said.

"People on a boat saw a body close to the rocky coast," said Petros Vassilakis, police chief for the southern Aegean region.

The lifeless body was spotted by a television crew from Greece's ERT public channel out filming in the area where the 67-year-old disappeared.

A cameraman "saw something strange near the fence, 50 metres from the sea", ERT reporter Aristides Miaoulis said on air.

"We discovered it was this man... he was lying down (on his back)."

Symi's mayor Lefteris Papakalodoukas was also with the crew and confirmed they had found Mosley, who had been vacationing on the island.

"It's the body of the journalist that we have been looking for over several days," he told ERT.

The authorities had on Friday announced they were stepping up the search after the Briton was last seen alive on Wednesday.

YEMEN'S COAST

Houthi rebels attack three ships

AFP, *Sanaa*

Yemen's Houthi rebels said yesterday they targeted three ships off the country's coast with missiles and drones after maritime security firms said two vessels had caught fire after being hit by projectiles.

The strikes are the latest in a flurry of attacks by the Iran-backed rebels who have been harassing ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden since November in a campaign they say is in solidarity with Palestinians amid the Gaza offensive.

In a statement on social media platform X, Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree said the rebels attacked "two ships belonging to companies that violated" directives by the group not to enter Israeli ports.

He identified the vessels as the Liberia-flagged MSC Tavvishi and the Norderney, which sails under the flag of Antigua and Barbuda.

Palestinians inspect the damage and debris of destroyed buildings a day after an operation by the Israeli Special Forces in the Nuseirat camp, in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: **AFP**

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Iran approves six candidates for June 28 vote

AFP, *Tehran*

Iran yesterday announced the six candidates, mostly conservatives, approved for the June 28 election to replace president Ebrahim Raisi, who was killed in a helicopter crash.

The candidates announced by the interior ministry were selected from 80 registered hopefuls by the Guardian Council, which oversees elections in the Islamic republic.

Among those approved are the conservative speaker of parliament Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and the ultraconservative former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili.

Just one reformist candidate, Massoud Pezeshkian, who is a lawmaker representing Tabriz in Iran's parliament, has been approved.

The conservative former interior minister Mostafa Pourmohammadi has also been authorised to run.

Others on the list include conservative Tehran mayor Alireza Zakaani and incumbent vice president Amirhossein Ghazizadeh-Hashemi, the ultraconservative head of the Martyrs' Foundation.

ISRAEL'S DEADLY ATTACK ON GAZA REFUGEE CAMP

UN official blasts West's double standards

AGENCIES

The UN's special rapporteur on the right to housing has rebuked countries he accused of bias on Israel's offensive on Gaza following a deadly attack by Tel Aviv on the Nuseirat refugee camp in the enclave.

"Countries that celebrate the release of four Israeli hostages without saying a word about the hundreds of Palestinians killed and thousands held in arbitrary detention by Israel, have lost moral credibility for generations and don't deserve to be on any UN human rights body," Balakrishnan Rajagopal said on X about the attack that took place on Saturday.

> **"Countries that celebrate the release of four Israeli hostages without saying a word about the hundreds of Palestinians killed... have lost moral credibility for generations."**
>
> **Balakrishnan Rajagopal**
> said on X

Earlier, the Israeli army announced that it had launched attacks on various locations in the central part of the Gaza Strip and had successfully rescued four captives alive from two different areas.

Citing a US official, CNN reported that an American unit in Israel aided the efforts to rescue the hostages.

US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz were among leaders who greeting their release even as they have also called for a truce.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell welcomed the hostage release and said reports "of another massacre of civilians are appalling... the bloodbath must end immediately".

The Gaza-based Government Media Office said that at least 274 Palestinians were killed and more than 400 injured on Saturday in severe Israeli airstrikes targeting Nuseirat refugee camp, areas east of Deir al-Balah, and al-Bureij and al-Maghazi camps in central Gaza, coinciding with a sudden incursion of vehicles east and northwest of Nuseirat.

More than 37,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the offensive began on October 7, according to local health authorities.

Eight months into the Israeli offensive, vast tracts of Gaza lay in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water, and medicine, reports Middle East Monitor Online.

Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice, whose latest ruling ordered Tel Aviv to immediately halt its operation in the southern city of Rafah, where over a million Palestinians had sought refuge.

"My child was crying, afraid of the sound of the plane firing at us," said one Gaza woman, Hadeel Radwan, 32, recounting how they fled the intense combat as she carried her seven-month-old daughter.

"We all felt that we wouldn't survive," she told AFP. Israel's top diplomat rejected unspecified accusations "of war crimes" in the operation.

Ukraine hits Russian Su-57 jet for first time

Says military intel

REUTERS, *Kyiv*

Ukrainian forces have for the first time hit a latest-generation Russian Sukhoi Su-57 fighter jet at an air base inside Russia, Kyiv's GUR defense intelligence agency said yesterday, showing satellite pictures which it said confirmed the strike.

In a Telegram post, the GUR did not specify how the Su-57 was hit or by which unit of Ukrainian military.

A popular Russian pro-war military blogger who calls himself Fighterbomber and focuses on aviation said the report of the strike on the Su-57 was correct and that it had been hit by a drone.

The GUR said the aircraft was parked at the Akhtubinsk airfield, which it said was 589 km from front lines in Ukraine between Ukrainian and Russian invasion forces.

"The pictures show that on June 7, the Su-57 was standing intact, and on (June 8th), there were craters from the explosion and characteristic spots of fire caused by fire damage near it," the GUR said.

Ukraine has been fighting a full-scale Russian invasion since February 2022.

Challenges for Modi in his third term as India PM

REUTERS

India's Narendra Modi was sworn in as prime minister yesterday for a third straight term, a rare feat that will also come with new challenges as the populist leader is forced to rely on allies to form a government. Here are some key issues Modi will need to tackle in office.

FUNDS, SPECIAL STATUS FOR ALLIES

In the third term, Modi's government may need to spend more to meet the demands of allies that helped him secure a majority in parliament, testing the government's purse.

Regional parties in Modi's alliance have already demanded more funds for their states and federal cabinet positions during negotiations on forming a new coalition government.

ECONOMIC DISPARITY

India's economy grew by 8.2 percent in the last fiscal year, one of the fastest rates among major economies, but voters have pointed to disparities on the ground, with growth more visible in cities than in the vast hinterland.

The economy has jumped five places to be the fifth-largest in the world in the past decade under Modi's rule and he has said he will lift it to the third position. But the country's per capita income still remains the lowest among G20 nations.

INFLATION ABOVE C BANK TARGET

Annual retail inflationINCPIY=ECI in April stood at 4.83 percent, slightly lower than March, but still above the central bank's 4 percent target. Food inflation, which accounts for nearly half of the overall consumer price basket, was an annual 8.70 percent in April, compared with a 8.52 percent rise in the previous month. Food inflation has been at more than 8 percent year-on-year since November 2023. Modi has banned exports of wheat and rice to contain domestic inflation.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment in India has also been one of the main issues in the election campaign with Congress accusing the Modi government of doing little to provide jobs for the youth.

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lost a third of the seats it held in rural constituencies, an analysis of voting data showed, reflecting discontent in the countryside over lack of jobs and inflation.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

India's rising world stature and assertive foreign policy have been touted as major recent achievements by Modi's administration.

A key diplomatic strain, however, remains with China which was spurred by a 2020 border clash that left 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers dead. Modi said last month the countries should address the "prolonged situation" on their border.

Modi's government has been trying to attract foreign companies to diversify supply chains beyond China.

Relations with Canada have also been strained after Ottawa and Washington accused an Indian official of directing the plot in the attempted murder of Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a Sikh separatist and dual citizen of the United States and Canada.

FARMERS

Stagnant farm income is a major sign of widening inequality between urban and rural India that has led to widespread protests. The BJP had promised to double farm income by 2022 in its manifesto for the last election, but has failed to do so.

LAND, LABOUR REFORMS

In February, a BJP spokesperson said Modi could make labour reforms a priority if he wins the general election. But with the pressures of a coalition government and a stronger opposition, Modi may have to delay such reforms.

INDIA'S JAMMU & KASHMIR

9 killed as gunmen attack Hindu pilgrim bus: police

NDTV ONLINE

At least nine pilgrims have been killed and 33 others have been injured when their bus, reportedly attacked by terrorists, plunged into a gorge in Jammu & Kashmir's Reasi district.

It is not yet known how many have received bullet injuries, Reasi's District Magistrate Vishesh Mahajan told NDTV. The pilgrims were on their way to the cave temple of Shivkhodi.

The bus was severely damaged from impact and bodies lay strewn at the accident site. Several empty bullet casings were also found at the site.

Visuals from the spot showed locals helping in rescue operations as ambulances stood on the side of the road for immediate assistance.

Reinforcements from the police, army, and paramilitary forces were rushed to the spot, the police said, reported news agency PTI.

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since their independence in 1947, and both claim the high-altitude territory in full.

Rebel groups have waged an insurgency since 1989, demanding independence or a merger with Pakistan.

The conflict has left tens of thousands of civilians, soldiers, and rebels dead.

Violence and anti-India protests have drastically fallen since 2019, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government cancelled the region's limited autonomy.

Women in traditional Hungarian dresses cast their ballots at a polling station in a school in Veresegyhaz, some 30kms east of Budapest during the European Parliament election yesterday. Voters across Europe cast ballots yesterday on the final -- and biggest -- day of elections for the EU's parliament, with far-right parties expected to make gains at a pivotal time for the bloc. PHOTO: **AFP**

Oceanic 'peace' pact signed in Costa Rica

AFP, *San José*

Over two dozen countries signed a wishful "declaration of peace with the ocean" on Saturday in Costa Rica, as a multi-day meeting to prepare for a major UN conference next year wrapped up.

Among the signatories were Germany, Spain, Sweden, Canada, Chile and South Korea, as well as Costa Rica and France, co-hosts of third UN Ocean Conference to be held next June in the French city of Nice.

"We are committed to scaling up transformative ocean actions to support nature-positive economies based on the best available science and scientific information, traditional knowledge and innovation," the document said.

About a year out from the major meeting, representatives gathered this week in San Jose for two days of discussions to prepare for the conference.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Who gets the subsidies in power sector?

Squandering of funds in the name of capacity charges must stop

In a frustrating if predictable move, the government has once again allocated a third of the budget for subsidies to the power sector, an overwhelming majority of which will be used to pay off capacity charges. It seems no amount of expert logic, public outrage, or even IMF prescriptions can discourage the government from wasting public funds on paying private power plants to sit idle. It has already spent more than Tk 1 lakh crore in capacity charges over the last 14 years. Research by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) reveals that capacity payments have skyrocketed from Tk 5,600 crore in 2017-18 to a staggering Tk 32,000 crore in the outgoing fiscal year, accounting for a whopping 81 percent of total subsidies in the power sector.

Instead of bringing down capacity charges as a matter of priority, the government is constructing an additional 27 power plants, which can only translate to a further increase in capacity charges in the coming year(s). What's more outrageous is that the government has decided to raise power tariffs three to four times a year apparently to lower subsidies over the next three years. Electricity prices were raised by 8.5 percent in February this year, and thrice by 5 percent each last year. Why is the public being asked to pay higher prices in the name of reducing subsidies when, in fact, the government is increasing subsidy allocation in the power sector—from 32 percent of the total allocation last year to 37 percent in the proposed budget?

As always, it is the people who are being unfairly tasked with absorbing the burden of chronic mismanagement, collusion, and corruption in the power sector. This is simply unacceptable, particularly given that the government does not seem to be taking any visible steps to address the root causes of high production costs—a lack of transparency and accountability in awarding contracts, overreliance on expensive imported fuels, and neglecting domestic gas exploration and renewable energy sources. Subsidies make sense when they ensure cheaper and more accessible services and amenities to the public, not when they prop up big business groups at enormous cost to the country and ordinary citizens.

As we have argued time and time again, the power sector needs an overhaul. At the very least, and on an immediate basis, the government needs to renegotiate power purchase agreements with the private power plants, replace outdated plants with efficient ones to reduce overall power generation costs, and diversify its fuel sources. The energy sector has been allowed to remain unaccountable for far too long. Such looting of public funds must stop.

Fragile embankments must be fortified

Five unions in Khulna at risk of serious flooding

We are worried about the constant threat of displacement facing the residents of five unions at the Koyra upazila of Khulna. Flooding is a seasonal occurrence in this part of the land where embankments are often breached leading to the inundation of homes and croplands. However, the situation seems particularly bleak this year after Cyclone Remal has battered most of the embankments, leaving many areas already submerged and eroded. Come monsoon, residents fear they may have no choice but to relocate unless the embankments are urgently repaired and reinforced.

The question is, why are these structures so fragile? They are meant to be a critical line of defence; what's the point of having them if they cannot withstand the pressure of water for long? Experts attribute their delicate state to poor planning and use of substandard construction materials. As per a report, many embankments and sluice gates along key rivers in this area are presently in a dilapidated state. Local officials at Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) have also acknowledged the poor state of a significant portion of the embankments. In fact, some 73 kilometres out of 2,006 kilometres of embankments in the Khulna, Bagerhat, and Satkhira districts are reported to be in a dilapidated condition.

Over the last few years, we have repeatedly talked about the importance of durable and well-planned embankments. We have seen how fragile embankments in many parts of the country were frequently, and rather too easily, damaged leading to the loss of homes, croplands and livelihoods. Many thousands were forced to leave their homes permanently, their villages swallowed by tidal surges. As the effects of climate change intensify, it is vital that the authorities also intensify their efforts to fortify existing safeguards against natural disasters. That means that there must be strict quality control in any project related to embankments so that those tasked with building/repairing them cannot get away with poor designs or use of low-quality materials. Officials in charge of the projects must also be made accountable for their negligence.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Italy joins WORLD WAR II

Italy, under the rule of Benito Mussolini, declared war against France and Great Britain and joined World War II on this day in 1940.

BUDGET FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

What can we learn from global experiences?

Nahid Akhter Jahan
is professor at the Institute of Health Economics in the University of Dhaka.

NAHID AKHTER JAHAN

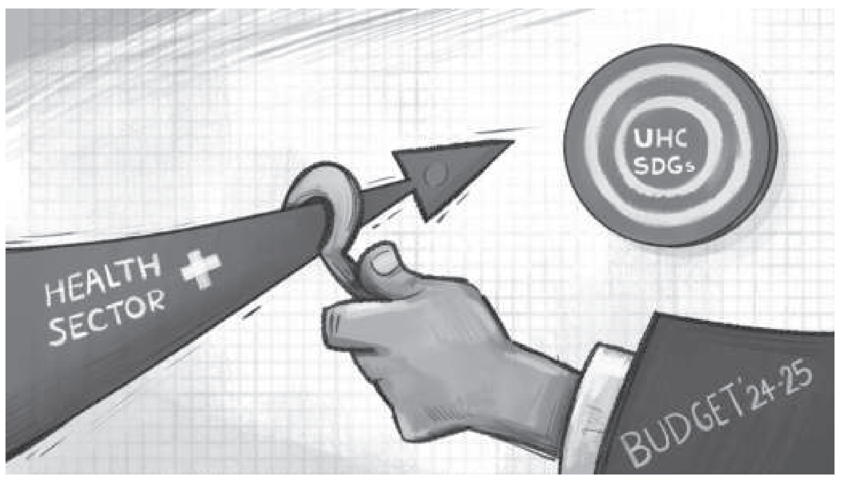
Allocation of resources to the health sector and proper utilisation of that allocation are crucial for achieving universal health coverage (UHC) as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many countries are moving towards health sector reforms by customising their healthcare financing mechanisms and healthcare provider payment methods. Global experiences show that more resources for the health sector aligned with increasing efficiency in spending, appropriate healthcare provider reimbursement, purchaser-provider split, and supply-side cost sharing are leading the countries towards achieving UHC. In 2021, Thailand spent 13.5 percent of its total government spending on health, while Turkey spent 11.5 percent, Sri Lanka 9.5 percent, and Vietnam nine percent. The same year, the out-of-pocket (OOP) health expenditure was nine percent of the total health expenditure in Thailand, 16.2 percent in Turkey, 49.6 percent in Sri Lanka, and 40.0 percent in Vietnam. These countries reduced OOP expenditure and increased efficiency in health service delivery by adopting different provider payment mechanisms and pro-poor strategies. Many countries are implementing a blended approach of input-based and outcome-based financing to tackle inefficiency, information asymmetry and moral hazards in health service delivery.

Bangladesh has allocated 5.19 percent of the proposed national budget—Tk 41,407 crore—to the health sector in FY2024-25. The share of the health sector has been more or less five percent of the budget for more than a decade. In 2020, Bangladesh's current health expenditure per capita was $50.66, and the government health expenditure per capita was $9.1, according to World Bank. The share of health in the budget and the per capita health expenditure in the country are low compared to other Asian countries. It has produced relatively good outcomes in achieving some of the MDGs at a low cost, but the issue of financial protection in healthcare and achieving the SDG targets remains a crucial challenge.

The low share of public financing is echoed in the relatively lower use of public health facilities in Bangladesh. Only around 12 percent of total health services were sought from public health facilities and about 29 percent from formal private healthcare providers in 2022. Informal healthcare providers dominated by providing 59 percent of the total health services. The large share of informal healthcare providers is also reflected in access to and utilisation of medical goods in the country. Patients receive 93 percent of their medicines from private pharmacies. Expenditure on medical goods from private providers was more than 60 percent of the total OOP expenditure in 2020. The OOP health expenditure was 68.5 percent of total health expenditure in 2020.

Budget preparation in Bangladesh is not backed by economic evaluation as it is in many other countries. And budget spending does not always ensure implementation of cost-effective interventions either; in 2022, the health budget utilisation rate was only about 78 percent. Lengthy procurement process, limited capacity of health managers in budget execution, rigid public financial management rules, frequent transfer of health managers, inadequate monitoring and supervision and lack of financial autonomy of public health facilities might be the causes of the low absorption capacity.

Bangladesh prepared the first Health Care Financing Strategy (2012-32) in 2012. The strategy described a pathway to achieve UHC in the country by identifying key interventions such as increasing budgetary allocation along with improving efficiency in financial management and health service delivery, establishing a health protection scheme, piloting and scaling up of Shasthya Surakhsha Karmasuchi (SSK), and initiating mandatory health insurance for the population employed in the formal sector. The recent review of the strategy also emphasised increasing public financing, revisiting public financial management rules, purchaser-provider split, strategic purchasing, and accreditation of the private sector.



VISUAL: **REHNUMA PROSHOON**

Sri Lanka has successfully lowered catastrophic health spending (5.33 percent) in a health system funded by general taxes and input-based financing. Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Turkey, and India, on the other hand, increased coverage by transitioning from input-based to outcome-based payment approaches. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Bangladesh needs to emphasise the area of provider payment immediately. Designing proper healthcare financing mechanisms and provider payment methods will help to redirect this huge OOP expenditure in the private sector through a third party, increase financing coverage, and ensure the quality of health services. The government may allocate additional funds for medical goods and increase the availability of medicines in public health facilities with effective monitoring and supervision. This could be a crucial intervention for reducing OOP expenditure in Bangladesh. India and Nepal recently increased the availability of medicines in public healthcare facilities with an increase in financial coverage.

As mentioned earlier, Bangladesh has produced "good outcomes at a low cost." There are other contributing factors outside the health sector, such as increased literacy rates, poverty reduction, social safety nets and other social determinants of health. These factors helped in reducing child mortality and achieving some of the MDG targets. Investment in public health and other social and environmental determinants of health is sometimes very cost-effective. Planned investment in health is required not only in the health sector, but also in other sectors. Different ministries should work together with better coordination to attain the SDGs by 2030 and the goals of the Perspective Plan by 2041.

Increasing efficiency in the public sector is a prerequisite for increasing budget allocation and enhancing healthcare financing coverage. However, global experiences show that an increase in efficiency alone is not sufficient to achieve UHC. Rather, countries improved efficiency while simultaneously increasing allocation in the public sector. The health sector's share in the national budget must be increased substantially in Bangladesh along with drastic measures to improve efficiency. It is essential to gradually introduce outcome-based payment in the health sector and strategic purchasing in the private sector. A master plan for health should be prepared with a holistic approach, including future allocation for the health sector, spending modalities, the needed health sector reforms, and of course, integrating health into other policies. We expect to see its reflection in the national budget in the coming years.

Cyclone Remal gives a stark reminder of our crisis protection gap

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KAZI AMDADUL HOQUE

Cyclone Remal has once again underscored the critical importance of disaster risk finance followed by anticipatory action in climate-induced disaster management. For the past five decades, Bangladesh has been a global leader in implementing anticipatory measures to mitigate the devastating impacts of cyclones. Both the government and non-government actors have employed measures related to anticipatory actions, which have proven to be effective. The global experience of insurance has been revealed as an area of consideration to minimise economic loss and appropriate measures to be taken to address non-economic losses.

Cyclone Remal has affected more than 37 lakh people in Bangladesh's coastal regions. Preliminary reports indicate that 35,000 homes have been destroyed, and nearly 150,000 homes have been damaged. Beyond the immediate destruction, long-term impacts such as waterlogged homes, damaged livelihoods, and impaired infrastructure will continue to affect the lives of those affected.

The visible damage is just the tip of the iceberg. Behind the shattered homes and ruined infrastructure lies a profound human suffering that is often overlooked. Families are displaced, livelihoods and education disrupted, injuries and health hazards increased, and their futures uncertain. The psychological toll of such a disaster, coupled with the physical destruction, makes recovery long and arduous.

Despite these successes, the ultimate goal remains bringing the death toll down to zero. The deaths that did occur during Remal highlight a critical area for improvement. Some of those who perished were elderly individuals who died on their way to the shelters. This tragic outcome points to the need for targeted strategies to assist the most vulnerable populations.

Bangladesh must intensify its anticipatory actions to address the evolving challenges posed by climate change and increasing cyclone intensity. This includes: 1. Intensify early warning systems with their interpretations to provide more accurate and timely information; 2. Building more robust and resilient infrastructure within communities to withstand severe weather conditions; 3. Collaborate with communities in disaster preparedness and response planning to ensure localised and culturally appropriate interventions; and 4. Develop specific strategies and facilities to protect the elderly, disabled, and other vulnerable groups during evacuations.

Rehabilitation efforts must consider the specific needs of vulnerable populations, especially the elderly and those living in coastal regions. Cyclone-resilient houses built using local materials such as sand and much less cement offer a promising solution. These houses, built with community participation, are designed to withstand strong winds and heavy rain with the provision of manual escalators and rainwater harvesting. Expanding this model could provide a sustainable solution for coastal housing.

This is high time for the banking sector to extend and accelerate green debt as part of its climate-responsive finance mechanism that could incentivise well-off individuals and entrepreneurs to invest in organic farming, climate-smart agriculture, resilient housing, environmentally friendly building materials, and water treatment plants.

Another lesson learnt from Cyclone Remal is that the Sundarbans, a vital natural safeguard against cyclones, are not as resilient as the forest once was. It struggled significantly during this cyclone, with reports indicating that it was submerged under five to seven feet of water. This submersion has destroyed the sweet water reserves within the Sundarbans, leading to a shortage of potable water in the region. Additionally, its wildlife has suffered, with reports that hundreds of deer and other animals were swept away by the waters. The shrimp farms have also been devastated by the cyclone. This has severely disrupted the livelihoods of yet another group of local people.

The Sundarbans has continued to provide some safety, and local NGOs have initiated mangrove planting projects in the area. The effectiveness of these initiatives is becoming evident, as the mangrove trees help fortify the forest and offer additional protection to the locals. Beyond their protective function, these trees can serve as a source of livelihood.

Remal disconnected three crore people across the country from electricity. This disruption posed significant risks on multiple fronts. The immense damage, amounting to nearly Tk 10 crore in the coastal region, raises the idea of whether it is time to shift these areas to solar energy and decentralise its management.

A crucial element in Bangladesh's disaster management strategy is the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP). These volunteers have been providing first response services for the past 50 years and have been lauded worldwide for their dedication and effectiveness. To continue this success, it is imperative not only to motivate and train these volunteers in a multi-hazard approach, but also to introduce them to modern technology.

Cyclone Remal brought new insights into the widespread concern it generated across the country. Not only were coastal regions affected, but the capital city Dhaka and the port city of Chattogram also faced severe disruptions. Landslides posed real threats in various areas, highlighting that cyclones can have a far-reaching impact beyond traditional high-risk zones. Given the widespread impact of climate-induced disasters, a holistic approach is necessary across the country. This includes: 1. Developing urban resilience planning across the country; 2. Establishing integration of disaster risk finance and anticipatory action into the systems; and 3. Unfold climate change, disaster management, supply chain, and responsiveness to the people nationwide using local language and local references.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

Newsroom: Fax- 58156306
reporting@thedailystar.net

Advertisement: 01711623910
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Subscription:
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US President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin during a meeting in New York City, US on September 20, 2023.

FILE PHOTO: **REUTERS**

When will the US gain ‘independence’ from Israel?

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MD MAHMUDUL HASAN

In a video recorded in 2001, Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly said, “The main thing, first of all, is to hit them [Palestinians]. Not just one blow, but blows that are so painful that the price will be too heavy to be borne.” Dismissing the possibility that the United States would be an obstacle to the perpetration of such gruesome crimes, he added, “I know what America is. America is a thing you can move very easily, move it in the right direction. They won’t get in the way.”

When the above statement was first reported in various media outlets in 2010, Netanyahu’s claim of Israeli influence over the US was met with disbelief and, in some quarters, with ridicule. Many thought it was inconceivable. How could Israel exercise such control over a country like the US?

More than a decade on, if we unpack the intricacies of US-Israel relations, we may not characterise Netanyahu’s statements as hyperbolic or counterintuitive. Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear understand that the US-Israel relationship is asymmetrical and lopsided in favour of the latter’s interests. Successive US governments have been acting against the stated values and principles of their country in order to offer unconditional support for inhuman Israeli policies against Palestinians. US governments—both Democratic and Republican—have been routinely ignoring their own human rights stance by using the veto power at the UN Security Council to protect the Israeli state from criticism of its gross violations of human rights and international laws.

The US’s acquiescent submission to Israeli authorities has become more conspicuous, and the magnitude of its catastrophic consequences more evident, since early October 2023 when Israel launched its ongoing genocide against Palestinians. At the expense of its domestic and international interests as well as its global standing, the US has been providing Israel with economic incentives and military munitions, which the latter has been using to slaughter innocent Palestinian children, women, and men and to demolish educational institutions and other critical facilities—all designed to trigger a mass exodus of the surviving Palestinians from their land.

There are instances when the US government treated its own citizens’ lives as less valuable than the interests of Israel.

In March 2003, Israelis went on their routine killing and demolition spree in the Palestinian town of Rafah. At that time, Rachel Corrie, the 23-year old US citizen and an alum of Evergreen State College in the state of Washington, was part of a team of peace activists who went to Palestine to prevent Israelis from bulldozing indigenous homes. On March 16, 2003, an Israeli bulldozer was approaching to flatten a house where a Palestinian pharmacist named Samir Nasrallah lived with his wife and three children. It “stood alone in a sea of sand and debris,” as Israelis had levelled most other Palestinian houses in the area.

Rachel Corrie stood in the path of the bulldozer, urged the operator to stop, and acted as a human shield to protect the property. Her urgings fell on deaf ears. Manufactured by the US company Caterpillar, Inc, the bulldozer ran over Corrie, fracturing her skull, shattering her ribs, and puncturing her lungs; she was crushed to death on the spot. Later, an Israeli court acquitted the IDF soldier who “deliberately” ran the bulldozer over Corrie, and the US government didn’t protest.

Emails that Rachel Corrie sent from Palestine before her death included the following:

“It is most difficult for me to think about what’s going on here when I sit down to write back to the United States... I don’t know if many of the children here have ever existed without tank-shell holes in their walls and the towers of an occupying army surveying them constantly from the near horizons. I think, although I’m not entirely sure, that even the smallest of these children understand that life is not like this everywhere.”

I hope commentators who attempt to insult our intelligence by saying that the problem between Israel and Palestine started on October 7, 2023 take note of Rachel’s words and consider the history of Palestine at least since the 1917 Balfour Declaration.

About 21 years after Rachel Corrie’s death, 25-year-old US Air Force serviceman Aaron Bushnell couldn’t take the mass murder that Israel has been committing in Palestine since October 7. On February 25, 2024, he walked to the Israeli embassy in Washington, DC, “poured a flammable liquid atop his buzz-cut head, [and] lit himself on fire.” Before immolating himself, Bushnell declared in a calm and clear voice:

“I’m about to engage in an extreme act of protest but, compared to what people have been experiencing in Palestine at the hands of their colonisers, it’s not extreme at all. This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal.”

Perhaps in his righteous passion for justice, Bushnell’s pure heart anticipated that his “extreme act” would bring the US government to its senses. Sadly, he was wrong. What’s more, his statement didn’t even receive adequate media coverage.

The seven World Central Kitchen aid workers that Israel killed in Gaza in April 2024 included a US citizen. Unsurprisingly, that didn’t shake US loyalty to Israel.

For a very long time, the US has prided itself as a land of freedom, free speech, and freedom of movement. Unfortunately, acting in the interests of Israel, it has flouted such core principles.

Prof Ilan Pappé of the University of Exeter is a British-Israeli citizen of Jewish background. He is the author of The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine (2006) and a known critic of Israeli apartheid and genocidal policies. He was travelling from the UK to the US to deliver a talk in Michigan. Upon his arrival at Detroit airport on May 13, 2024, he was detained and questioned by security personnel for two hours about his views on Israel-Palestine issues. He was allowed to leave the airport only after the agents “copied the contents of his phone.”

At the expense of its domestic and international interests as well as its global standing, the US has been providing Israel with economic incentives and military munitions, which the latter has been using to slaughter innocent Palestinian children, women, and men and to demolish educational institutions and other critical facilities—all designed to trigger a mass exodus of the surviving Palestinians from their land.

The US government regularly lectures the rest of the world on intellectual and political freedom and castigates other nations for their lack of free speech. It is very unfortunate that, guided by its loyalty to Israel, it let this incident take place. What’s more, we are shocked to have seen university authorities in the US stifle free speech and crack down on peaceful demonstrations and encampments that students set up at campuses to promote justice for Palestinians.

All these suggest that (electoral) democracy is not the only system that is under attack in the US, and Donald Trump is not the only politician to blame. Authorities in the US are eroding long-established principles and values in order to support Israel’s apartheid rule. This has harmed US reputation in the world and embarrassed its conscientious citizens. The extent to which the US has contravened its own principles and international laws to show allegiance to Israel does not suggest that it has acted independently.

It is time for the US to realise how it has subverted its own interests and prestige, and follow its own interests as a sovereign country. With students’ encampments at US universities, the movement for US “independence” from Israel has started. The sooner it materialises, the better for the US and for the rest of the world. Importantly, the freedom of Palestine from Israeli occupation is dependent on US “independence” from Israel.

Must students learn studentship before they learn to learn?

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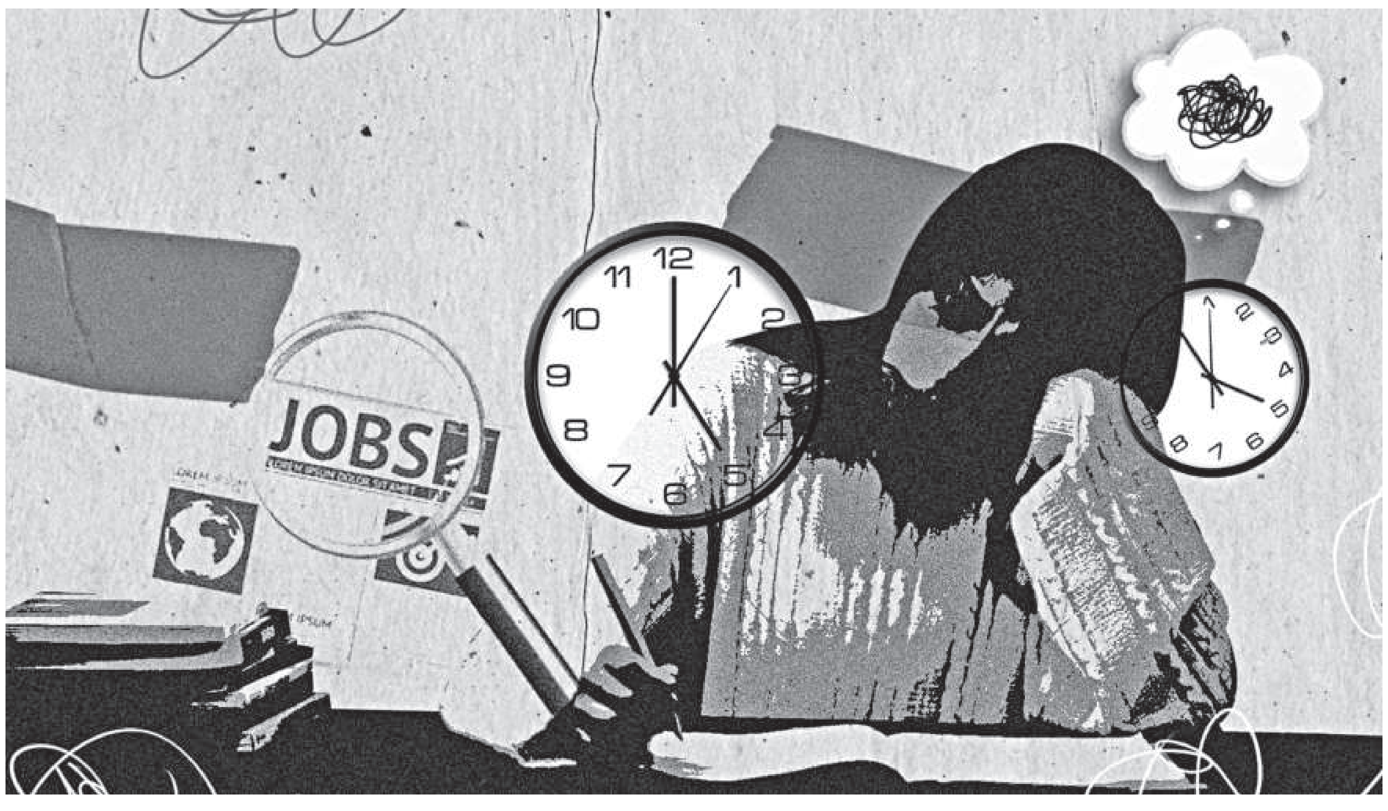
MOHAMMAD SHAMSUZZAMAN

Ideally, no teacher thinks of punishing or surveilling his students. Neither do I. I often tell my students that I’m not a police officer or an administrator. I’m an educator, and my job is to help them learn. As well, I believe firmly that the problem with learning is a problem with teaching. If I teach effectively, they learn easily. Their failure is my fault. I’m, ironically, not consumed with a guilty feeling as I notice my students struggling to learn these days. I become more nostalgic than regretful as a teacher. I seem to have become a victim of “illusions of the good-old-days,” as Steven Pinker mentions in *The Sense of Style*. I’m tempted to think with every passing year that I was a better teacher in the past, for I used to have better students. However much I want to think that that’s a delusion, sometimes I can’t help feeling like a dinosaur amid some zombies. Students look confused. Communication seems disrupted. Learning apparently dwindles. These generalisations, unfortunately, are not without a grain of truth in them.



VISUAL: **SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR**

Universities are unlike schools and colleges. Most students don’t seem to have intellectual and social capital to cope with the culture in which universities operate, as they enter universities fresh out of colleges. Universities are not teaching entities, per se. Universities are, instead, transformative sanctuaries. Students are meant to be more inspired than taught to discover their intellectual and professional pursuits. Students are not acolytes who listen and learn. They are disciples who think critically to question ideas and ideologies they come across. They no longer need to hone their rote learning skills to ace exams. Nor should they expect their teachers to admonish them for falling short of diligence and discipline. These default virtues of a university education presuppose academic and behavioural traits students hardly acquire while at schools and colleges. Students must first invent the university, as David Bartholomae suggests in his article “Inventing the University,” so they learn what it means to be a university student. When they finally invent the university, some of them carry over the consequences of initial disorientation. This is a transitional crisis that universities are ill-equipped to address. Students are the victims. Teachers, sometimes, are the victims of victims.

Such a situation disrupts the rapport between students and teachers. Add technology to this pickle. Technology sceptic Clifford Stoll claims in *Silicon Snake Oil* that the internet and educational technologies lead us away from sound educational practices. Stoll sounds anachronistic these days in that the internet and technologies offer infinite options and opportunities to facilitate education. Nonetheless, a reflective teacher perhaps would regret sometimes that technologies have somewhat compromised his authority as a teacher. Teaching is no longer time- and space-bound. And a particular teacher is disposable, because there’s a cadre of better teachers—ahem!—prowling somewhere online, available at any time, from anywhere. Consequently, the separation between teachers and students widens. Students are distracted from learning. Teachers are demotivated to teach. Technologies apparently devour the earnest engagement that teaching and learning ideally warrant. Teachers seem less effective these days, for students have emerged anew worldwide because of technological advances and affordances. As a result, students are missing out on the basics they must embody.

And that’s the concern that Emily J Isaacs raises in her pitch, “It’s Time to Start Teaching Your Students How to Be a Student,” in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. She implies that learning is not altogether a cognitive endeavour. A brilliant individual is not necessarily a successful student, unless s/he has already acquired the “studenting” skills. Learning is largely a behavioural virtue. Students must cultivate some habits, skills, and behaviours to succeed in university-level courses. Students, for example, must learn to attend classes regularly, meet deadlines, pay attention, manage time, resist digital distractions, take care of their health, and seek help. She argues that most students who come to campus are unfamiliar with these basics of studentship. She urges that these skills be taught explicitly to undergraduate students in particular. Such an approach to teaching dislodges a professor from the hallowed pulpit he professes or pontificates from. He initially becomes a coach to help students embark on the long journey to maturity that a university education is. While this role of a teacher relegates him to a lesser light position, nowhere is it mentioned in the teaching manual (if that exists!) that he can’t assume such a responsibility. Will it make teaching smooth and unsnagged?

I doubt it! Hyperbole aside, education is apparently a commodity worldwide these days. Whoever can afford to buy it possesses it. And every “human animal” (I’m tempted to borrow this from Roy Scranton’s *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene*), whoever intends to possess it, is not a student. Some of them are either cuckoos or counts, who are unaffected by the intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic potential of education. Education is a conventional value for them. They are incorrigible for this dangerous misconception of education. They are impervious to instruction. They have false expectations and undue demands about a faculty’s teaching, grading, and behaviour. Nothing—and nobody—stops them until they are catered to what they want. However minuscule this group of students is, they exist, and because of them, the Pareto Principle, which posits that for many outcomes, roughly 80 percent of consequences come from 20 percent of causes, appears implausible for a teacher. These days, roughly 99 percent of consequences come from one percent of students for a teacher. While teaching studentship is an excellent idea, unless the system is purged of non-students, it’s a problematic option. And the problem is structural, not pedagogical. Teachers yet can be useful agents to turn the tide in their favour.

Teaching is a learned skill. It’s not a gift, although we supposedly have gifted teachers. Opportunities for teachers to learn about teaching are inadequate. Graduate programmes, besides the North American ones, mint scholars and researchers, not teachers or educators.

Fixing students might not fix the problem with studentship altogether. Teachers are part of the problem, too. Teaching is a learned skill. It’s not a gift, although we supposedly have gifted teachers. Opportunities for teachers to learn about teaching are inadequate. Graduate programmes, besides the North American ones, mint scholars and researchers, not teachers or educators. They are deluded into thinking that teaching is not their work; research is. They apparently excel as researchers following graduate schools. When, however, they embark on teaching, they are often caught flatfooted. John Loughran and Ian Menter claim in the article “The essence of being a teacher educator and why it matters” that the teaching of teaching is sophisticated work, although it is often viewed simplistically. Sceptics might argue that teaching is a heritage profession immune to innovation and intervention. It’s stuck in a perennial status quo. The profession totters under its own weight. We must not waffle to confess that some of us lack teachership, too. So, who is going to teach teachers teaching?

Superior teachers, of course! However idealistic I might sound, I would aver that teaching is an inspirational endeavour. Mark Edmundson claims in *Why Teach?* that a “corporate university” has abdicated its mission to inspire passions and talents. Inspiration is in short supply on campus these days, Edmundson reminds us. Teaching has been reduced to dealing with content. Teachers (have to) frantically teach what would make students job-ready. In this dispensation, a successful education provides a return on investment. Education, then, is an economic ticket to a better life.

Unfortunately, that is the end of education, because it’s the beginning of egocentrism. Education is altruistic. An ideal education civilises us to think about and work for others. Unless students are inspired to be creative, curious, and reflective, those affective faculties remain untapped. And the teachers who cultivate these faculties are an endangered species in the academic ecosystem, Edmundson bemoans. As well, Edmundson worries that too many professors have lost the courage of their own passions, depriving their students of the fire of inspiration. As long as we strive not to become one of those professors ourselves, we add to the repertoire of teachership. When we find and emulate our colleagues practising the idealistic virtues of teaching, we excel as educators in dealing with the deficiency of studentship.

Teaching is a solemn engagement, as is learning. A commitment to teaching must be complemented with a commitment to learning. If the enterprise of teaching is based on power dynamics that somewhat signal to some students that the whole system is stacked against teachers, they know that falling short of studentship isn’t a consequential lapse. Indifference to learning is already endemic. Questioning teachers’ authority is alarmingly on the rise. Education seems redefined as it veers away from scholarship and ideals into grades, graduation, jobs, and salaries. I’m not convinced that education has been this way because students are influenced by the insightful sarcasm of Oscar Wilde, who said in his essay “The Critic As Artist,” “Nothing that is worth knowing can ever be taught.” They apparently slight learning, for learning has become an optional luxury. It’s no longer a civic necessity. So, what would place students back on the right track? The acquisition of studentship, I assume. And who can be more effective agents than empowered teachers to help students acquire studentship?

BENGALI AND NON-BENGALI RIOTS at Karnaphuli Paper Mills

State, Class, and Ethnicity in East Pakistan

AZIZUL RASEL

From the mid-1950s, the relationship between Bengali and non-Bengali workers began to deteriorate to such an extent that the East Bengal mills witnessed two serious riots in the same year. The first riot between Bengali and non-Bengali workers occurred at Karnaphuli Paper Mills, Chandraghona, on March 22, 1954. In less than two months, Adamjee Jute Mills, then one of the largest jute mills in the world, experienced violent riots between Bengali and non-Bengali workers, resulting in the deaths of more than 600 people.

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SADAR

> **The Bengali workers were indeed aggrieved with the management and the labour policies. However, I argue that the mill authority and the state systematically used these grievances to fragment class solidarities between Bengali and non-Bengali workers. As the Pakistani state frantically sought capitalist industrial development, it aimed to thwart any powerful concerted labour action in the industrial spaces.**

This essay attempts to understand why, within a few years of the creation of Pakistan, serious riots occurred between workers of two linguistic groups: the Bengalis (almost all of whom were Muslims) and the Urdu-speaking Muslims. The Urdu-speaking groups, who migrated to East Pakistan, are commonly perceived as Biharis. Although an overwhelming number of them were Biharis, not all Urdu-speaking Muslim refugees to East Pakistan were Biharis. In official papers, they are treated as upcountry Muslims, non-Bengali Muslims, and Mohajirs or holy migrants. This essay examines whether they were able to forge significant labour solidarities and whether Bengali and non-Bengali industrial workers in East Pakistan were able to produce powerful concerted industrial actions. If the workers failed to produce such solidarity and concerted industrial action, what hindered them from doing so? Was it because of the workers' ethnic and linguistic differences? Some historians suggest that the riots between Bengali and non-Bengali workers in East Pakistan, which occurred shortly after the general election in 1954, were provoked by the central government to undermine the victory of the newly formed United Front's coalition government in East Pakistan. Layli Uddin, however, argues that the riots were mainly the outcome of a severe crisis in labour-management relations.

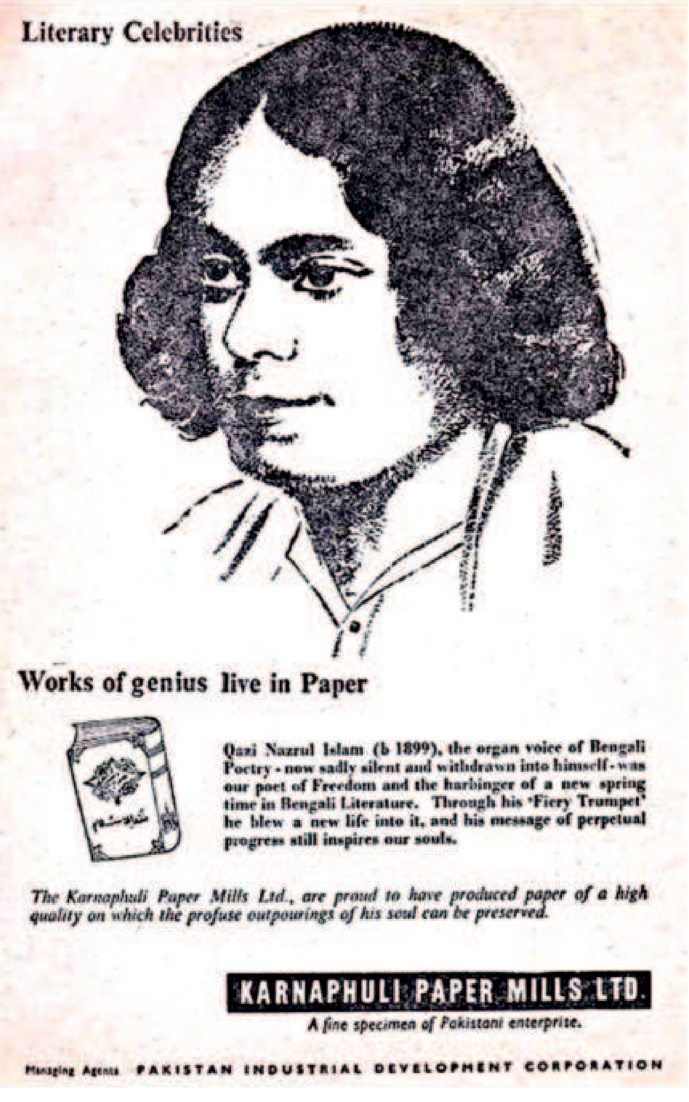
To explain the relationship between class, ethnicity, and the role of the state, this essay explores the riots between Bengali and non-Bengali workers at the Karnaphuli Paper Mills.

The morning of March 22, 1954, was a busy day as usual for the Karnaphuli Paper Mills. However, discontent and grievances permeated the air of the mills and the working-class neighbourhood of Dobashi Bazar, where most Bengali workers gathered for leisure time adda and daily groceries. M.H. Shah, the deputy commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, mentioned in his letter to the commissioner of the Chittagong Division, that he received news of the 'disturbance' at Chandraghona at about 1 PM while he was busy counting votes for the Chittagong Hill Tracts Buddhist constituency."

S.M. Hasan, C.S.P., the commissioner of the Chittagong Division, arrived at Chandraghona camp on March 23, a day after the horrific riots occurred. His letter to the chief secretary of the government of East Bengal provided a detailed description of how the riots at Karnaphuli Paper Mills began. Hasan met with S.S. Nohri, a senior technical assistant in charge of the process section of the mills, who narrated to him how the riots started. Nohri informed him that initially, the riots began over a simple matter. On March 18, Nohri sent some workers to M. Ekhlas, the Bengali senior technical assistant (chemical). However, unhappy with the management's treatment of him, Ekhlas sent the workers back, stating that he was not aware of his position in the mills. Upon learning of this, Khurshid Ali, the non-Bengali chief operating director of the mills, summoned Ekhlas to his office. Khurshid and Ekhlas had a heated debate there, during which Ali asked Ekhlas to return to his former government job. This concluded the events for that day, and Ekhlas returned to work. However, news of the heated debate between Khurshid Ali and M. Ekhlas spread throughout the mills.

According to Nohri, the Bengali workers of the mills organised a meeting at Dobashi Bazar, Chandraghona, on March 21. Some members of the Majdur Union were also present at the meeting. Following the meeting, the Bengali workers, along with the members of the Majdur Union, held a procession and paraded at the Dobashi Bazar and the workers' colony. They were heard chanting slogans such as "Hindustani chai na [we don't want Hindustani], Khurshed Ali murdabad [Down with Khurshed Ali], Majdur dabi mantey hobe [workers' demands have to be met], Ekhlas Saheb zindabad" [long live Ekhlas Saheb], etc.

On March 22, the fateful day, Khurshed Ali went to the 1st floor of the Soda Recovery Bailer House of the mills, the working station of Ekhlas. There, Khurshid Ali and Ekhlas again had a heated debate. Agitated, Khurshid asked Ekhlas to leave the building, which Ekhlas quietly observed, and he went back home. The news had already spread around the mills and the workers' colony. Soon, the agitated Bengali workers gathered adjacent to the turbine house. To his misfortune, Khurshid Ali went there to calm the aggrieved workers. Ali was subsequently mobbed by the workers, resulting in injuries and bleeding. However, with the help of some workers and officers, Khurshid Ali was able to escape major injuries at that time. Unfortunately, luck was not on his side, as a mob of 800 people chased him again at the main gate of the mills. After a while, Ali was found missing. The agitated workers also chased H.M. Shirazee, a labour officer, who jumped into the river. Eleven injured workers, of whom 5 were Bengali and 6 were non-Bengali, were admitted to the hospital.


Literary Celebrities

Works of genius live in Paper

Qazi Nazrul Islam (b 1899), the organ voice of Bengali Poetry - now sadly silent and withdrawn into himself - was our poet of Freedom and the harbinger of a new spring time in Bengali Literature. Through his 'Fiery Trumpet' he blew a new life into it, and his message of perpetual progress still inspires our souls.

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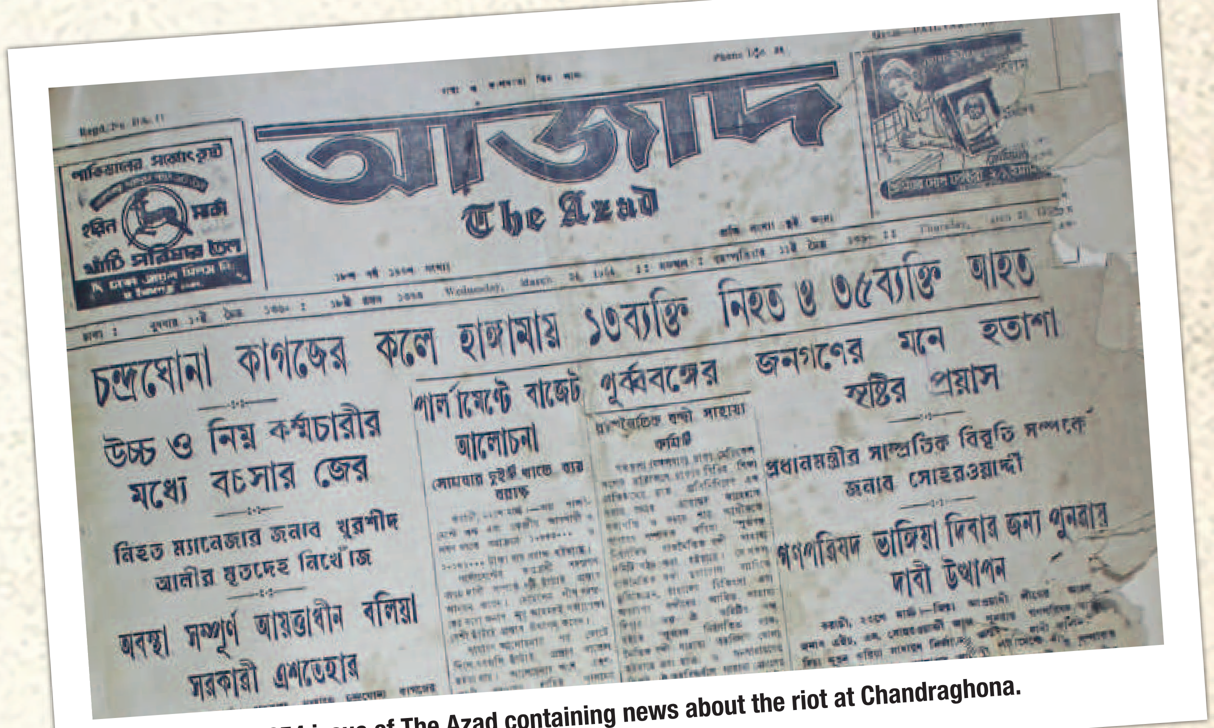
So, why did the Bengali workers become so aggrieved, leading them to engage in serious riots at the Karnaphuli Paper Mills? Scholars argue that the riots between Bengali and non-Bengali workers, which occurred shortly after the victory of the United Front in East Bengal, were instigated by the central government mainly to sabotage the provincial government formed by the Front. Some scholars assert that the riots were, to some extent, a manifestation of the excitement created by the victory and the formation of the government by the United Front. For them, these new developments signalled a new promise.


আজাদ
The Azad

চন্দ্রঘোনা কাগজের কলে হাঙ্গামায় ১৩ব্যক্তি নিহত ও ৩৫ব্যক্তি আহত

উচ্চ ও নিম্ন কর্ম্মচারীর মধ্যে বচসার জের

নিহত ম্যানেজার জনাব খুরশীদ আলীর মৃতদেহ নিখোঁজ

অবস্থা সম্পূর্ণ আয়ত্তাধীন বলিয়া সরকারী এশতেহার

পার্লামেন্টে বাজেট আলোচনা

পূর্ববঙ্গের জনগণের মনে হতাশা সৃষ্টির প্রয়াস

প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সাম্প্রতিক বিবৃতি সম্পর্কে জনাব সোহরাওয়ার্দী

গণপরিষদ ভাঙ্গিয়া দিবার জন্য পুনরায় দাবী উত্থাপন

The March 24, 1954 issue of The Azad containing news about the riot at Chandraghona.

However, Layli Uddin recently refuted these assumptions in her excellent essay. For her, although the riots in East Bengal were 'ostensibly' between Bengalis and non-Bengalis, they mainly stemmed from an inner tension within the labour situation, which she describes as 'a severe crisis in labour management'.

She suggests that workers' grievances were primarily against the highest management and those in authoritative positions. However, riots between Bengali and non-Bengali workers at the Karnaphuli Paper Mills, the Adamjee Jute Mills, and other industrial spaces indicate that lower-echelon Bengali and non-Bengali workers were actively involved in the riots. In the Chandraghona riots, too, most of the workers killed and injured were lower-echelon workers. Among the 10 workers killed in the riots were watchmen, contractors, camp jamaders, foremen, and an orderly. Only three of them were high-ranking officers. In the Adamjee riots in May 1954, most of the rioting workers were lower-grade workers.

The Bengali workers were indeed aggrieved with the management and the labour policies. However, I argue that the mill authority and the state systematically used these grievances to fragment class solidarities between Bengali and non-Bengali workers. As the Pakistani state frantically sought capitalist industrial development, it aimed to thwart any powerful concerted labour action in the industrial spaces. The state's concern to thwart any concerted powerful industrial action by the labourers is evident in official correspondences. Labour commissioners were instructed to observe daily labour situations and report on developments to the concerned state agencies.

From the Pakistan government's secret documents and statistical publications, it appears that the government rigorously and elaborately maintained statistical data on the population regarding ethnicity, race, gender, and class. In its labour policy, the state clearly showed a bias towards non-Bengali Muslim refugees. They were given preference in the employment of industrial workers. However, there were multiple complex reasons behind this. Indeed, among the non-Bengali refugees, there were more skilled individuals. The state implemented various support programmes to assist these refugees. Consequently, the state's labour policy created a kind of labour aristocracy in East Bengal's mills, where non-Bengali workers enjoyed more benefits than Bengali workers. This conscious government policy, over time, created an inviolable rift between Bengali and non-Bengali workers in the factory spaces.

A memorandum by Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury, then assistant secretary of the East Pakistan Federation of Labour, dated April 21, 1953, just around a year before the Chandraghona riots, details the discrimination in wages and benefits between Bengali and non-Bengali workers at the Karnaphuli Paper Mills. The memorandum also expressed the grievances of the Bengali workers. Chowdhury highlighted the grievances of the Bengali labourers of the mills. In his letter to the commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, he pointed out, in his words, the 'nepotism' and 'provincialism' of the non-Bengali top-ranking officers, whom he referred to as outsiders. As he wrote, "the history of the Chandraghona Paper Mills Projects under Khurshid Ali, operative director for the last three years, has been a dismal story of provincialism, jobbery, nepotism, and corruption. The outstanding feature of the entire administration has been a systematic policy of persecuting the poor local employees."

In the memorandum, Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury highlighted the wage discrimination between Bengali and non-Bengali workers. Chowdhury stated, "the disparity of pay and service conditions between the local workers and workers (non-Bengali workers, he forgot to use the word) must shock the conscience of every civilized man. Not to speak of the upper hierarchy of officers, the ratio of pay between a section of clerks and another section of clerks is 2:1. With microscopic exception, the pay of a Bengali clerk ranges from Rs 90/- to Rs 150/- whereas that of an outsider clerk ranges from Rs 150/- to 300/-."

Historians Raj Narayan Chandavarkar, Nandini Gooptu, and Subho Basu have emphasized the importance of the neighbourhood in working-class culture, politics, and everyday life. Workers' consciousness, politics, and activism are not only shaped in the shop floors, but the neighbourhood also plays a crucial role. For the workers of the Karnaphuli Paper Mills, Dobashi Bazar served this crucial function. As we have seen, prior to the Chandraghona riots, workers gathered at Dobashi Bazar, held meetings, paraded, and chanted slogans. Dobashi Bazar was where Bengali workers encountered emerging Bengali nationalist leaders, such as Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury, and nationalist ideas and rhetoric.

Subaltern historians highlight the autonomy of subaltern domain. However, I argue that the consciousness of subaltern people, whether peasants or workers, is not always immune to ideas from the outside world. At Dobashi Bazar or in the neighbourhoods of other mills in East Bengal, Bengali workers were exposed to the teachings and excitement of newly emerging nationalist enthusiasm and the idea of autonomy. The growing distance and strained relationship between Bengali and non-Bengali workers were, in many ways, engineered by the state. This vitriolic relationship hindered their ability to organise powerful concerted labour action. Consequently, in the 1960s, Bengali workers gravitated towards the flourishing democratic and nationalist mobilizations in East Bengal led by middle-class leadership. In turn, Bengali nationalist leaders pledged support for various labour actions organised by Bengali workers and promised to incorporate workers' demands into their agendas. Thus, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, solidarity between Bengali and non-Bengali workers was marked by a significant rift.

Azizul Rasel *is a PhD scholar at McGill University, Canada.*

City Edition

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What to WATCH

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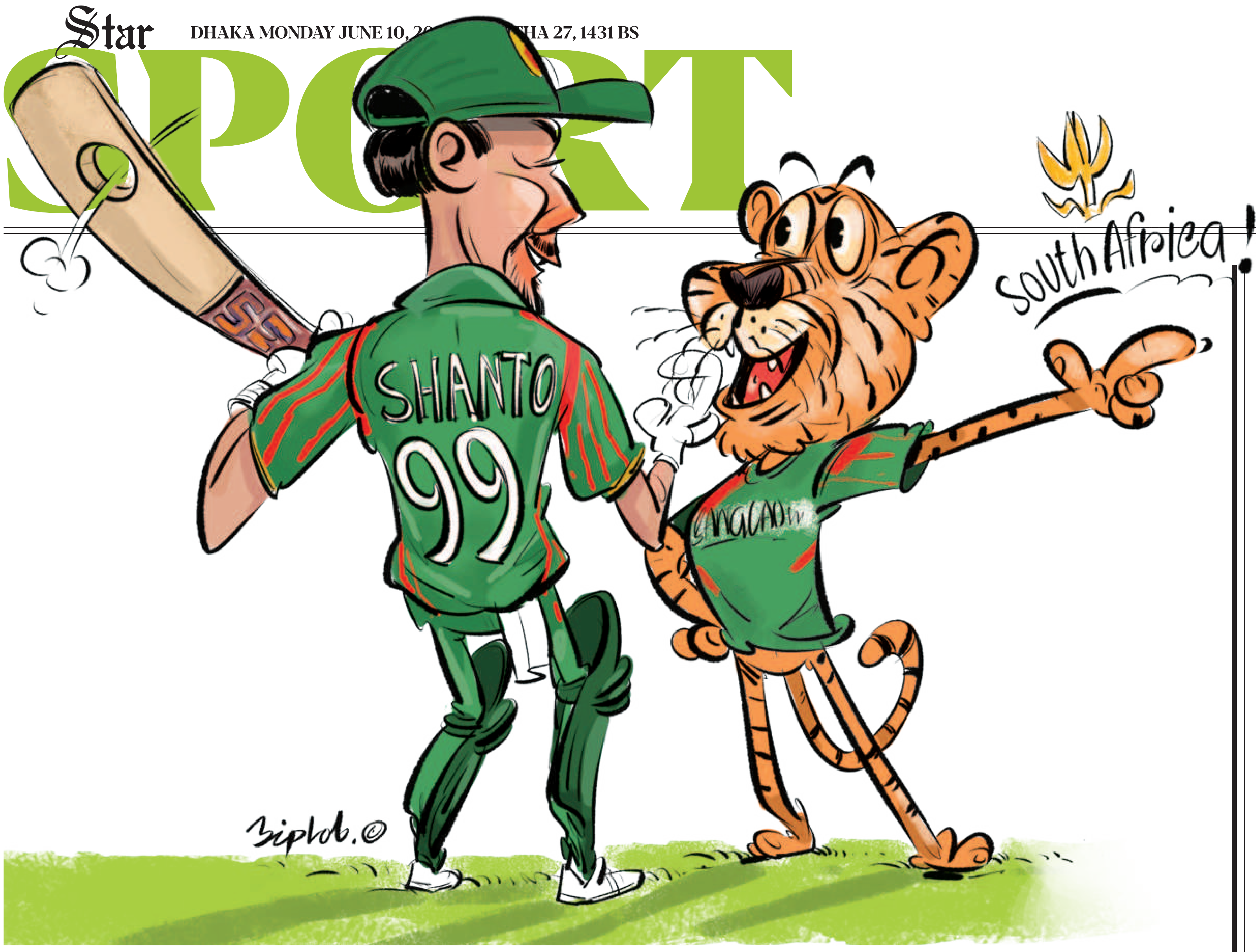

Upbeat Tigers look to carry momentum

SPORTS REPORTER

Conditions have been far from the norm at the Nassau County International Stadium, the venue for Bangladesh's second group game in the T20 World Cup against South Africa today.

Bangladesh players, who reached New York on Sunday, are breathing easy after a two-wicket win in their opening match against Sri Lanka and would look to carry momentum going into their last game in the USA. However, the Tigers have never beaten South Africa in the T20I format, having played eight matches, and there are big question marks on the conditions on offer.

At a press conference ahead of their clash against Pakistan at the same venue where Bangladesh would take on South Africa, India skipper Rohit Sharma had commented about the unpredictability of the wickets at the venue and it would likely be a similar case for the Tigers.

"These wickets are challenging, even the curator was confused about how they will behave," Rohit had told reporters.

So far in the three World Cup games played there, Rohit was the only player to hit a half-century, against Ireland. The invariable bounce on offer was accompanied by swing and seam movement. Batters were getting hit by deliveries that rose sharply from a length too.

The outfield conditions also did not allow scoring opportunities as usually is seen in the T20I format and it led to the ICC making a statement on working hard to improve the conditions.

Tigers will definitely be taking notes from the high-voltage India-Pakistan game on Sunday before their game against the Proteas.

Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto had said that the Sri Lanka fixture was the most tense game of his career but winning a pressure game of that level would help the Tigers regain the belief in themselves, especially following dismal performances in their World Cup build-up series in which they lost to co-hosts USA in Houston.

The pressure was telling when Sri Lanka got off to a moderately good start and were carrying on with momentum. The Bangladesh bowling unit mustered the required skill and experience, and above all, the courage to hold Sri Lanka back.

The batting unit, however, stuttered as usual but the contributions of Liton Das, Towhid Hridoy, and Mahmudullah Riyad at the death allowed the team to get over the line in a very tight game.

"As we managed to win this game, everyone will have extra confidence. And if we can go into the second game with this confidence then it will help. I hope something good will happen in the second game," Shanto hoped.

Bangladesh have crossed the first hurdle of their World Cup campaign and a mental barrier has been crossed which would allow them to settle in against a superior South Africa.

Shanto, however, was not taking anything for granted after their plans came to fruition against the Lankans.

"We will have to come back with a new strategy [against South Africa]. There is no other way than to play good cricket. If the batters can contribute we will have something good," he said, knowing that batters would need to pull their socks up and be counted in another vital game.

- **Bangladesh are yet to win a T20I against South Africa, having played eight matches against them.**
- **Bangladesh have faced South Africa three times in T20 World Cups, suffering convincing defeats each time.**
- **Bangladesh's 104-run defeat against South Africa in Sydney in the 2022 T20 World Cup is their biggest margin of defeat in the tournament.**
- **With 13 ducks in 83 innings, Bangladesh opener Soumya Sarkar is now tied at the top of the unwanted list for most ducks in T20Is with Ireland's Paul Stirling, who also managed the same number of ducks in 143 innings.**

Double whammy for Paolini

REUTERS, *Paris*

Coco Gauff and Katerina Siniakova claimed the French Open women's doubles title on Sunday with a 7-6(5), 6-3 victory over Italians Sara Errani and Jasmine Paolini - a day after the latter's crushing loss in the singles final.

The win was Siniakova's eighth women's Grand Slam doubles crown and Gauff's first. Paolini, who suffered a 6-2 6-1 defeat to Iga Swiatek on Saturday, was left looking dejected.

The first hour of the match was largely dictated by Errani and Siniakova's struggles on serve, as both were broken twice each, with the first set going into a tiebreaker.

A quick start there gave Paolini and Errani a 5-3 lead, but Siniakova raised her game to win some key points that turned the tide in her and Gauff's favour.

The Italians began the second set with real intensity, earning four break points in the first game, but Gauff and Siniakova battled back for a crucial hold before going up a break to take a 2-0 lead.

That appeared to take the wind out of Errani and Paolini's sails, and though they were able to twice bring the second set back on serve, Gauff and Siniakova broke to take a 5-3 lead.

Gauff, who has often struggled with her revamped serve in recent months, showed no nerves when it mattered most and comfortably held on to clinch the win.

SHORT CORNER

Olympic champion Jacobs retains European 100m crown

Italy's Olympic champion Marcell Jacobs retained his European 100m crown in Rome on Saturday in the perfect tonic for the upcoming Paris Games. Jacobs timed a season's best of 10.02 seconds to claim gold. Italian teammate Chituru Ali took silver in 10.05sec, with Briton Romel Glave claiming bronze in 10.06sec.

Croatia clinch first-ever victory over Portugal

Goals in each half by Luka Modric and Ante Budimir got Croatia a historic first win over Portugal in eight matches when they beat the hosts 2-1 in an international friendly on Saturday, as Cristiano Ronaldo remained on the bench.

Italy must aspire for Euro 2024 success, says Spalletti

Luciano Spalletti has said that his side must "aspire" to retain their European Championship crown, even if it seems a longshot. That victory proved to be an exception to Italy's recent form, though, given the Azzurri failed to qualify for either the 2018 or 2022 World Cups.

Hosein shines as Windies thrash record-low Uganda

Left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein's career-best figures of five for 11 decimated an inept Ugandan batting line-up as the West Indies romped to a 134-run victory in a Group C match of the T20 World Cup at the Guyana National Stadium on Saturday.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website*

Booters battle Qatar heat ahead of Lebanon tie

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh football team are trying to acclimatise to the scorching heat in Qatar, where they are set to take on Lebanon in their final match in the FIFA World Cup qualifiers at the Khalifa International Stadium in Al Rayyan on Tuesday.

Th charges of Javier Cabrera arrived in Al Rayyan on Saturday, fresh off their spirited performance against Australia, where they suffered a 2-0 defeat at the Bashundhara Kings Arena on Thursday.

The booters are charged up after the stern resistance they showed against the Socceroos but for now, adapting to the sweltering heat in Qatar is the biggest challenge for Cabrera's charges.

"The visiting team usually struggles to adapt to the weather so soon after arrival. The temperature in Qatar is about 45 to 48 degrees in the day, but it comes down to 36 degrees after the sun goes down.

"Adaptation is a challenge for the boys, but we are hopeful that the boys will adapt to the weather before the match against Lebanon," said assistant coach Hasan Al Mamun in an audio message sent by Bangladesh Football Federation.

Bishwanath Ghosh, who missed the tie against Australia due to suspension, is also optimistic about both adaptation and the outcome of the match.

"Very recently we had the similar weather in Bangladesh. I don't see much difference between the weather in Bangladesh and Qatar. We also don't want to focus on this issue, rather we have to start the work in a bid to realise our objective in Qatar," Bishwanath said.

"Our preparation is good because we came here after playing a big match against Australia. We might have lost the match but we are hopeful with the positive things we did in the Australia match. If we can repeat the performance against Australia, we can return home with something good from Qatar."

Bangladesh are currently at the bottom of Group I with just one point in five matches, which came from a draw against Lebanon in the first leg at the Bashundhara Kings arena last year.

The booters are targeting to secure at least one point in the second leg against Lebanon to end their campaign on a positive note.

"We want a win. Lebanon will also be wanting to win but our objective is to secure either full three points or at least one point in our last match of the World Cup Qualifiers," said Mamun.

Carlos Alcaraz outlasted German Alexander Zverev to win a maiden French Open, becoming the youngest man to capture Grand Slam titles on all three surfaces with a 6-3, 2-6, 5-7, 6-1, and 6-2 victory in a nail-biting final on Sunday. While the 21-year-old has won all of his three major finals, the defeat prolonged Zverev's frustration at Grand Slams, with the German still chasing a first title despite reaching the last four eight times. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

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UZ chairmen saw higher growth in wealth than MPs

Says TIB citing last five years' data

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The incumbent upazila chairmen are outdoing lawmakers in terms of increasing movable assets over the last five years, says a report of Transparency International Bangladesh.

Citing examples of wealth growth, the TIB said during the period, the highest growth of a lawmaker's movable wealth was reported at 3,065 percent, while the wealth of Khan Arifur Rahman, Jhalakathi Sadar upazila chairman, surged by 11,666 percent.

At a press conference in Dhanmondi's Midas Centre yesterday, the graft watchdog revealed this after analysing affidavits of all candidates and newly elected representatives taking part in the sixth upazila parishad polls.

According to the TIB, the number of candidates who have moveable or liquid assets worth at least Tk 1 crore each has tripled over the last five years.

Most of the candidates, whose average income and immovable property have gone up, were from Gazipur and Mymensingh regions.

According to the TIB's analysis, the average income and movable assets of candidates in Cumilla, Feni, and Khulna regions rose significantly.

A total of 5, 472 aspirants vied for three posts in the upazila polls. Of them, 1,864 contested for chairmanship, 2,095 for the office of vice-chairman, and 1,513 for vice-chairman in reserved posts for women.

TIB says that there is also a discrepancy between the affidavits of the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

PHOTO: AFP

India's Jasprit Bumrah celebrates dismissing Pakistan opener Mohammad Rizwan during their Group A fixture of the ongoing T20 World Cup at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York today. Bumrah was the star as he claimed three wickets and helped India make a sensational comeback to beat Pakistan by six runs while defending a 120-run target.

Alcaraz wins maiden French Open

AFP, *Paris*

Carlos Alcaraz fought back to defeat Alexander Zverev in a five-set French Open final on Sunday to clinch his first French Open title, becoming the youngest man to win Grand Slam titles on all three surfaces.

The 21-year-old battled cramps to recover from 2-1 down in sets and win a gripping contest 6-3, 2-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2 after four hours and 19 minutes on Court Philippe Chatrier.

Alcaraz adds the Roland

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

YOUTH MINISTRY

Official linked to embezzlement of Tk 11.52 crore reinstated

BAHARAM KHAN *and* **SAJJAD HOSSAIN**

The youth and sports ministry has reinstated an official who, along with three others, was earlier dismissed on charges of embezzling Tk 11.52 crore.

Farhat Noor

The reinstatement, done through a gazette notification on June 5, has raised concerns among many who said the move would call into question the government's commitment to fighting corruption.

A three-member committee formed by the ministry investigated Farhat Noor, who was the deputy director (training) at the Directorate General of Youth Development, and three other officials in connection with the embezzlement.

The committee found proof that all four had involvement in embezzling the money. They disbursed the money, which was meant for beneficiaries, to the subordinate offices under the directorate illegally.

Bangladesh Public Service Commission endorsed the ministry's decision to terminate them, after which Farhat and the three others were dismissed under Rule 3(b) of the Government Servants (Continuation and Appeal) Rules, 2018, on February 12.

The Anti-Corruption Commission also approved filing a case against the four following an investigation.

However, in the June 5 order, the ministry asked Farhat

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

UPDF supporter shot dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*

A supporter of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) was shot dead by unidentified criminals in Khagrachhari's Panchari upazila Saturday night.

The deceased is Barun Bikash Chakma, 55, of Kamol Krishno Karbari Para in the upazila.

The UPDF's spokesperson Aongya Marma said, a group of armed criminals attacked Barun at his house and shot him, leaving him dead on the spot around 9:30pm.

He accused members of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) of being involved in the killing.

This correspondent was unable to provide a comment from the PCJSS as the party does not have a committee in the Panchari upazila.

Panchari Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Shafiul Azam said they could not recover the body immediately as the incident took place in a remote area.

"We are yet to identify the criminals," he added.

Israel keeps pounding eastern, southern Gaza

Outrage grows as Palestinian death toll in Saturday's hostage rescue raid on Nuseirat camp rises to 274

AGENCIES

Israeli forces pounded eastern and southern Gaza anew yesterday, a day after killing 274 Palestinians during a hostage rescue raid, and tanks advanced into further areas of Rafah in a bid to seal off part of the southern city, residents and Hamas media said.

Palestinians remained in shock over Saturday's death toll, the worst over a 24-hour period of the Gaza offensive for months and including many women and children, Palestinian medics said.

In an update yesterday, Gaza's health ministry said 274 Palestinians were killed - up from 210 it reported on Saturday - and 698 were injured when Israeli special force commandos stormed into the densely populated Al-Nuseirat camp to rescue four hostages held since October by Hamas.

Doctors described the scenes inside Al-Aqsa Hospital in central Gaza as a "complete bloodbath", with one medic saying the inside of the hospital "looks like a slaughterhouse". Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said Al-Aqsa and Nasser hospitals are "overwhelmed".

The EU's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, called it a "massacre", while the UN's aid chief described in graphic detail scenes of "shredded bodies on the ground".

- Tanks advance into further areas of Rafah
- US resumes aid deliveries to Gaza from temporary pier
- Israel's offensive in enclave killed 37,084 since Oct 7

"Nuseirat refugee camp is the epicentre of the seismic trauma that civilians in Gaza continue to suffer," Martin Griffiths said in a post on X, calling for a ceasefire and the release of all hostages.

Israel's military said a special forces officer was killed in exchanges of fire with Hamas fighters emerging from cover in residential blocks, and that it knew of "under 100" Palestinians killed, though not how many of them were Hamas members or civilians.

Yesterday, three Palestinians were killed and several hurt in an Israeli airstrike on a house in Al-Bureij in the central Gaza Strip, while tanks shelled parts of nearby Al-Maghazi and Al-Nuseirat, reports Reuters.

The Israeli military said in a statement its forces were continuing operations east of Bureij and the city of Deir al-Balah in the centre of the coastal enclave, killing several gunmen and destroying Hamas infrastructure.

Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip has killed at least 37,084 Palestinians and wounded 84,494 since October 7, the Hamas-run Gaza ministry said in a statement.

Meanwhile, the United States has resumed aid deliveries to Gaza from a temporary pier, the country's military said Saturday, after the structure suffered storm damage and underwent repairs in a nearby port, reports AFP.

Free edn up to 8th grade on the cards

Says Mohibul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury told parliament yesterday that the government intends to provide tuition-free schooling up to eighth grade in an effort to ensure equal access to education for children from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education is already working toward this end, and the plan will be implemented at a convenient time, the minister said in response to a question from Chattogram-11 MP M Abdul Latif.

In response to another question from reserved seat MP Farida Yasmin, the minister informed parliament that there are vacancies in vice-chancellor (VC) positions at 29 private universities across the country.

"There are 114 private universities authorised to operate in the country,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Bangladeshi killed in BSF firing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Cumilla*

A Bangladeshi man was shot dead by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along the Jamtala border in Cumilla's Burichang upazila yesterday morning.

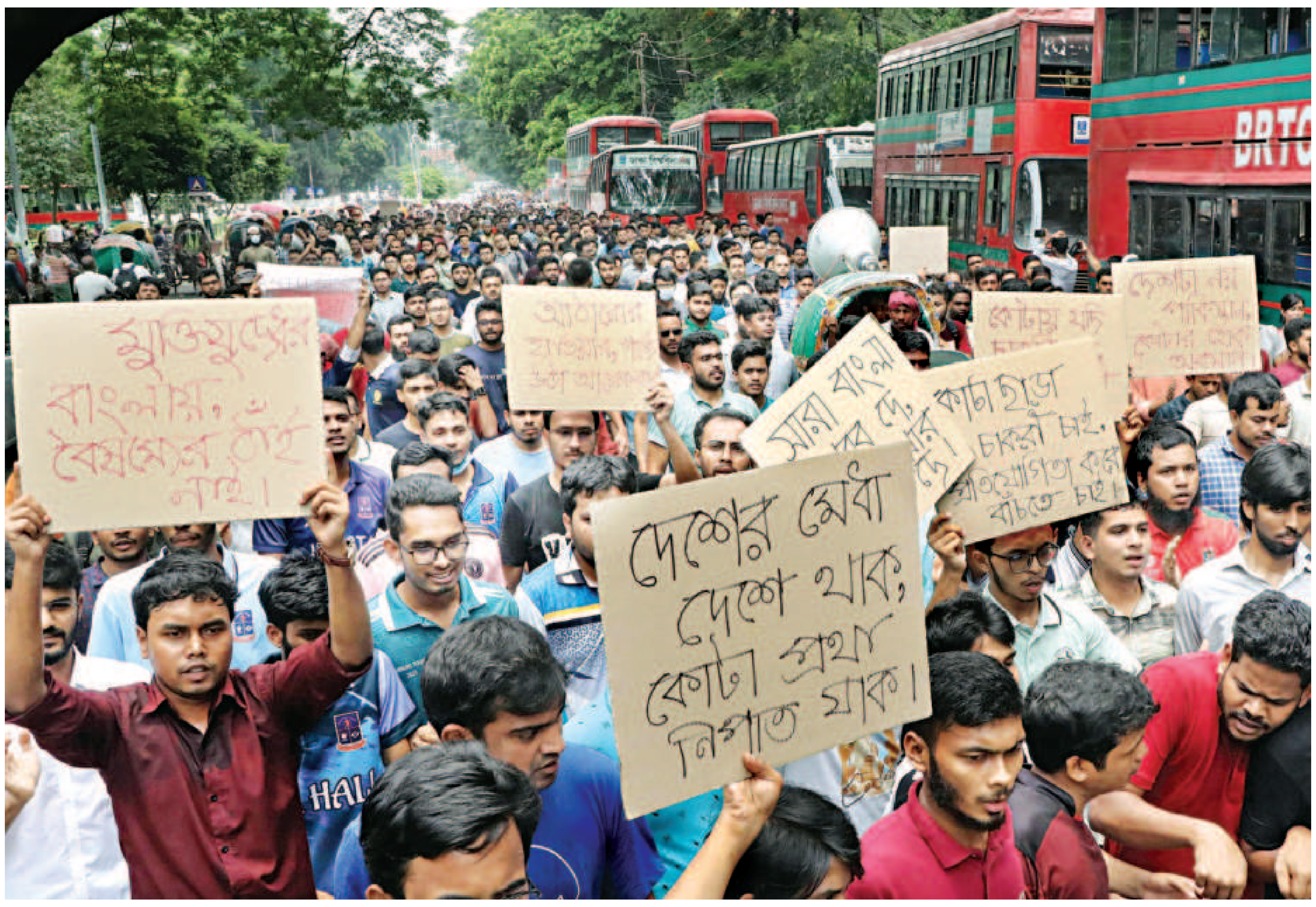
The deceased is Md Anwar Hossain, 50, of Mirpur village in the upazila.

Abul Hasnat Khandaker, officer-in-charge of Burichang Police Station, told The Daily Star that BSF troops opened fire on Anwar around 8:00am.

His body is still inside the Indian territory and it will be handed over to his family members once BSF returns it, he added.

According to local sources, Anwar trespassed into Indian territory to smuggle sugar into Bangladesh.

Killings along the Bangladesh-India border have risen over the last three years despite repeated state-level commitments to bring such killings down to zero.


দেশের মেধা দেশে থাক, কোটা প্রথা নিপাত যাক

Several hundred students of Dhaka University yesterday staged a protest on the campus, demanding the cancellation of the 30 percent quota for the freedom fighters' children in the first and second tier government jobs.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

WWII veteran, 100, weds 96-yr-old bride on D-Day anniversary

AFP, *Carentan*

It might have been the longest wait but on Saturday 100-year-old American World War II veteran Harold Terens married his 96-year-old fiancee in Normandy, just days after being honoured on the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings in northwestern France.

To the sounds of "I will always love you", "Ave Maria" and bagpipes, Terens and his sweetheart Jeanne Swerlin said "I do" in the town of Carentan-les-Marais at a ceremony attended by dozens of guests, some wearing military uniforms.

To top off an extraordinary day, the newly wedded couple then attended the state banquet at the Elysee Palace in Paris thrown by President Emmanuel Macron in honour of visiting US leader Joe Biden.

"I waited 96 years to find the right man and now I have a wedding like only a queen and king can have," Swerlin told AFP before the ceremony in Normandy. "I feel young again," Terens said. "It's the best time of my entire life."

Terens and Swerlin, who live in Boca Raton, Florida, tied the knot after commemorations of the 80th anniversary of the June 6, 1944 Normandy landings.

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DHAKA TUESDAY JUNE 11, 2024

REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 142 | JAISHTHA 28, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | ZILHAJJ 4, 1445 HIJRI | 16 PAGES PLUS LIFE STYLE : TK 15.00

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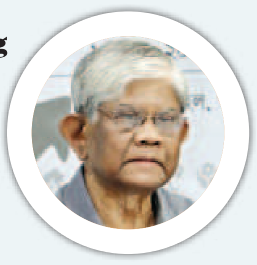
Economic immorality called out

Economists paint a grim picture for Bangladesh at discussion

"In an economy devoid of moral values, the resource distribution becomes unequal, economic discipline breaks down, business climate deteriorates and honest taxpayers become disheartened."

WAHIDUDDIN MAHMUD, eminent economist



"Already, our banking sector is suffering due to the huge amount of bad loans. Some people are taking out loans but are not repaying them. It seems that the loan default has become a business model."

SALEHUDDIN AHMED, former BB governor

"The banking sector is becoming weaker and weaker. And many depositors complaining that they cannot withdraw their money."

FAHMIDA KHATUN, executive director of CPD

"The budget has been framed following the recommendations of the IMF, the oligarchs, and bureaucrats. It was framed ignoring concerns of the entrepreneurs and other real actors in the economy."

HOSSAIN ZILLUR RAHMAN, executive chairman of PPRC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is heading towards an economic system devoid of moral values, which is causing a breakdown in financial discipline, spoiling the business climate, and discouraging honest taxpayers, said noted economist Wahiduddin Mahmud.

He was one of the speakers who took part in a discussion on the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 at a city hotel yesterday.

The Editors' Council and the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) organised the event.

Wahiduddin observed, "We are talking about being a Smart Bangladesh. If smart people have no values, it becomes horrifying.

"How we can restore the values in the economy should be analysed and focused on."

Citizens too have a responsibility, as many engage in corruption to evade taxes or get benefits by bypassing rules and procedures, he added.

Wahiduddin, also a former finance adviser to a caretaker government, said the main source of this economy devoid of values is the political power system. When the power illegally goes to the loyal people and vested groups, it is used for immoral activities.

In the interest of the economy, the government must keep some sectors free from corruption and irregularities, he said.

The administration lacks accountability, and corruption is deeply rooted there, which wastes public funds, said Wahiduddin, also a former professor of economics at Dhaka University.

He said the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) has failed to play its due role in curbing money laundering. "Recently, we have seen that a former government official kept hundreds of crores of taka in banks

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

PHOTO: BSS

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina meets her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Sunday night.

Hasina, Modi look to foster ties further

Hold one-to-one meeting in Delhi; Hasina invites Indian PM to visit Bangladesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *New Delhi*

In a first since the general elections in the two countries, prime ministers Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi held a one-to-one at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Sunday night.

The meeting was held soon after the banquet hosted by the Indian president that followed Modi's swearing-in ceremony, said Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud.

At the meeting, Hasina once again felicitated Modi and the NDA on their victory in the parliamentary election and expressed her desire to work with the new Indian government to further strengthen the bilateral ties, Hasan Mahmud told reporters early yesterday at the ITC Maurya Sheraton Hotel, where Hasina stayed during her visit.

Hasina also invited Modi to visit Bangladesh at his convenience, he said.

The foreign minister also said the ties between Bangladesh and India have reached "a new height under the prudent leadership of Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi".

He added that Bangladesh and India have multifaceted relations, and several issues are shared between the two countries. "Both countries have benefitted from working together.

"As neighbours, we have many opportunities to strengthen our people-to-people contacts. The people from the two countries are benefitting in terms of enhanced connectivity between them. We have to work more because connectivity gives mutual benefits."

As the Hasina-Modi meeting set the tone for carrying forward the relations, Indian Cabinet Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar yesterday called on Hasina

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

GAS CRISIS hits consumers hard

ASIFUR RAHMAN

A two-week-long gas crisis has been affecting homes, factories, and vehicles that run on compressed natural gas, thanks to a dip in supply following the shutdown of an LNG regasification terminal in Cox's Bazar on May 29.

People in many areas in the capital are finding it difficult to cook at home. Some factories have closed as they could not operate due to low gas pressure. Almost all city CNG filling stations had long queues of vehicles.

Power supply to rural areas worsened as many plants use gas to generate electricity.

The government had planned to produce 17,800 megawatts of power a day during this summer, but it could generate the highest only on April 30--16,477MW.

The average production was between 13,000MW and 15,000MW in April-May, according to data of Bangladesh Power Development Board.

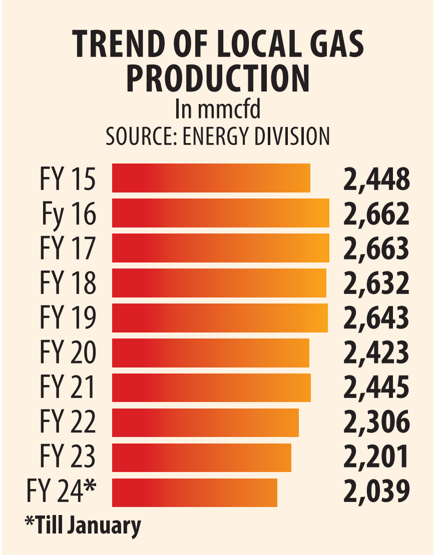
Officials attributed this production dearth to a shortage of fuel, which stems from the dollar crunch.

Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (REB), responsible for supplying electricity to rural areas, had to conduct up to 1,100MW of load shedding a day since May 27. The districts of Mymensingh, Tangail, Dhaka, Narayanganj, Narshingdi, and Noakhali experienced the highest power cuts, according to REB.

During Cyclone Remal on May 27, the LNG regasification unit in Moheshkhali of Cox's Bazar was damaged. The unit, operated by Summit Group, was taken to a dry dock abroad last week for repairs, said Summit in a statement on June 5.

The LNG terminal is expected to be brought back in about three weeks, added the statement.

The country gets LNG from two floating storage regasification units (FSRU) having a total capacity to process 1,100 million cubic feet of gas a day (mmcfd). The incident reduced the supply to 600 mmcfd.



Petrobangla can currently supply around 2,600 mmcfd against a demand of 3,800 mmcfd.

The country's local gas production has dropped to 2,039 mmcfd from the yearly average of 2,448 mmcfd in 2016, according to data from January.

The Summit's FSRU only resumed operations in mid-April after undergoing

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Heartbreak for Tigers in agonising SA defeat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh came agonisingly close to taking a major step towards securing a Super Eight spot in the ongoing T20 World Cup as the Tigers fell short by just four runs in their Group D game against South Africa in New York on Monday.

It seemed like a victory was only a matter of putting the finishing touches to a regular job while in chase of a 114-run target. However, the hordes of Bangladesh fans who had turned the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium into a mini-Mirpur were left with hands on their heads, much like the dejected players who will now have to pick themselves up and ensure they progress to

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

So near and yet so far as Bangladesh suffered a heartbreaking four-run defeat to South Africa in a nail-biting ICC Men's T20 World Cup fixture at Nassau County in New York yesterday. In a tricky chase of 114 where the boundaries dried up near the back end, the Tigers were eventually left to rue the mistimed shots off a few full tosses bowled by spinner Keshav Maharaj in the last over, especially when Mahmudullah Riyad's shot in the penultimate delivery, seemingly a winning six over long-on, found the fielder agonisingly short of boundary ropes. PHOTO: AFP

A submachine gun in hands of 'unstable' cop?

P3

Air pollution linked to 135m premature deaths

P7

Play should be a fundamental right for all children

P9

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Murder witness stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narsingdi*

Police yesterday recovered the body of a man, who was a witness in a murder case, in Narsingdi's Shibpur upazila.

Ahmedul Kabir, 37, of Chakradha union was found dead in the field of Baroigaon Government Primary School in the morning.

Md Farid Uddin, officer-in-charge of Shibpur Police Station, said Ahmedul was a witness of a case filed over the murder of two people -- Jalal Mia, 35, and his brother Khurshed Alam, 30, in 2014.

Kabir's brother, Lelin Mia, said his death is likely linked to his testimony in the case. "A few men came to our house on Sunday at 11:55pm. They wanted to talk to Kabir so he went out with them. Later in the morning, we found his body near the school."

Multiple stab wounds were found on the victim's body, said Mohammad Mahmudul Kabir Bashar, residential medical officer at Narsingdi Sadar Hospital.

An investigation is underway to determine the motive behind the murder, said OC Farid Uddin said.

COURTESY: **VERIFIED FACEBOOK PAGE OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in conversation with Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, her son Rahul Gandhi and daughter Priyanka Gandhi at the ITC Maurya Sheraton Hotel in New Delhi yesterday.

AC land torches bales of maize stored in union office yard

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

The Assistant Commissioner (Land) in Thakurgaon's Haripur upazila yesterday torched several piles of maize plants stored by farmers in the yard of Bhaturia Union Land Office.

Earlier, AC Abdullah-Al-Noman Sarkar had ordered the farmers to move their crops and free up space at the yard, said Bhaturia Union Chairman Md Shahjahan.

"In response, the farmers had requested the official for some time. But AC Noman did not listen to the farmers and set fire to their crops without notice Monday evening."

Victims Shahidul, Johurul, Biplob, and Solim of Chapshar cluster village said they had picked the maize plants and stacked them in four piles in the yard away from the office building like every year as they have no space to harvest crops in their village. Of the four piles, two still had crops that were to be harvested.

The union chairman also said AC Noman threatened him with dire consequences when he came to the spot and stood by the people.

AC Noman, however, could not be contacted as he didn't pick up calls from this correspondent.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Arifuzzaman said he would notify the higher authorities.

According to media reports, AC Noman was recently transferred to Thakurgaon from Lalmonirhat for harassing local journalists.

Economic immorality called out

FROM PAGE 1

and then withdrew it too. But nobody was caught."

He said if Tk 10 lakh is transferred via banks, the BFIU notices it and is supposed to detect the source.

"The atmosphere for confidence has not been created. We see unbridled circulation of black money in the economy and capital flight."

Wahiduddin said when the economic indicators were strong, the irregularities, mismanagement, and waste were covered up. "It [the economy] had the capacity to absorb those. At present, it has no capacity to absorb this mismanagement."

The current economic crisis is not temporary, and mid- and long-term strategies are needed, he warned.

Citing mega projects, the economist said those were built with loans. He said some of them could have been built with equity sharing. "Then, it might have eased the pressure of debt repayment."

Wahiduddin said the economy is facing the challenges of stubborn inflation; erosion of foreign exchange reserves; lower revenue collection; lukewarm growth in remittance and export earnings; capital flight; indiscipline in the banking sector; massive corruption; and waste of public funds.

"In this situation, the budget was as usual ... which can be termed a sacrificial lamb that has no significant scope to do the many things that are required."

Due to lower revenue earnings, there is no scope for a budget with high expenditure, which the country requires. Considering the high inflation, the government had to contain the deficit too, he said.

In overall macroeconomic management, some basic weaknesses have been exposed.

He said low revenue collection was a big weakness, but the government has not taken any strong corrective measures.

Another weakness is the huge loans taken from internal and external sources. "If the government continues to borrow, the budget may fall into a debt trap."

Wahiduddin said the banking sector is the most sensitive to the economy. "But it is today left uncontrolled and unprotected.

"A massive qualitative change and reforms are necessary to get rid of these weaknesses. The question is whether the government's top level makes the promises and conducts the reforms. It will be clear in the coming days."

Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of the Power and Participation Research Centre, said, "The budget has been framed following the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund, the oligarchs, and bureaucrats.

"It was framed ignoring the concerns of the hardworking entrepreneurs and other real actors in the economy."

Following the IMF's recommendations, the budget's growth has been contained. It is focused on the preparation for graduation from the LDC group, he said.

The government has not taken any measures to reform the banking and revenue sectors. Instead, it allowed amnesty for legalising undisclosed money.

"This is an unjust step," he said, adding that such a measure was taken to please the oligarchs.

A former adviser to a caretaker government, Zillur said the government did not take steps to improve the business climate.

He said the tax-free income remains unchanged despite high inflationary pressure, and the target to raise more revenues through value-added tax impacts people irrespective of their incomes.

He listed five major challenges confronting the country: unfavourable macroeconomic conditions; the cost-of-living crisis; the joblessness of young people; the unfriendly business climate; and the moral value crisis.

Zillur termed the targets for curbing inflation and raising private investment "unrealistic" as there was no indication how these would be reached.

"If the government cannot reduce inefficient loans for budget implementation, control corruption that has already become institutionalised, and make the bureaucracy service-oriented, the economy will be in a huge crisis in the coming days."

He said an administrative reform commission was necessary. The bureaucrats' attitudes seem colonial, and the people face challenges in getting services from public agencies, he added.

"The government has to think seriously about the banking sector.. it should prepare a white paper on this sector. The failure of this sector will hold us back... We have destroyed the banking sector."

AHSAN H MANSUR, executive director of PRI

"There is no [government] effort to reduce costs ... An administrative reform commission is long overdue."

MOHAMMAD MUSLIM CHOWDHURY,
former comptroller and auditor general

Mohammad Muslim Chowdhury, a former comptroller and auditor general, said there was no effort in cost saving, and operating expenditure eats up the lion's share of the budget.

He too said a commission for administrative reforms was long overdue.

Muslim, also a former finance secretary, said the volume of soured loans would be between Tk 4,00,000 crore and Tk 5,00,000 crore, which is huge considering the size of the budget.

Default loans amounted to Tk 1,82,295 crore at the end of March this year, according to the latest data from the Bangladesh Bank.

Former Bangladesh Bank governor Salehuddin Ahmed said the government should reduce the size of the ADP (annual development programme) by Tk 1,00,000 crore to Tk 1,50,000 crore so that the budget deficit drops massively and so does the need for bank borrowing.

"The operating expenditure should also be reduced. If such bold decisions are made, banks will be able to lend more to the private sector. Otherwise, the government will borrow hugely from banks, squeezing out the private sector and hurting job creation."

He said the government's debt is rising at a high rate, and there could be a situation where it would have to take out loans to repay loans.

"Already, our banking sector is suffering due to the huge amount of non-performing loans. Some people are taking out loans but are not repaying them. It seems the loan default has become a business model."

The former governor said the government changes the tax structure almost every year. There should be a long-term plan so that businesspeople can assume what the tax structure would be.

"It is changing the tax structure at will."

Salehuddin said there was no accountability in public spending.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director at the Policy Research Institute, said fixing the interest rate to a single digit, keeping the exchange rate the same, and inefficiency in financial management, especially the banking sector, have created the macroeconomic problems.

He expects inflation to come down after a few months if the government can continue the contractionary monetary policy and supportive exchange rate management.

"If the central bank does not intervene in the banking interest rate, the exchange rate will remain at the existing stage. Then, inflation will be tamed."

Ahsan said the budget has some inconsistencies.

For example, the government has targeted to raise private investment to GDP ratio to 27 percent from the existing 23 percent. He questioned how the investment would be financed.

This is because the banking sector is already in a liquidity crunch due to the huge default loans. Moreover, the government will take 76 percent of new deposits, around Tk 1,70,000 crore, to finance its budget deficit.

If the rest is to go to the private sector, investment cannot be raised to the targeted level, he added. "The banking sector is not in a position to lend a huge amount."

He urged the government to publish a white paper on how the banking sector got into the current situation.

Mansur suggested that the private sector borrow from abroad if the exchange rate remains stable for a few months.

"If they take up loans from external sources, they will get financing at a lower rate, and it will boost the foreign exchange reserves."

According to Mansur, the government has not cut its spending in the budget; rather, it only squeezed its growth of spending.

"If it cuts expenditures by a significant amount, the private sector can get financing."

The government spends around 42 percent of its total expenditure on operations, which is a lot higher considering its service quality.

He said the US is run by 11 ministries, but Bangladesh has ministries manifold of that.

"Bangladesh does not need so many ministries, and the government should cut spending on the bureaucracy."

About the huge spending in the power sector, he said the government should renegotiate and revisit the power-related agreements to reduce costs, be it with Adani Power or local companies.

"The government needs to raise revenue by expanding the tax net. Due to the failure of this sector, the government has been forced to make its budget loan-dependent."

With the existing low revenue collections, it cannot be a developed nation, Mansur said, adding that easy government services have to be ensured so that people feel encouraged to pay taxes.

On the newspaper sector, Salma Islam, editor and publisher of the Daily Jugantor, said the industry is facing myriad challenges. "The government should announce this as an industry."

She proposed reducing duties and taxes on the raw materials used in publishing newspapers.

Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said, "The banking sector is becoming weaker and weaker. And many depositors complaining that they cannot withdraw their money."

She said the Banking Company Act has been amended to serve the interests of vested quarters and new formulas have been devised to reschedule loans.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, AK Azad, publisher of the Samakal, and Dewan Hanif Mahmud, editor of the Bonik Barta, also spoke at the event.

Hasina, Modi look to foster ties further

FROM PAGE 1

at her hotel in New Delhi to discuss the entire canvass of the bilateral ties.

Hasina congratulated him on becoming the cabinet minister again and invited him to visit Bangladesh, Hasan Mahmud said.

"We, the two countries, have been working to elevate and further expand our relations," Hasan Mahmud, quoted Jaishankar as saying.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and PM Hasina's Press Secretary Nayeemul Islam Khan were also present during the press briefing.

Jaishankar in a post on X, formerly Twitter, said, "Honoured to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh today [yesterday]. The India-Bangladesh Maitri continues to advance."

Jaishankar was given charge of external affairs later in the day.

Hasina also held a meeting with Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, her son Rahul Gandhi, and daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra at the hotel.

"CPP Chairperson Smt Sonia Gandhi ji, former Congress President Shri Rahul Gandhi, and Congress General Secretary Smt Priyanka Gandhi Vadra ji greeted Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed ji and met other delegates in New Delhi today [yesterday]," Congress posted on X with a video of the meeting.

"They discussed a wide range of topics to strengthen the India-Bangladesh bond based on trust, cooperation, and a commitment to mutual growth," it added.

Hasina and Sonia embraced each other as the Bangladesh PM welcomed the Congress leader into her room. Right behind Sonia was Rahul wearing kurta-pyjama instead of his usual T-shirt and trousers, ready with a "namaste" followed by a hug. Priyanka Gandhi then entered and was also welcomed with a hug.

The bonhomie in Hasina's meeting with Sonia and her children was in keeping with the long-standing close relations between the PM and the Gandhi family, which date back to the ties between Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the then Indian PM Indira Gandhi, who played a stellar role in the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971.

Hasina wrapped up her New Delhi visit and returned home with her entourage on a special flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines that landed at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 7:15pm yesterday.

Gas crisis hits consumers hard

FROM PAGE 1

maintenance in Singapore for two and a half months. The gas supply situation in the country had been the same back then and people had to endure gas shortage.

Sabakat Sabri, a college student from the capital's East Shewrapara, said they have been facing an acute gas crisis for about a week.

"We have been living here for 15 years, but we never experienced such a bad gas supply situation," he told The Daily Star.

Sabri said they hardly have gas in the morning. "None of my family members can have breakfast at home before heading out to work. The gas pressure does not improve even around noon. That's why we have lunch late."

He said they started using an electric stove on Sunday.

Visiting five CNG filling stations in the capital over the last couple of days, this correspondent found long queues of cars and CNG-run auto-rickshaws.

At Anudip CNG and LPG Filling Station in Moghbazar, a long queue of vehicles was seen around midnight on Saturday.

Hossen Miah, an auto-rickshaw driver, was waiting for one and a half hours in front of a filling station in Satrasta area around yesterday noon. For the last couple of days, he needed at least two hours to refill.

"Be it day or night, the delay happens. As the gas pressure is low, the CNG cylinder cannot be filled. That's why drivers need to visit the filling stations more than usual," he said.

Farhan Noor, secretary of Bangladesh CNG Filling Station and Conversion Workshop Owners Association, said the normal pressure of gas is supposed to be 15 pounds per square inch (psi), but it is now 2 to 3 psi most of the time during the day.

On Saturday, locals in Narayanganj's Siddhirganj demonstrated on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway, demanding smooth gas supply.

On June 5, President of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) Mohammad Ali Khokon wrote to the Petrobangla chairman demanding improvement of gas supply to the industrial belts, including Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Gazipur, Maona, Savar, Ashilia, Tongi and Sreepur.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, he said there has been no improvement.

"Hundreds of factories are without gas, causing production loss," he said.

Mohammad Hatem, managing director of MB Knit Fashion Ltd in Fatulla of Narayanganj, said their production was halted for four days last week.

In Savar's Ulail area, Madhumati Tiles Ltd has been closed since June 1 due to lack of gas.

Md Salim Khalifa, general manager (accounts and finance) of the factory, said, "We had been getting gas at 3 to 5 psi for the last one and a half years. But the number reduced to 0.5 psi since the beginning of this month. We had no option but to send all 400 workers on leave."

Abu Saleh Mohammad Khademuddin, manager at the Savar zonal office of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited, said, "In our source supply line, the pressure was supposed to be 50 psi, but it is now around 20psi."

This newspaper could not reach Petrobangla Chairman Zanendra Nath Sarker and Titas Gas Managing Director Md Haronur Rashid Mullah for comments. They did not respond to calls yesterday.

An official of Petrobangla, wishing anonymity, said gas supply will not increase this month.

Prof M Shamsul Alam, energy adviser to the Consumers' Association of Bangladesh, said it was expected that gas supply from floating terminals would be disrupted during natural calamities.

"Such a vulnerable infrastructure is not useful for energy security ... When an LNG regasification unit stops production, there is no alternate to it," he said.

It is clear that the government is depending on imported LNG rather than exploring local gas, he said, adding that the government has announced plans to explore 48 gas wells in three years. However, there is no reflection of this plan in the proposed budget.

"The government even fails to spend allocations for Gas Development Fund for gas exploration," he added.

Our Savar correspondent also contributed to this report.

S African parties talk coalitions

AFP, *Johannesburg*

South African parties were discussing forming a coalition government yesterday, as President Cyril Ramaphosa called on all groups to work together after general elections produced no outright winner.

Ramaphosa's African National Congress (ANC) won 40 percent of the vote -- its lowest score ever -- on May 29 and, for the first time since the advent of democracy in 1994, it needs the backing of other parties to govern.

"As the country prepares for a new democratic administration, all parties need to work together to sustain the momentum of reform, growth and transformation," Ramaphosa wrote in his weekly newsletter.

Palestinians thank PM

As the people of Palestine go through the most horrific genocide, living in conditions unimaginable in the human mind and conditions that cannot be accepted by the human soul, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, has offered an unparalleled hand to help the persecuted people of the Gaza Strip. The Prime Minister has generously offered to provide Tk 50 million in humanitarian aid support to the innocent children, orphans and residents in Gaza, who are unjustly paying the price of Israel's criminal aggression.

This is not the first time that the Prime Minister has shown her humanity. During the first week of Israel's onslaught in Gaza, she sent batches of medicines and basic raw materials, followed by another batch the week after. The Government of Bangladesh has shown unyielding support for Palestinians. Bangladesh became the first nation to offer to intervene in South Africa's case against Israel in the International Court of Justice. Bangladesh has also expressed its readiness to host the largest possible number of students from the Gaza Strip, especially female students, to study in Bangladeshi universities through full scholarships. The prime minister has also consistently urged all countries to recognise the State of Palestine.

The prime minister has stood with Palestine since she began her political career, taking after her father, the Father of the Nation, Sheikh

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

NO HOME FOR HARIJANS

DSCC evicting at least 87 families, many not rehabilitated

MD ABBAS

PHOTO: MD ABBAS

When the city corporation excavators reached the Miranzilla Harijan Colony in Bangshal yesterday, tears streamed down the face of Chinothi Rani Devi.

She held her children tight as dust swirled around them.

"Despite being citizens, we are treated as if we have no value. We are being evicted without any consideration for our rehabilitation."

"I have three children and my elderly parents. Where will we go in such a state? There is no one to listen to us," she added.

Laxmi Rani, a 75-year-old woman from the colony, could not bear the thought of seeing her home get bulldozed. The colony is where she spent her entire life. She died of a stroke on Sunday, possibly anticipating what awaited them the next morning. She died due to the stress of getting evicted, her neighbours said.

Babul Chowdhury, a resident for nearly six decades, stood in front of his home in despair as it too will be demolished today.

"The city corporation took my job as a sweeper, and now they are evicting us from our homes," he said. "Where will I go now with my seven family members?"

> **Despite being citizens, we are treated as if we have no value. We are being evicted without any consideration for our rehabilitation.**
>
> **Chinothi Rani Devi**

He claimed the authorities did not even give them any time to relocate.

Miranzilla Harijan Colony had been their haven for generations, a refuge built by their ancestors during the British era. Now, the Dhaka South City Corporation was deeming their existence illegal. DSCC wants to expand its existing kitchen market in the place.

Over 87 families are being evicted, without any alternative housing, they claimed.

Community leaders said DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh assured them that only 20 families would be evicted. However, they later learned from DSCC officials that over 87 families would be evicted.

"Although the authorities claimed they will evict 87 families, they are planning to evict more than 120 families," said Nirmal Chandra Das, secretary general of Bangladesh Harijan Oikya Parishad.

The heartbreak of losing their ancestral land was compounded by the uncertainty of where they would go next. These underprivileged families, many of whom had toiled as sweepers for the city, were now being cast out with nowhere to turn.

Meanwhile, Chinothi Rani Devi looked at her children after she was done speaking to this correspondent.

Their frightened eyes mirrored her own dread. This eviction wasn't just about tearing down their homes; it was about tearing apart their lives, their community, their very identity.

Krisna Lal, president of Bangladesh Harijan Oikya Parishad, led a delegation to the Nagar Bhaban as the excavators arrived. But the mayor did not meet them, he claimed.

A team of DSCC officials, led by its Executive Magistrate Md Jahangir Alam, conducted the eviction drive, accompanied by law enforcers.

A DSCC official stated that the team

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

GRAFT CASE

Charges against PK Halder accepted

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday accepted the charges brought against 23 people, including former managing director of NRB Global Bank Proshanta Kumar Halder, known as PK Halder, in a case filed over embezzling Tk 70.82 crore from International Leasing and Financial Services Limited (ILFSL).

Judge Mohammad Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after scrutinising the case dockets and other relevant documents in the case.

On April 29, Anti-Corruption Commission's Deputy Director Gulshan Anowar Pradhan, also the case's investigation officer, submitted the charge sheet to a court.

PK Halder, the prime accused in the case, was arrested in Ashoknagar, India, on May 14 of 2022 on charges of money laundering.

The charge sheet stated that the accused took Tk 70.82 crore from the ILFSL and the amount stood at Tk 103 crore along with interest until October 16, 2022 which was embezzled and laundered by the accused.

Submachine gun in the hands of an 'unstable' cop?

Constable who shot his colleague dead had history of mental illness, claims family; police unaware

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

SMT-9 submachine gun -- a sophisticated weapon that can wreak havoc in the wrong hands.

Police constable Kawsar Ali, who shot his on-duty colleague dead in the highly secured diplomatic zone in the capital's Baridhara, was mentally unstable and even received treatment at a hospital, claimed his family members.

Yet, there he was, entrusted with the SMT-9, a weapon designed to unleash controlled chaos.

The police brass, however, claimed they did not know about Kawsar's mental condition.

But this "ignorance", if it's in fact true, raises further questions, "What background checks do law enforcers conduct before handing over such weapons to their own?"

"My son was supposed to be on duty with a stick. We do not know why he was given the weapon as his department was aware of his sickness," Kawsar's mother Mabia Khatun told The Daily Star yesterday.

His wife Nilufa Yeasmin said Kawsar received treatment from a Pabna hospital, and provided a medical certificate taken in 2010.

The Daily Star has a copy of the certificate, which shows Kawsar being released from a mental facility in 2010.

Police cordoned off the area after the shooting on Saturday night.

WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR

- Kawsar joined the force in 2005
- Took treatment at a mental hospital in 2010
- Received awards 25 times
- He was punished 4 times for negligence
- Has been doing duty at diplomatic security division since Aug 2022
- 3-member committee formed to probe killing
- Police say altercation centring duty led to the shooting

According to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Kawsar has been working at diplomatic security division since August 2, 2022. He has been doing duty with heavy weapons since then.

Kh Mahid Uddin, additional commissioner (crime and operations) of the DMP, said, "We were not aware of Kawsar's mental condition since he was doing duty properly."

"During interrogation, Kawsar spoke about some personal discomfort. The real reason why he shot a colleague dead would be known during investigation," he said.

Around 11:45pm on Saturday, Kawsar shot his colleague constable Monirul Islam with his SMT-9 submachine gun in front of the Palestine embassy in Dhaka. During the incident, he fired a total of 38 rounds from two magazines.

Gulshan police arrested Kawsar for murder, and he is now on a seven-day remand.

An embassy driver, Sajjad Hossain, was also shot and is receiving treatment at United Hospital.

DMP yesterday formed a three-member committee to probe the murder with deputy commissioner of Gulshan Division Rifat Hasan Shamim as head. The committee was asked to submit a report within seven working days, Mahid said.

The police officials did not disclose any reason behind the shooting till yesterday.

On Sunday, investigating officer of the murder case, Abdul Mannaf, a sub-inspector at Gulshan Police Station, reported that Kawsar shot Monirul during an altercation centring duty.

Contacted, DC Rifat Shamim told The Daily Star, "Many issues have come up. We need some

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

WHITENING BLACK MONEY

An injustice to honest taxpayers

Say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The provision for whitening black money by paying 15 percent tax in the proposed national budget for 2024-25 fiscal year will encourage corruption, and it stands against the values of a just society, said speakers at an event yesterday.

The remarks came at a national budget review programme organised by the Economics department of Dhaka University on the premises.

Prof Selim Raihan, executive director of SANEM, criticised the tax disparity between honest earners and black money holders.

"People with legal incomes have to pay 30 percent or more taxes, while those legalising black money will pay 15 percent. This is an injustice to honest taxpayers," he said.

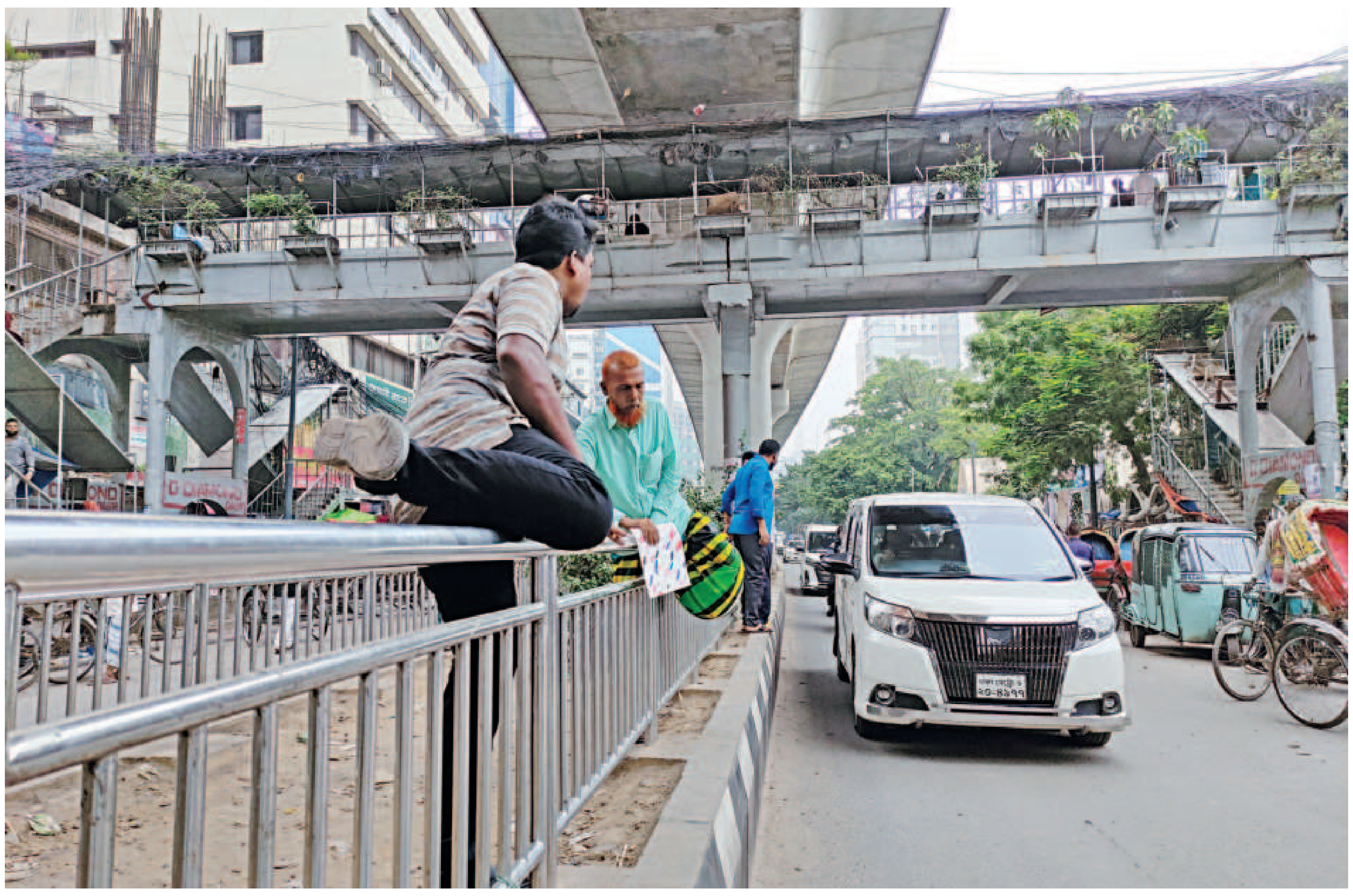
Raihan questioned the realism of the government's target to reduce inflation to 6.5 percent within the next fiscal year, with a GDP growth target of 6.75.

"The exchange rate needs to be stabilised and the government should further undertake major reform initiatives to address problems in the financial sector, including defaulted loans," he added.

Prof Masuda Yasmin, chairman of DU Economics department, expressed her disappointment with the budget, saying it failed to meet expectations amid the current economic crisis.

> **The economy needs stability, even if it means slower growth.**
>
> **PROF MASUDA YASMIN**
> Chairman of DU Economics dept

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Pedestrians choose to climb this island and cross the road amid traffic despite a footbridge being right behind them. Just one slip and an accident might happen. The photo was taken opposite the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Street food may not be that good

Study confirms harmful bacteria presence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Street foods like chotpoti, chola-muri, sandwich, sugarcane juice, aloe vera juice, and mixed salads in Dhaka contain harmful bacteria, a recent study reveals.

A seminar that took place at the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) conference room recently showed how researchers found E coli, Salmonella, and Vibrio bacteria in popular street foods.

Latiful Bari, head of the Food Nutrition and Agriculture Research Laboratory at Dhaka University, presented these findings.

The study shows alarming bacterial levels in these foods. Each plate of chotpoti has an average of 72 million E coli, 750 Salmonella, and 750 Vibrio bacteria. Chola-muri contains 740,000 E coli, 2,000 Salmonella, and 3 million Vibrio bacteria. Sandwiches have 2,000 E coli, 2,000 Salmonella, and 1.6 million Vibrio bacteria. Sugarcane juice contains 65,000 E coli, 17,000 Salmonella, and 13,000 Vibrio bacteria. Aloe vera juice has 56,000 E coli, 1.8 million Salmonella, and 14,000 Vibrio bacteria. Mixed salad contains 1,800 E coli, 510 Salmonella, and 300 Vibrio bacteria.

These bacteria cause various stomach diseases, including diarrhea. The study indicates that out of every 10,000 people consuming these street foods, two get sick from E coli, four from Salmonella, and one from Vibrio bacteria.

Researchers collected 450 samples from street food vendors in 37 regions of Dhaka north and south city Corporations. Contaminated water, dirty towels, unclean hands, and dusty environments contribute to these germs entering the food.

Latiful Bari said, "The lack of health and sanitation knowledge among vendors is a significant issue."

He emphasised the need for training vendors and conducting daily monitoring to ensure food safety.

Defeated

FROM PAGE 5

Saidur and his son are currently undergoing treatment in a Dhaka hospital.

"The incident was a planned attack," Saidur said. "Police did not take any action against the attackers; rather, they are trying to harass us. Even a case has been filed against us."

Before the election, Saidur had complained against DIG Abdul Baten for violating the code of conduct and accused Madhyanagar police of bias. He believes this led to the attack.

DIG Baten denied the allegations, stating, "What would I gain from this incident? I didn't influence the local police to work for my brother."

He claimed Saidur's supporters first attacked his relative. "I only instructed the local police to control the law-and-order situation," Baten said.

Madhyanagar Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Emran Hossain said police are playing an impartial role and additional law enforcers have been deployed to avoid further violence.

Razzak and Azim could not be contacted for comments.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 11

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

DNCC knocks down 25 illegal shops, 6 buildings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation yesterday demolished 25 illegal shops and six multi-storied buildings at Dakkhinkhan's Jamtala, adjacent to Uttara Azampur railway line.

DNCC Chief Property Officer Dr Mohammad Mahe Alam and Executive Magistrate Mahmudul Hasan led the drive, in presence of DNCC mayor Md Atiqul Islam.

Narrow roads and waterlogging are two major problems in Dakkhinkhan and Uttarkhan areas, said the mayor. "Road widening and drainage construction projects are underway in this area. However, people are not leaving space for road widening.

Drainage cannot be constructed to remove waterlogging due to the Illegally constructed buildings," he also said. Eviction of illegal structures will be continued to widen roads and solve waterlogging problem, he said.

No home for harijans

FROM PAGE 3

demolished some walls and abandoned houses yesterday and will continue the eviction drive today after rehabilitating some of the 40 families in vacant rooms of two buildings constructed for cleaners.

DSCC Public Relations Officer Md Abu Nasher said those who are documented cleaners of the city corporation will be rehabilitated.

However, there is no scope for the rehabilitation of others, he added.

Nasher said a decision to expand the existing kitchen market was made in February 2016, and they are merely implementing that decision. "So, we are not hurting any individual, group, or community."

Palestinians

FROM PAGE 3

Mujibur Rahman, who had supported and assisted the just struggle that the people of Palestine have been waging for freedom and independence—the toughest national movement in history. Our late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in particular bore witness to the principled position of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the courageous stance taken by Bangladesh in the divisive international stage under his leadership.

In appreciation of the humanitarian and moral support of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, has sent a message to express his gratitude. As the Palestinian Ambassador in Bangladesh, it is most necessary that I express, on behalf of my people, the extent of our appreciation for Bangladesh and the prime minister's exemplary stance at this historically difficult time in Palestine, when many in the world are choosing, willingly, to stand on the wrong side of history.

Yousef SY Ramadan
Palestine ambassador to Bangladesh

An injustice to honest taxpayers

FROM PAGE 3

"The economy needs stability, even if it means slower growth," she said.

Prof Sayema Haque said the government could have reduced the budget deficit further, warning that borrowing from the domestic sector to meet the deficit could lead to increased inflation.

DU Vice Chancellor Dr ASM Maksud Kamal highlighted the growing waste in various sectors due to a lack of skills and the need for special attention to agricultural production in light of climate change.

"There will be a significant risk to food security in future if the agriculture sector isn't given priority in the budget," he said.

Speakers also talked on issues including social security, large-scale investment, industrialisation, and the health system.

They called for increased allocation and incentives in the SME (small and medium-sized enterprises) sector, proper use of budget allocations, and institutional measures against corruption to ensure proper implementation.

Prof Ferdowsi Nahar, Rumana Haque, Saima Haque, and Syed Naimul Wadood also spoke.

Submachine

FROM PAGE 3

time to investigate thoroughly before we can provide a clear statement."

Kawsar joined the force on December 15, 2005.

During his service, he received 25 awards for good performance. But he was also punished four times for negligence, such as missing duty and overstaying leave, according to a police source.

Several police constables in the diplomatic zone questioned why superior officers deployed Kawsar, who was mentally stressed, with a modern weapon in a sensitive area. They are demanding a proper investigation.

Tawohidul Haque, associate professor at Dhaka University, told The Daily Star, "Law enforcers commonly label the accused as 'mentally disabled' or 'stressed' to downplay incidents."

He added, "Superiors cannot avoid responsibility as they must assess situations before deploying officers to sensitive duties. Annual performance reports also highlight personal behaviour and relationships with colleagues."

He suggested implementing a proper mechanism to address these issues.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said yesterday, "A committee has been formed, a case was filed, and the accused constable is on remand and being interrogated. We believe the truth will emerge after the investigation."

[A Kushtia correspondent also contributed to this report.]

Hiring Freight Forwarder for Microbiota Directed Food (MDF) Shipment to West Africa (Addendum)

Tender Ref. No. icddr,b/SCM/OTM/2024/05 Date: June 10, 2024

The bid submission date of the ref tender has been revised from **JUNE 13, 2024, by 3.00 PM to JUNE 24, 2024; 3:00 PM BST**. All the amendment information of the tender will be available in icddrb website in the below link:
https://www.icddrb.org/work-with-us/tender-notices.

icddr,b

Senior Manager, Supply Chain Management
Tel: 9827001-10, Ext.# 4409/4403/4400

Request for Quotation: Oracle Software Licenses

BRAC Bank PLC. delivers a full array of banking services to individuals as well as business entities with a network of 187 Branches, 45 Sub-branches, 329 ATMs, 457 SME Unit Offices and 1,080 Agent Banking Outlets across the country. Currently the Bank is seeking for vendor(s) to provide different Oracle Software Licenses.

A Request for Quotation (RFQ) for Commercial Proposal Submission is issued for the mentioned purpose. The RFQ along with details of the bidding process can be found on the bank's website: **https://www.bracbank.com/en/information/e-tender**.

Interested eligible bidders are requested to submit the Commercial proposal as per the mentioned bidding process.

BRAC BANK
আস্থা অবিচল

World Health Organization
Bangladesh

VACANCY NOTICE

World Health Organization (WHO) invites applications from the interested and eligible candidates for the following position under following contractual modality:

- **Messenger / Fixed-term appointment**

For further details on submission of applications including detailed post description please visit our websites:
https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/employment
https://careers.who.int/careersection/ex/jobsearch.ftl

Qualified ***female candidates*** are highly encouraged to apply.

WHO has a smoke-free environment and does not recruit smokers or other tobacco users.

World Health Organization
Bangladesh

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

The World Health Organization in Bangladesh invites proposals/bids from the interested Companies in Bangladesh for the following service:

1. **RFP/BAN/2024/022:** To conduct Routine EPI coverage evaluation survey including EPI review and assessment for Rohingya population in Cox's Bazar.
   Deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 30 June 2024 (Dhaka time).**
2. **RFP/BAN/2024/023:** Community led campaign to make Khulna an active, clean, and healthy city.
   Deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 26 June 2024 (Dhaka time).**
3. **RFP/BAN/2024/024:** To provide support on "Vulnerability and adaptation assessment of climate change impact on nutrition in Bangladesh".
   Deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 26 June 2024 (Dhaka time).**

Interested Companies can view and download the relevant RFP documents from:
https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/procurement-notice.

Interested bidders are requested to submit their financial and technical proposals in two separate sealed envelopes as per the instructions provided in the RFP documents at the Reception of WHO Bangladesh, House-SW(I)1/A, Road-8, Gulshan-1, Dhaka.

জনতা ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
ট্রেজারি ডিপার্টমেন্ট
প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা
১০ বৎসর বা তদুর্ধ সময়কাল যাবত অদাবীকৃত বা লেনদেনহীন আমানত সামগ্রীর বিবরনী (শাখা ভিত্তিক)
০১/০৫/২০২৩ তারিখ হতে ৩০/০৫/২০২৪ তারিখ পর্যন্ত

ক্রমিক নং	কোড নং	শাখার নাম	হিসাব সংখ্যা	টাকার পরিমান
১	০২৫০	বাগাতিপাড়া, নাটোর	১০	১৫৭৬৬.৮২
২	০১৫৬	আশাশুনি শাখা, সাতক্ষীরা	৩	২২০৬.৭৯
৩	০০২৭	কেডিএ শাখা, খুলনা	৩	৪১২.৭২
৪	০০৫১	ময়মনসিংহ কর্পোরেট শাখা, ময়মনসিংহ	১	৭৪০৪৫৮.৭৫
৫	০৪২৩	বৈদেশিক বানিজ্য কর্পোরেট শাখা, ঢাকা	২৬	২৩২১১.৫৭
৬	০০১৫	রেয়াজউদ্দীন বাজার শাখা, চট্টগ্রাম	৩	১৩১৪৯.০০
৭	০৩১৫	রেলরোড শাখা, বাগেরহাট	১	১২৮.৮৪
৮	০৪৮১	শাহজালাল উপশহর শাখা, সিলেট	৩৮	৯৭২৭.৬০
৯	০০০৪	খুলনা কর্পোরেট শাখা, খুলনা	৫	১৩৩৯.৩৫
১০	০২৩৭	মতিঝিল কর্পোরেট শাখা, ঢাকা	১	৩২.৬৫
১১	০৪০৩	তুলসীঘাট শাখা	২	২৬০২৬.১০
১২	০০৫১	রাজউক ভবন কর্পোরেট শাখা, ঢাকা	৭	৩৫২০২.১৫
১৩	০১২২	নোয়াপাড়া কর্পোরেট শাখা, যশোর	৬	৯৩৯১.৩৫
১৪	০৮৭৫	জয়নগর, ময়মনসিংহ	১১	১৬৩১৮.০০
১৫	০১৮০	গাজীপুর কর্পোরেট শাখা	২২	১১৩২৮.২৮
১৬	০৮৭৫	জয়নগর	২১৫	৫৭২৪৬.১২
১৭	০২৮৩	ইটনা শাখা	১৭	১৪৩০০.০০
১৮	০১৭৮	আইডব্লিউটিএ কর্পো:	১০	৩৬৩৫৭.১০
১৯	০২০৮	এলিফ্যান্ট রোড কর্পো:	৫	৩২৪৩.০১
২০	০৫১০	শেরপুর কর্পোরেট	৪৩	২৮৩৪৬৫.৭৬
২১	০৫৫৩	নারন্দিয়া শাখা	৪০	৩৪৫১৪.০০
২২	০০০৮	রংপুর কর্পোরেট শাখা	১৬	৩৩০০.০০
২৩	০৩৫৫	ঝিনাইগাতী	১৬	৫৬৪৯.৩৬
২৪	০৩৫০	সাভার কর্পোরেট শাখা	১৩	৩৯৭৪.২৮
২৫	০৪৫২	জাতীয় স্মৃতিসৌধ	১	১১২৮০.০০
২৬	০৭১৯	ঘড়িসার	৪	৩২৪৭.৪৪
২৭	০৮৩৩	চাটখিল	৪	২২৮১৬.২০
২৮	০২৮১	ভেদরগঞ্জ	৩	৪১০৬.৪৫
২৯	০১৬০	বন্দর	১৭	১৩৬৫.৪৬
৩০	০১৯৭	মহাখালী কর্পোরেট শাখা	১৪	৭৬১৪৬.৮৬
৩১	০২০৮	এলিফ্যান্ট রোড কর্পো:	৪	১২২৬১.৪১
৩২	০০৫১	ময়মনসিংহ কর্পো: শাখা	৪	১৩৬১২৭.৬৬
৩৩	০২৮০	কালকিনি শাখা	১	২৪৩৫.৫৪
৩৪	০০৮৯	টান বাজার শাখা	১৫	৫০৮.৪১
৩৫	০৩৬০	মদনগঞ্জ শাখা	১৮	১৬৬৬.২২
৩৬	০১৬৫	মাদারীপুর কর্পোরেট	৬	৪১৭৯.১৫
৩৭	০৩০১	শাহজাদপুর শাখা	৯	৫৬৪৮.৬২
৩৮	০১৬৯	রাঙ্গামাটি শাখা	৬	১২১৬০.০০
৩৯	০৬৩৫	মহিপাল শাখা	৬	১৭৯.২৯
৪০	০৬৭১	পেশকারহাট শাখা	১	১৯২৫৫.০০
৪১	০১৮০	গাজীপুর কর্পো: শাখা	২৬	৮০৯৫.২২
৪২	০৪২৩	বৈদেশিক বানিজ্য কর্পোরেট শাখা, ঢাকা	২৮	২৭৬২০.৮৯
৪৩	০৮১২	রানীরহাট শাখা	৫	৩৪৩৮.৬৫
৪৪	০০৭৩	গোপালগঞ্জ কর্পো:	১৩	১২০৯৯.০৯
৪৫	০৭৮৩	গোসাইবাড়ী শাখা,বগুড়া	২৬৮	৭৪৫৭৫.১৩
৪৬	০৪৫৮	পাঁচবিবি শাখা, বগুড়া	৩০	১২৬৮২.৭৩
৪৭	০৭৮২	বিসিক ইন্ড: এস্টেট শাখা, বগুড়া	৩৪	৩৭১৩১.৬৭
৪৮	০৮৬০	উল্লাপাড়া শাখা	৭	১৮৮৫৭.১০
৪৯	০৮৭৭	সোনাতলা শাখা	১১৩	৮২০৮৩.৪০
৫০	০৬৪৫	হাটিকুমরুল শাখা	১	৬০০.০৯
৫১	০০৫০	গোদনাইল শাখা	১৮	১২৭৭.০৮
৫২	০৯০৭	টুঙ্গিপাড়া শাখা	৫	১০৭৮০.০০
৫৩	০৩০২	লক্ষীরহাট	৫	৯৪৯১১.৪৬
৫৪	০২৯৯	চন্দন বাইশা	৪০	৬৪৫৭৫.৮৬
৫৫	০৩৭২	সপ্তপদী মার্কেট	২	১০৬২.৮০
৫৬	০১৭৪	আড়ানী শাখা	২	১১৮.০০
৫৭	০১০৭	ফেনী কর্পোরেট	৫২	৩৩৭৮০৯.৬৩
৫৮	০৯১০	স্টেশন বাজার শাখা, ঠাকুরগাঁও	৫	২২১৪৭.৬৮
৫৯	০২৭১	বলিয়াকান্দি	৫	২০৫৩.০৯
৬০	০৭৪৭	তিতুমীর মার্কেট শাখা	২	৩৫১৫.০০
৬১	০৭৪৭	তিতুমীর মার্কেট শাখা	১	২২৫০.০০
৬২	০০১৮	বগুড়া কর্পো	৮৪	৫৬৯৫৩.৫০
৬৩	০৭৮৮	গোয়ালচামট শাখা	১১	২৪৫৭৩.১৬
৬৪	০৮৯৬	ভাঙ্গা শাখা	৯	১৪৭৬.৪২
৬৫	০৭১৬	ভাটিয়া বাজার শাখা	১১	১৩৩৪.৯৭
৬৬	০৬৫৭	আব্দুল্লাহপুর	৬	৬৭৫.৭৮
৬৭	০৭৭৮	বীরকুৎসা	১০	৪৭৬.৮৬
৬৮	৬৮৮	হাটিজোপাড়া	৯	৩৮১৬.৯৩
৬৯	০১৩৬	তোপখানা রোড কর্পোরেট	৪৯	৬৯৬৭১.৪২
৭০	০০৮১	কুষ্টিয়া কর্পোরেট শাখা	১১	১২২২.৩০
৭১	০৫৯২	নারুয়া	১২	৫৬১.৭৮
৭২	০০৯৫	ফেঞ্চুগঞ্জ	১১	৭৭০৮৭.৭০
৭৩	০২২১	গোদাগাড়ী	১৩	৬১০৩.৩৩
৭৪	০২৫৮	দুর্গাপুর	৪	১১০০.০০
৭৫	০৪০২	চাঁদনী বাজার	১৫৭	৮৭৯৬৩.৫২
৭৬	০১৩৪	ফতুল্লা	৩৮	২৬৬৭.৬০
৭৭	০৩৮১	রাজুনীবাড়ী	১৬	৩২৯৭.০৪
৭৮	০০৭১	সান্তাহার	১	৫৮৪.৬৭
৭৯	০৬৯১	কাঁকনহাট	৩	১৪২.৪৭
৮০	০৮২৯	ওলেমা বাজার শাখা	২০	১১০২.৬৯
৮১	০৩২১	রাজবাড়ী শাখা	১০	৪০২৫.৮৮
৮২	০০০৯	খাতুনগঞ্জ কর্পো.	৩	২২৬২০.৪৬
৮৩	০৪৯৭	নওহাটা	২	১১৬.৮৩
৮৪	০৮৬৪	সেনবাগ	১৭	২৪০৭৫০.৮১
৮৫	০১২৭	ঠাকুরগাঁও কর্পো:	১১	২৪০৭৯.৭৭
৮৬	০৬৭২	দেবিদ্বার	৪	১০৮৫.১৪
৮৭	০৫২৩	শিবগঞ্জ	৩২	৫৫৩৪.৫১
৮৮	০৮২২	দামকুড়াহাট	১	৪৮৯৭.০০
৮৯	০৩৫৯	সোনামিয়া মার্কেট	১৫	১৪৪০.৪১
৯০	০৬৬২	বাগবাটি শাখা	৯	৩৩৪৫.৫৪
৯১	০৪১৬	ভেড়ামারা শাখা	৫	৫৬০.৪৩
৯২	০২৮৭	বানেশ্বর	১৭	৪৪৫৯.৭৩
৯৩	০৭৮৯	বিসিক ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল এস্টেট শাখা	২০	৩০৫০.৩৮
৯৪	০৯২৫	বোয়ালমারী শাখা	৩	২২৬.৭৭
৯৫	০৬১০	দেলুয়াবাড়ী হাট	৩	১৫৪২.২১
৯৬	০২১৮	আলমনগর	১১	১৯৫১.৩৮
৯৭	০২০৭	ধামরাই	১২	৫২৭২.০৯
৯৮	০৮৪৫	দিগরাজ	৪	২৪৮.২৪
৯৯	০৩৯৪	বাসুদেবপুর	৫	১৭৫.৯৭
১০০	০৩১০	ভবানীগঞ্জ	৪	৫২২২৪.৭৩
১০১	০৭৪৮	মহিলা শাখা , ময়মনসিংহ	১	২৬৪২৯.০০
১০২	০৮৭৬	মহিলা, রাজশাহী	৩৪	১৪২১০.০৭
১০৩	০৭৫৫	চৌড়হাস বাজার শাখা	৪	১৮১৩.০৯
১০৪	০৩৯১	মোহনগঞ্জ	৫	৩৪৭.১৯
১০৫	০৪৩৭	পুঠিয়া	১৮	২৯৯৩.৭৮
১০৬	০৭০১	দেওপুরা	১৭	১৩০১১.৯০
১০৭	০৪০৫	ধানগড়া	৪	২৯১.১২
১০৮	০০৭৮	কাটাখালী বাজার	১২	৫৮৩৬.৩৯
১০৯	০৭৮১	লক্ষীপুর শাখা	৪	২৩৩৯.২২
১১০	০৩১৫	রেলরোড শাখা	৩৮	১৯৫৩১.২৭
১১১	০০১৪	রাজশাহী কর্পো:	১৩	৩৩৬১.৬৫
১১২	০০২০	সদরঘাট	৫	৬৮০.৫৫
১১৩	০৩১২	হড়গ্রাম শাখা	৭	১৭৯৫৫.৯৩
১১৪	০১৫৯	হোটেল ইন্টারকন্টিনেন্টাল কর্পোরেট	১	১৬৬৬৩.৭০
১১৫	০১৮৩	জামালগঞ্জ, বগুড়া	৫৫	১২৭৬৬.০৫
১১৬	০৪৩৬	প্রেমতলী	২	৫৪১৫৯.১৮
১১৭	০১৪৩	মিরপুর সেকশন-১ কর্পো	২৭	২৬৬৫১.৩২
১১৮	০৩৯১	মোহনপুর শাখা, রাজশাহী	১০	৯৫৮.০৪
১১৯	০১৫৯	হোটেল ইন্টারকন্টিনেন্টাল কর্পোরেট	১	৪৮৫১.৭৭
১২০	০০৫৬	ফরাশগঞ্জ শাখা	২	৪০৩.৯৭
১২১	০৭০০	রায়পুর বাড়ীয়া	১৩	৪৮৩৪.২৯
১২২	০১২৬	নীলফামারী প্রধান শাখা	১০	২৩৭৯১.৭৬
১২৩	০৬৯২	রাজারবাড়ীহাট	১০	১২৬৩৩.৩৭
১২৪	০২১০	খানজাহান আলী রোড,শাখা,খুলনা।	১০	৫৯১৩.৯৫
১২৫	০২৫৩	নাচোল	৪৫	৩৮৮৭১.৭০
১২৬	০৯৪৪	পাংশা শাখা	১	২০.০০
১২৭	০৭০২	হেতেমখান	২৬	২৬১৮২.০৫
১২৮	০১৮৪	কচুয়া	১	৪৫৯৮.০৩
১২৯	০১৬২	রহনপুর-০১৬২	১	৩৪১.৯৪
১৩০	০২৬৩	কোটালীপাড়া শাখা	৫	৩২০৫.০০
১৩১	০৭৬০	কাদিরগঞ্জ শাখা	৩৯	৫১০৬৯.১৫
১৩২	০৬৩৭	মোহনপুর শাখা	১	৬০৩১.৪২
১৩৩	০৩৪৭	নওদাপাড়া	১২	৭৯৮.৮০
১৩৪	০২৯৬	কানসাট	১	৪৮৪৯.১৪
১৩৫	০৫১৭	কাজীর মোড়	৫	৪১১৮০.৩৫
১৩৬	০১৫৩	নওগাঁ কর্পো:	৩৫	৪৭১৩১.৪১
১৩৭	০১৪৯	শৈলকুপা শাখা	১	৩৬৭.৮৭
১৩৮	০৪৬৩	তানোর	৫	৫৪২৩.৭৬
১৩৯	০৩৩২	স্টেশন রোড	১৯	৭১৮৯.৭৬
১৪০	০৩৭৭	মলদা	৫	৯৮.৩৭
১৪১	০২০৯	তাহেরপুর	১৩	১২৩২০.৫৮
১৪২	০৫৫১	সুচিপাড়া শাখা,চাঁদপুর।	৮	২২৫৯.০০
১৪৩	০২৪৩	সৈয়দ আলী চত্বর	৩০	৯০৩৬.৭০
১৪৪	০৩৭৮	তিলকপুর	৩৯৬	৬৯০০৮.০১
১৪৫	০২৯০	আদমদিঘী শাখা, বগুড়া	৬৭	৫৯৯২.৮০
১৪৬	০৪৫৭	চাতরা ০৪৫৭	২	১৮৩৪.৬১
১৪৭	০৬২১	হাটফতেপুর	২	৪১১.২৮
১৪৮	০৮২১	হলিদাগাছী	১১	১৪১১.০০
১৪৯	০৪৬০	বিলসদর	৮	২২২৭.৬৭
১৫০	০৫৯৮	গঙ্গারামপুর শাখা, মাগুরা	১	২৬৫৫৬.০০
১৫১	০১১৬	চাঁদপুর কো-অপারেটিভ শাখা	৫	১৫৯১৯.৫০
১৫২	০৫৮৮	আড়পাড়া	৫	৩৩৩২১.৪৯
১৫৩	০৬৬৮	ধামাইর	৩	৩৭১.৭২
১৫৪	০৬৬৪	ধুকুরিয়াবেড়া	৬	১৮৯৬৬.৯৬
১৫৫	০৩৫৮	বি. কে. রোড শাখা, নারায়ণগঞ্জ।	১২	৬৮০.৬৭
১৫৬	০৫৩১	ফুলতলা	৩	১৬৬৭.৭৪
১৫৭	০৩৮৫	ছাগলনাইয়া	৮	৬১১.৫০
১৫৮	০৬১৯	জোড়াদহ	৫	৫১৬.০৪
১৫৯	০৮০৬	যশোর রোড কর্পোরেট শাখা	২	৬৬৬.৩০
১৬০	০৮৪২	বেগম রোকেয়া সরণি	১০০	১০৪৬২.০২
১৬১	০৮৯৮	নবাব আব্দুল গণি রোড কর্পোরেট শাখা, ঢাকা।	৪	৮১৪৩.২০
১৬২	০৪৮৩	ফকিরহাট	১৪	৫৯৭৯.৫১
১৬৩	০৭০৫	গগনপুর	১	১৩৩১.২৪
১৬৪	০২৫৯	হরিনাকুন্ডু শাখা, ঝিনাইদহ	৩	৯৯৯.৩৬
১৬৫	০১৮৬	ফরিদগঞ্জ	১০	২৮৪০.৯৪
১৬৬	০০১৬	চাঁপাইনবাবগঞ্জ কর্পোরেট শাখা	৩৭	৬১৭৪৯.২১
১৬৭	০৪১২	কুয়েট কর্পোরেট শাখা	১৩	১১৭৪১.৪৫
১৬৮	০৪৮৮	কচিকাটা	৪	১০৮৫.০০
১৬৯	০১৬৮	নজিপুর	২	১১০৫.৬৩
১৭০	০৮৪০	মোংলা পোর্ট কম্পাউন্ড	৯	১১৯৬০.৯১
১৭১	০০৫১	ময়মনসিংহ কর্পোরেট শাখা, ময়মনসিংহ	১১	১৩৬৩৬৫.৬৩
১৭২	০১৮৬	রামপাল	৫	২৪৩.০৫
১৭৩	০৮৮৫	মতলব	৩৮	৫৬৭২.৫১
১৭৪	০৬৫৮	লাঙ্গলবন্দ শাখা	১৫	৫৭৪১.২৮
১৭৫	০৩৯২	নিতপুর	১	৪৩৬৭৩.৮৫
১৭৬	০০২১	মাগুরা প্রধান	৫৯	২৪৫৪০.৩১
১৭৭	০১৮৬	রামপাল	৫	১৬১৯.৯২
১৭৮	০০০৪	খুলনা কর্পোরেট শাখা	১১০	৫১৭১২.৩২
১৭৯	০৬৪৭	মুহুরীগঞ্জ	১০	৬৬৭২৭.৫৪
১৮০	০২৬৫	কালীগঞ্জ, লালমনিরহাট	৭	১২৮৫০.০০
১৮১	০৫৩৪	লালবাগ বাজার	২	১৬০৫.৭২
১৮২	০৪৬৮	মসিমপুর	৫	৮৮৫৪১.৫০
১৮৩	০৫২৮	রুজভেল্ট জেটি শাখা, খুলনা	১০	২২৭২.৫৭
১৮৪	০২৩৪	লোহাগড়া, নড়াইল	৭৪০	১০৭০৭২০.১১
১৮৫	০৩১৯	রাজারবাগ কর্পোরেট শাখা	৭	৮৭৯১.২৬
১৮৬	০৩২৯	কমলাপুর বাজার শাখা	১৭	৯৪৯৬২.৬১
১৮৭	০০৮৫	মোহাম্মদপুর কর্পো: ঢাকা	৪৬	১৭২৮২১.২১
১৮৮	০৪৬৯	চর কৈজুরী বাজার শাখা	২	৮৯৬৪.৪৮
১৮৯	০৪২৬	খুকনী	১২	২৬৫৮.১৭
১৯০	০৪৬৪	নলদী	৩১২	২২১৩৫৯.৫৫
১৯১	০১২৯	কুড়িগ্রাম কর্পো:	১৬	৪০৩৩২.১৭
১৯২	০২৫৬	মনিরামপুর শাখা	২৭৩	১৪১৯০৮.৮৩
১৯৩	০০৫২	নড়াইল	৮০	২৮৬৯.৮৭
১৯৪	০৬৯৮	নকলা	৪৮	১২৮৯০৭.১১
১৯৫	০৬৪০	নাভারণ	৮৭০	১৮৮৪০৪.৫০
১৯৬	০৬১৪	মহাকাল	৪০৬	৩১৬৭২১.২৭
১৯৭	০৩৩৪	নূরনগর শাখা	১০	১৯২৫.০০
১৯৮	০৩৭৪	আরডিএ	৪৫	১২৬২০.৬৩
১৯৯	০৯০০	ইউজিসি ভবন কর্পোরেট শাখা	৫৫৮	৬৬৪৪৩৪.২৪
২০০	০৫২৯	শেখপাড়া বাজার, খুলনা	৩	৩৫৮৭.৭৫
২০১	০৭৪০	সাতপাড় শাখা	১০	১৪৭৭.২৪
২০২	০৭৬৯	এস বি ফজলুল হক রোড শাখা	১	৫৮৬.৩৫
২০৩	০৫৩৬	রুপসা ইস্ট	৬	১৯৬৬৬.৫২
২০৪	০১৩০	সোহাগপুর শাখা, সিরাজগঞ্জ	৫	৭৬৪৯.৪৬
২০৫	০২৫৭	শরণখোলা	১৪	১২৯৭৩.৭১
২০৬	০৪০৯	তামাই	৫	২৮৯০৪.৬০
২০৭	০৩৫২	শঠিবাড়ী	১৮	১৩৫২৮.৮৬
২০৮	০৭৯৩	শশুয়া বাজার	৬	১৬০৪৬.৭৬
২০৯	০৪৮৪	তাড়াশ	৪	১৫৬৭০.২৩
২১০	০৪০৮	কলেজ রোড শাখা, ফেনী।	১৮	১১৮২৪৭.০০
২১১	০৪৭৭	কাটাখালী শাখা	২৬	৬১০৫৪.৫৬
২১২	০২৪৮	রানীবাজার	১০	৫০২৩.০০
২১৩	০৬৩২	আতশ আলী বাজার	৮	৪০১৮.৩৬
২১৪	০৭২৯	ডেমরা বাজার	১	৭২৪.৬১
২১৫	০২৫৪	মান্দা	৪৪	৫৭০২৫.০৫
২১৬	০৪৮৩	কলাহাটি	৪	৪২৮.৯১
২১৭	০৬২৭	চাঁচড়া শাখা	২৪০	৬২৪২৬.২১
২১৮	০৪৬৬	বাকড়া	৬৮৮	১৫৩৯২৩.৩৩
২১৯	০৪৭২	কালীপুর শাখা	৭	৭৩৫২.২১
২২০	০৬৬৫	বনগ্রাম	২৩	১৩১৭.৬০
২২১	০৫৬১	ভবানীপুর শাখা	৫	৫৩৪.৭৪
২২২	০০৬৫	হাজীগঞ্জ	১০	১৭০৯.৭৯
২২৩	০৪৭১	নুরপুর	৮	১২৩৩.৬০
২২৪	০৬৩৬	বেনাপোল	৫২৯	৫২২৫৪৮.৪৩
২২৫	০৬৪২	চাটমোহর শাখা	১২	৬১২৩.৭৫
২২৬	০৪৯৯	মিউনিসিপালিটি	৭	৫০৫১.৮৭
২২৭	০৪৬১	কাশিনাথপুর	৫	৫১৯২৮.৯২
২২৮	০৯০৩	ভেলানগর	১৭	১১০৩৫.৭১
২২৯	০৭৭৫	রূপগঞ্জ বাজার শাখা, নড়াইল	২৬৩	৯৫৭৯৪.৬৩
২৩০	০৭০৯	ছেংগারচর	১৫	১২৯৬৮.৫০
২৩১	০৮৪৯	বেড়া শাখা	৮	৪১৩২.৯৫
২৩২	০৫২৬	আটুয়া	৬০	৩০৫১৫৪.৫৪
২৩৩	০৬৩৯	দুলাই	২৭	১০৪৮.৮৬
২৩৪	০৪৬৭	জোনাইল	১	৩৬.১০
২৩৫	০৬২৮	দৈবজ্ঞহাটী বাজার শাখা	৭	২৯৪৬.০৬
২৩৬	০৩৯৮	ধানাইদহ শাখা	৩	৬১৫.১৬
২৩৭	০১৯২	বড়দিয়া	২০৬	৩৩৭১৮৪.৯১
২৩৮	০৮৫৭	কলাপাড়া	৫৭	৩৯৪৮.৩৩
২৩৯	০৬৫৫	কাঁচপুর শাখা,	৩০	১৪০৯.৯৩
২৪০	০৭০৯	মৌখাড়া	১০	২৪৪৬৫.৫৪
২৪১	০৭৭৯	হাতিয়ান্দহ	৩৮	১৪১৭.৪৮
২৪২	০৪৭৮	দয়ারামপুর	৬	৮২.১৭
২৪৩	০২৫০	বাগাতিপাড়া	১৩	২১০১.৯১
২৪৪	০৩৯৫	মাধনগর	৭	৬৪৭০.৪৫
২৪৫	০৮০৭	উপশহর শাখা	১৪৯	৩৫৫৮১.৫২
২৪৬	০৭৪৭	জালালাবাদ শাখা	১০	১৯৪৬.১৫
২৪৭	০১৫৫	গুরুদাসপুর	৪	২০৯৪.০০
২৪৮	০০৩৫	ঝিকরগাছা	৮৮৬	১১৩৯৫৮০.০৬
২৪৯	০০১১	এইচ. এম. এম. রোড শাখা	৮২৮	১৪৪৭২৬.৬৪
২৫০	০৪১৫	নবীগঞ্জ শাখা	২০	৬৪৪.০০
২৫১	০৭৭২	কালির বাজার শাখা	১৬	২২৪৮.১৬
২৫২	০০৫৫	ছাতক শাখা	৮	১৬৫৬.৯৯
২৫৩	০৪৫১	বাজাপুর বাজার শাখা নাটোর	১২	৪৩৪৪.৮৯
২৫৪	০০২৩	নাটোর প্রধান	২৮৩	৩১০৬১৪.৭২
২৫৫	০২২০	জগন্নাথপুর	৪৩	৫৫০২.৫৫
২৫৬	০১৬৪	রানীগঞ্জ বাজার শাখা	৭	৬৮৮.৪৮
২৫৭	০৬৮২	সালামপুর	৫৯	৫৪১৯৮.৬৫
২৫৮	০২২২	গোবিন্দগঞ্জ	৬	৩১২.০০
২৫৯	০২৭৬	জাওয়া বাজার, সুনামগঞ্জ	৮	৬৪৩.০৮
২৬০	০২৩৫	জিরো পয়েন্ট	১৭	১২৩০৫৪.০০
২৬১	০২৭৯	সুনামগঞ্জ কর্পো:	৪০	১৭৯.৯১
২৬২	০২৪৯	জিন্দাবাজার	১০	৪৩০০.০৩
২৬৩	০০৩৮	এম কে রোড কর্পোরেট, যশোর	২৫৭	৯৭২৬১.৫৫
২৬৪	০০১৫	রেয়াজউদ্দীন বাজার	৭	৩৯৮.৩৬
২৬৫	০৭৬৩	সুকান্ত বিপনী শাখা	৫৩	৩৪০৬০.২২
২৬৬	০৪৫৬	পটুয়াপাড়া	৭২	২৯৪১৬.৩৮
২৬৭	০২৭৯	সুনামগঞ্জ কর্পো:	১১	৬৪.১৪
২৬৮	০৪৮২	স্টেশন রোড, সিলেট	৫	২৮৬৯.২৪
২৬৯	০৪৪৮	সাচনা বাজার শাখা	২	২৫.০৩
২৭০	০৩০৬	নতুন বাজার শাখা	১২	১২৫৭৬.২০
২৭১	০০০৭	বাগেরহাট কর্পোরেট	৪৬	৭৭১৬.১৮
২৭২	০৪৩৫	ছাতিয়ানতলা	১৬২	১৬০১৭৫.৬৯
২৭৩	০৭৭৪	সিংড়া বাজার	২	২৮০৩২.৪৩
২৭৪	০৪২৯	মাইজপাড়া শাখা	২২২	৭২৭৬৩.৬২
২৭৫	০৩৭৫	নয়াবন্দর শাখা	৬	৭৫.০০
২৭৬	০৮৮৮	জনতা ভবন কর্পো: শাখা	৬৫	৩৪৯৮.৮৪
২৭৭	০১৩৯	কেশবপুর	৯৫	৪৭৩০১.১৬
২৭৮	০১৭৩	খানখানাপুর	২	২০৯.০৪
২৭৯	০৫০৬	স্টেশন বাজার নাটোর	১৯	২০২৪২.০৭
২৮০	০০২৮	নেত্রকোনা প্রধান শাখা	১১৫	৯২৭৭.৫৮
২৮১	০৮০০	শ্যামনগর শাখা	২৫	১০৪৮.৭৯
২৮২	০৩৪৯	মিরপুর সেকশন - ১০ কর্পোরেট শাখা	৪৭১	২৬৫৪০০.২৯
২৮৩	০০৩৮	এম কে রোড কর্পোরেট, যশোর	১৮	৯৪৭৬.৫৪
২৮৪	০২৩৭	মতিঝিল কর্পোরেট	২৯৯	৬১২৩৪৩.২৪
২৮৫	০০৯১	দিনাজপুর কর্পো	৩	১৮০৫১৭.১২
২৮৬	০৪৩৯	সরিষাবাড়ী	৫০	৯৫২১৬.১০
২৮৭	০১৯০	গংগাচড়া শাখা	২	৮২৩.৩৪
২৮৮	০১১৯	শান্তিনগর শাখা, ঢাকা	১	৯০৯.০৬
২৮৯	০৫৩৮	ফুলবাড়িয়া শাখা, ঢাকা	৩১	৯৬৯৩০৬.৪৪
			১৩৯১৫	১৪১৫৫০৮২.৬৯

উপরোক্ত অদাবীকৃত আমানত হিসেবে চিহ্নিত হিসাবসমূহের বিস্তারিত বিবরণ (হিসাবধারীর নাম, ঠিকানা সহ অত্র ব্যাংকের ওয়েবসাইট www.jb.com.bd এ আগামি এক বছর ব্যাপী প্রদর্শন করা হবে। অদাবীকৃত আমানত ফেরত পাওয়ার জন্য গ্রাহকগণ উক্ত ওয়েবসাইট হতে অবগত হয়ে সংশ্লিষ্ট শাখায় যোগাযোগ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

GD- 973

Climate crisis affects women, children more

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women and children are more affected by environmental disasters in Bangladesh, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They also said Dhaka's rapid and unplanned urbanisation has degraded the environment, causing pollution and excessive heat that severely threatens women's and children's health, resulting in a rise in pregnancy complications and infant mortality.

The event titled "Endangered Environment Fading Dhaka: Transition Thoughts" was organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad at the capitals' Segunbagicha.

Dr Nabanita Islam, associate professor and head of architecture department at University of Asia Pacific, said climate change is one of the major environmental challenges at present. Women and girls are the direct and indirect victims of environmental disasters and climate change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Speedy implementation of climate action plans
- Coordination between govt policy makers, implementing agencies
- Ensuring women's participation in climate action plans

She emphasised on speedy implementation of climate action plans, coordination between government policy makers and implementing agencies, ensuring women's participation in climate action plans, removing air polluting transport, stopping indiscriminate tree felling and waste management of brick kilns and factories.

Dr Fauzia Moslem, president of Mahila Parishad, said Dhaka's environment is in a very fragile state, creating adverse effects on the health of women and children. In this situation, steps must be taken to deal with the environmental disaster of Dhaka. Advocate Masuda Rehana Begum, joint general secretary of Mahila Parishad, also spoke.

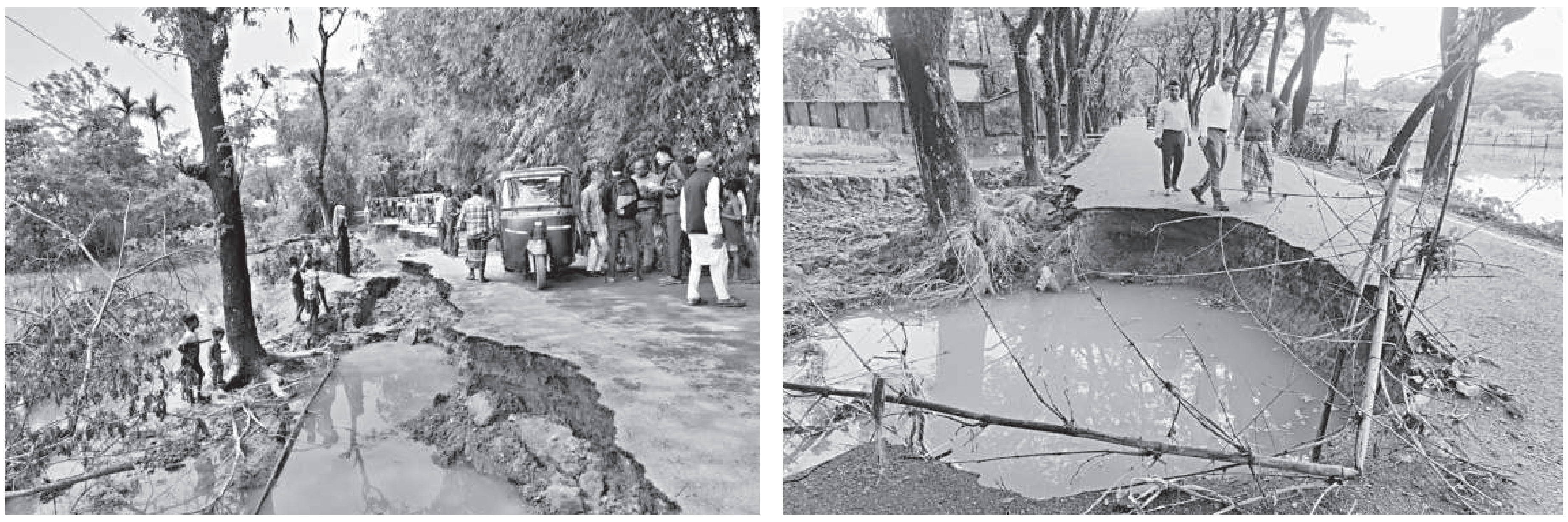


PHOTO: STAR

Flood damages 200km of roads in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

Since May 27, Sylhet has faced severe flooding due to relentless rain, wreaking havoc on its transportation infrastructure. Estimates indicate that road damages across the district have already reached Tk 200 crore, a figure expected to rise.

In Gowainghat upazila, Mohammad Manik Mia from Baurbagh described how the flooding submerged most of the roads, leaving behind large potholes that disrupt traffic and raise concerns about accidents.

Commuters now face higher fares when using CNG-run vehicles due to the poor road conditions.

Raihan Ahmed, a CNG-run vehicle driver, highlighted the challenge of navigating the pothole-ridden roads, which often results in vehicle damage. The situation has strained his livelihood, with repair costs outweighing his income from fares.

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and Roads and Highways Department (RHD) reported that 12 out of 13 upazilas in Sylhet have been affected by flood.

The situation is improving, but the conditions were severe in Gowainghat, Zakiganj, Jaintapur, Companiganj, and Kanaighat upazilas. Many roads in these areas were closed for several days due to damage.

According to LGED, approximately 160km of roads in Sylhet have been damaged, costing around Tk 118.70 crore. The RHD reported that 40km of roads have been damaged, incurring a loss of Tk 84 crore.

Affected roads include the Shari-Gowainghat, Darbast-Kanaighat, Companyganj-Chatak, Fenchuganj-Manikona, and the Sylhet-Tamabil roads in Jaintapur.

KM Faruq Hossain, executive engineer of LGED Sylhet, said the full extent of the damage will not be known until the water recedes completely. So far, approximately 160km of roads under LGED's jurisdiction have been damaged, causing a loss of Tk 118.7 crore.

Amir Hossain, executive engineer of RHD in Sylhet, said 40km of roads have been damaged, causing a loss of Tk 84 crore. Temporary repairs have been made to the most damaged roads to allow vehicular movement. Permanent repairs will take time and require further inspection and allocation of funds.

Private company filling up part of Belai beel

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gazipur*

A company named Banglamark has been filling up a part of Belai beel with sand, allegedly without any permission, in Nalshada village under Kaliganj upazila of Gazipur.

Visiting the area recently, this correspondent saw that the company was filling up a 12-bigha fenced portion of the waterbody that encompasses a vast area on both sides of the Tongi-Kaliganj road.

According to the upazila administration and related sources, the High Court had issued a status quo order on January 27, 2019 to protect the government waterbody and adjacent agricultural land in Kaliganj.

And yet, various companies have long been filling up portions of the natural water reservoir and constructing structures there, locals alleged.

Previously, several mobile court drives were carried out against illegal structures built encroaching the waterbody, and the accused were fined and ordered to stop sand filling.

"I lodged a complaint against Banglamark on March 21 for filling up the low-lying agricultural land and the waterbody in Nalshada village. In response, the UNO and assistant commissioner in the upazila only visited the site but took no action in this regard yet," said Benazir Sarkar, a resident of Shimulia Sarkar Bari village in the upazila.

"Banglamark's sand filling activities are going on at night in presence of a supervisor," he alleged.

Contacted, Kazi Nahid, the supervisor, claimed that the company's owner Rafiqul Islam owns the portion of the waterbody.

He also claimed that another real estate company has been spreading misinformation against Banglamark after failing to purchase the same property.

SM Imam Razi, UNO and executive magistrate of Kaliganj upazila, said Banglamark has been fined several times for filling up Belai beel. "If they still continue sand filling, we will file a case against them," he said.

Defeated candidate files complaint with EC over attack

STAR REPORT

A complaint was filed with the Election Commission in Dhaka yesterday regarding an attack on a defeated chairman candidate and his family by supporters of the winning candidate centring the Madhyanagar upazila polls on June 7.

Supporters of Abdur Razzak Bhuiyan, allegedly attacked the defeated candidate, Saidur Rahman, and his family near their residence in Datiapara village. The violence left at least seven people, including Saidur and his son lawyer Arifur Rahman, seriously injured.

Family members of the victims claimed the police have not taken any action against the attackers. Razzak is the elder brother of Rangpur Range DIG Abdul Baten.

Masukur Rahman, eldest son of Saidur, filed the complaint with the EC.

Meanwhile, Sunamganj District Lawyers' Association and Songkhubdho Nagorik Andolon, Sylhet held separate human chains protesting the attack. They demanded a judicial investigation.

Witnesses said the attack was reportedly led by Azim Mahmud, a nephew of Razzak.

Meanwhile, Azim filed a case against 17 people, including Saidur, with Madhyanagar Police Station on Saturday night.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Bangshi is DYING

Pollution, encroachment turn once-vibrant river into a narrow canal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

The once-vibrant Bangshi river in Jamalpur is slowly dying. Merchants once navigated its waters on large boats, but now, the three-kilometre stretch of the river within Jamalpur municipality barely resembles a three-metre-wide canal before merging with the Brahmaputra.

Encroachment, pollution, and unchecked siltation have led to its decline.

In 2007, local authorities began demarcating the river's land and excavating it to reduce waterlogging. However, the river was soon filled with garbage dumped by residents.

"Whenever it rains, our houses flood with dirty water as the river can no longer drain it away. The bad odour from the river is a constant nuisance. The municipality should take urgent steps to clean the river," said Aminul Sheikh, a resident of Dayamayi area.

Other locals shared his concerns.

"The river has become a canal over the years due to illegal land grabbing. Now it is filled with garbage and serves as a mosquito breeding ground. The municipality should clean up the waterbody and excavate," said Jahangir Selim, president of Jamalpur District Environment Protection Movement.

Mayor Mohammad Sanowar, however, put the onus on the locals for the river's plight.

"We repeatedly try to prevent residents from throwing waste into the water body. We need to conduct mass awareness drives in this regard," he said.

Terrible toilets

Hospital washrooms in appalling state, says icddr,b

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Only 68 percent of government hospitals have functional toilets, of which, only 33 percent are clean, as per a new study.

Meanwhile, for private hospitals, at least 92 percent are functional while 56 percent of the toilets are clean.

International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b) conducted the study in collaboration with University of Technology, Sydney and the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

There was only one toilet for every 214 people in public hospitals and 94 for private ones

According WaterAid, for institutional toilets in outpatient facilities, there should be one toilet for every 20–25 patients

The study evaluated 2,459 toilets in Dhaka's healthcare facilities

The study, which surveyed 12 government and private hospitals in Dhaka, was recently published in the journal PLOS ONE, according to a icddr,b press release issued yesterday.

The study found high user-to-toilet ratios in outpatient facilities in Dhaka hospitals.

There was only one toilet for every 214 people in public hospitals and 94 for private, significantly below the recommended standards set by WaterAid, the study shows.

According WaterAid, for institutional toilets in outpatient facilities, there should be one toilet for every 20–25 patients.

The study evaluated 2,459 toilets in Dhaka's healthcare facilities to assess the availability, functionality, and cleanliness of toilets.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Barisal PWD Division, Barishal
www.pwd.barisal.gov.bd

Memo: 5025/2 Dated: 09/06/2024

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of following works given below:

SL No.	Tender ID	Invitation Reference No.	Name of works	Tender closing date & time
1	997617	egp/bari/external/water/supply/RRF/23-24	External water supply work at RRF Police Lines Barishal under the project Construction of Barisal & Sylhet Armed Police Battalion (APBN) and Range Reserve Force (RRF) Police Lines	20/06/2024 12:00
2	997288	PWD/Bari/CO/Bunglow/2023-24	Remaining Work Commandant Officers Bunglow for APBN Barisal under the project Construction of Barisal & Sylhet Armed Police Battalion (APBN) and Range Reserve Force (RRF) Police Lines	20/06/2024 12:00
3	997289	PWD/Bari/Site/Cleaning/APBN/2023-24	Ancillary renovation work including with site cleaning & sanitary repair for APBN Barishal under the project Construction of Barisal & Sylhet Armed Police Battalion (APBN) and Range Reserve Force (RRF) Police Lines	20/06/2024 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (Email: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

09/06/24
Md. Faisal Alam
Executive Engineer
PWD Division, Barishal
Tel: 02478864915
E-mail: ee_bari@pwd.gov.bd

GD-975

Zilla Parishad, Natore
www.zpnatore.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.00.6900.002.34.027.16-234 Date: 10/06/2024

e-Tender Notice: 04/2023-2024

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement ZP Dinajpur as mentioned below.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time
1	990462 04/ZPN/23-24/W-01	25/06/2024-12.30pm	25/06/2024-13.00pm
2	990478 04/ZPN/23-24/W-02	25/06/2024-12.30pm	25/06/2024-13.00pm
3	990490 04/ZPN/23-24/W-03	25/06/2024-12.30pm	25/06/2024-13.00pm
4	990493 04/ZPN/23-24/W-04	25/06/2024-12.30pm	25/06/2024-13.00pm
5	990495 04/ZPN/23-24/W-05	25/06/2024-12.30pm	25/06/2024-13.00pm
6	990496 04/ZPN/23-24/W-06	25/06/2024-12.30pm	25/06/2024-13.00pm
7	990497 04/ZPN/23-24/W-07	25/06/2024-12.30pm	25/06/2024-13.00pm
8	992039 04/ZPN/23-24/W-08	25/06/2024-12.30pm	25/06/2024-13.00pm

1. This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal. No offline hard copies will be accepted.
2. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
3. The fees or downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to 25-Jun-2024 Time: 12.30pm.
4. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Asadunnabi
Assistant Engineer
Zilla Parishad, Natore

GD-974

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

ENTERTAINMENT'S RISING STARS

MEET DEBOSRIE ANTARA

The female voice of 'Lage Ura Dhura'

Born and brought up in a family that practices and appreciates the art of music, Debosrie Antara officially debuted in Dhallywood with 'Laage Ura Dhura' from the upcoming Shakib Khan starrer 'Toofan'. The song, composed by Pritom Hasan, has now become the party anthem of the season.

ZAREEN NAWAR

The singer, as of late, has been assumed to be from West Bengal simply based on her name, but she has been in the limelight since amassing two duets with the famed Habib Wahid.

It's been a few months since we last spoke. How're you feeling now that 'Laage Ura Dhura' is storming through the charts and social media?

I, myself, am feeling *Ura Dhura* (laughs). However, I have to admit, they got the right song for me, at the right time. It feels like a step forward for my career, as my name is still not 'out there' in the industry, in that sense.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

How did this opportunity come about?

Pritom *bhai* called me one day and said that he had a work for me. It'll suffice to say, I was stunned, as it would mean working with a musician like him for the first time. When I was told that I would be lending my voice to an item song, I wanted to know more about the lyrics, considering item songs ought to have a standard.

When all the related decisions were made, funnily enough, I still had no idea that I would be singing for a song in ***Toofan.*** That was mostly because I am obviously not a part of the film industry, and when I was told that Mimi Chakraborty would be lip-syncing to my voice, I still did not know enough to connect the dots.

A personally significant aspect of the song that I discovered-- once the trailer was released-- was that it is penned by Rasel Mahmud and Shorif Uddin. Now, Rasel Mahmud is the man who wrote the first-ever jingle I voiced. It was a full-circle moment for me.

Many claim that your name has largely been disregarded throughout most of 'Toofan's' promotional campaigns. What is your take on this?

I have come to learn and understand that there can be several reasons behind that. There are certain regulations that the team must adhere to for maximising promotional content, including which names to push and publish. They could have also been confused regarding which name of mine to use, since my stage name was written inside a bracket beside my actual name, Antara Roy Chowdhury, in my NDA. Having said that, ***Toofan*** in and of itself is a massive project to helm, so I'm sure they have more pressing matters to attend to.

Besides, the film is about Shakib Khan, so the male singer having most of the limelight is natural.

What was your experience working with Pritom Hasan like?

He is a very humble, nice, and genuine individual, who was transparent from his end, from the get-go. He is also very knowledgeable, so when it comes down to sound mixing — he is extremely meticulous.

When we were discussing the required texture of ***Laage Ura Dhura,*** Pritom *bhai* further elaborated on the analyses of female singers with deeper voices being preferred worldwide nowadays. His explanation boosted my morale and made me realise that the texture of my voice is an asset that I have.

Has further work been knocking on your door since 'Laage Ura Dhura's' release?

I am working on several projects, including works related to my profession outside the musical world. I will be releasing my self-made song this year, followed by more originals. I have returned to dance and music classes to hone my skills. As an artiste, I believe I must work on myself so heavily so that I can, at the very least, be solid in my work.

PORI MONI
looks to resume Eid sacrifice at FDC

Consecutively for six years, Pori Moni upheld a tradition of offering her sacrifice at the BFDC, during Eid-ul-Azha. She has been earning high praise for her commitment to this act, by her colleagues, as she pledged to distribute the meat among the needy co-artistes.

The actress also stated that she would continue to make sacrifices at FDC as long as she lives. However, due to a ban on sacrifices inside the FDC after 2021, she performed the rituals outside.

Regarding this year's plan, Pori remarked, "I want to sacrifice again. If someone from the FDC can ensure that the Kurbani is performed together in a joyful atmosphere, then I will participate."

'Toofan' sees record advance ticket sales

TOOFAN
THIS EID UL ADHA

Shakib Khan starrer ***Toofan*** is set to premiere this Eid-ul-Azha. The advance ticket sales for the film began 10 days prior to the release. Remarkably, 40 percent of tickets for the initial days have already been sold as per the hall associates of Roots Cineclub, Sirajganj.

Advance ticket sales have also begun at the air-conditioned miniplex, Cinescope, in Narayanganj.

Cineplex, Blockbuster, Lion, and other theatres are also expected to begin advance ticket sales within a day or two, which should alleviate the rush to watch ***Toofan*** starting from Eid day.

NEWS

ACC not doing

FROM PAGE 12

he said, adding, "As soon as we received the information, we froze the accounts and seized the properties."

Moinuddin further said, "The ACC does not have the authority to issue travel bans. We need to convince the court that he is attempting to leave the country, and for that, we need concrete evidence. We cannot approach the court with just newspaper cuttings."

On the interrogation of Benazir, he said, "... We want to hear the statement of the accused. Therefore, we often give a second chance for the initial interrogation."

About former army chief Gen Aziz Ahmed, he said a lawyer asked them to probe corruption allegations against Aziz and the allegation involves false information provided by his brothers to obtain passports.

"We are working to verify this information."

He said the ACC has written to two departments regarding the forgery of national identity cards by Aziz's brothers Haris Ahmed and Tofail Ahmed alias Joseph.

Moinuddin said that proving corruption was extremely difficult. The ACC alone could not eliminate all forms of corruption, while ministries were not taking action.

"Had they done so, many complaints would not come before the ACC."

ACC Commissioner (investigation) Md Jahurul Haque said, "Those in power in society are the ones who commit corruption. The CIP and VIP individuals, whom you try to honour, are involved in corruption."

At the event, 12 journalists from print, online, and electronic media were awarded the ACC Media Award for 2020-2021.

ACC's Commissioner (enquiry) Asia Khatoon, ACC Secretary Khorsheda Yasmeen and other top officials were present.

Blinken in Middle

FROM PAGE 12

Around half of the Gaza Strip's 2.3 million people had been sheltering in Rafah before last month's assault, and a million have had to flee again.

Since last week, Israel has also launched a large-scale assault in the central Gaza Strip, around the small city of Deir al-Balah, the last popuation centre yet to be stormed. Yesterday, residents said the Israelis had pulled back from some areas there but were keeping up air strikes and shelling.

Finance, telecom ministers slated in JS for 'failure'

FROM PAGE 12

the financial sector, Chunnu said he submitted the cut motion against the minister's demand for increasing budget of his ministry.

He said the major task of the finance ministry is to supervise the banking sector and check graft.

"Is the Finance Division or Bangladesh Bank supervising or taking any actions against the looting of people's money and irregularities in banks?" he questioned.

Chunnu said PK Halder laundered around Tk 3,000 crore and left the country. Different large companies take loans and then their interest is waived. "Can the finance ministry answer these questions?"

Crictising the finance minister, the JP MP said Tk 2,200 crore of interest has been waived while farmers are being arrested for Tk 50,000 loan.

"Why should the ministry spend money if you can't regulate the financial sector?"

The opposition chief whip said the major reason for the dollar crisis is money laundering.

Lambasting former finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, the JP MP said the previous finance minister did not listen to him.

"Stop corruption and irregularities. Businesspeople, politicians, bureaucrats who have laundered money abroad and have homes and hotels in Canada, Europe and America should be investigated and identified. Identify them even if you can't bring back the laundered money," Chunnu said.

Independent MP Pankaj Nath said money is being laundered. Be strict about this. Action should be taken against willful loan defaulters. The restriction on opening LCs needs withdrawal.

Another independent MP Hamidul Haque Khandker said there is no clear explanation as to why the Finance Division has demanded additional money.

"The money laundered by Arafat Rahman Koko [late son of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia] in the past has been brought back," he said.

In reply to the criticism of MPs, Finance Minister Hasan said MPs have made general allegations regarding corruption and irregularities.

He, however, said they were trying their best to combat corruption.

Speaking on the cut motion on the ICT Division, Chunnu wanted to know whether its "learning and earning projects" were running properly.

He highlighted media reports on the irregularities in the Sheikh Hasina ICT Park in Jashore.

He added that the park has been named after the prime minister. "How can wedding ceremonies and social events take place there?"

Pankaj Nath said if you open the box of Doel laptop, you will find a Chinese computer. "Is it not corruption?

He wanted to know what action was taken.

He also alleged that widespread irregularities are taking place in the Directorate of Posts.

The cut motions of the MPs were rejected by voice votes.

Later, the supplementary budget of around Tk 37,817 crore for fiscal year 2023-24 was passed by parliament.

Flooding, landslides kill 3 in Vietnam

AFP, *Hanoi*

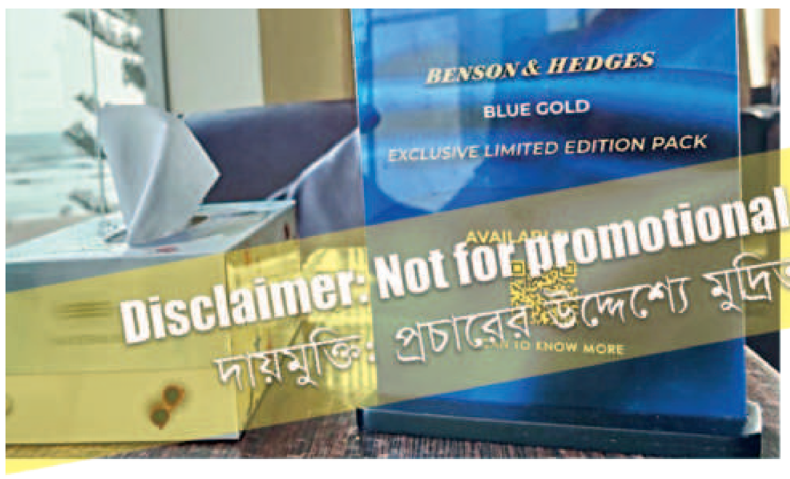
Flooding and landslides in northern Vietnam have killed three people, state media said yesterday, after days of heavy rain that partially submerged thousands of homes.

Images on state media showed water gushing down the steep roads of mountainous Ha Giang province, a popular spot for motorcycle tours, with vehicles overturned and abandoned in the floodwater.

Residents in Ha Giang city stood on rooftops waiting for rescue.

Around 400 foreign tourists were evacuated from the flooded area.

It has been raining heavily and continuously in the province since Saturday. Thousands of homes have been partially submerged and many roads damaged, state media said.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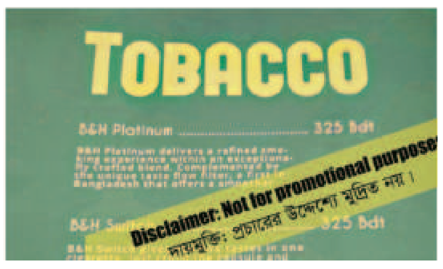
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Cigarette promotional materials of British American Tobacco Company found in open display at four Dhaka restaurants in Dhanmondi and Gulshan and two five-star hotels in Cox's Bazar. All kinds of tobacco promotions are illegal under tobacco control law, although BAT has found a way to do it anyway.

PHOTO: STAR

BAT violating tobacco control law

FROM PAGE 12

Chattogram and Cox's Bazar, the study found BAT invested in these restaurants to sell its products and display its promotional materials.

The study also found all these restaurants received one-time cash benefits from BAT for displaying their promotional materials. The payment, made by cheque or transfer intended to cover rent or utility bill, ranged from Tk 120,000 to Tk 5,400,000.

The Daily Star shared its findings with BAT via repeated phone calls, multiple text messages and emails over the last 10 days, but the company did not make any comment.

Separate smoking zones in hotels and multi-room restaurants are legal, but Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act, 2005 (amended in 2013), prohibits advertising tobacco products in any manner, including through leaflets, posters, billboards and signboards.

The Act also bans offering free samples or low-cost to entice buyers.

Violation of the rules carries three months' jail sentence or Tk 1 lakh in fine or both for first-time offenders. Repeat offenders will face twice as much the punishment for breaking the rules each subsequent occasion.

Despite the restrictions and provisions for punishment, BAT has managed to infiltrate many popular restaurants and hotels in different parts of the country.

Over the last two weeks, The Daily Star visited 18 restaurants in the capital's Dhanmondi, Banani and Gulshan and found 15 have separate designated smoking zones, where only BAT brands are available.

BAT products, including cigarettes and lighters with BAT logo painted in them, were found in open display in three restaurants—two in Gulshan and one in Dhanmondi.

In the smoking zones of these three restaurants, smoking areas featured eye-catching displays and illuminated advertisements. Each table had a display case, and large showcases advertised cigarettes.

One Gulshan restaurant even included a "Tobacco" section in its menu, listing four BAT cigarette brands priced at Tk 325, although most retail shops charge higher.

"We only sell BAT products. And we don't sell single sticks, you have to buy a pack," said an employee, indicating a deliberate marketing strategy to boost sales.

One restaurant owner said BAT's promotional activities are financially gainful for him.

"It's a good deal because almost every month, BAT arranges a function at my restaurant. I make good profit from increased sales," he said.

He said BAT officials regularly pay visits to ensure their promotional materials are prominently displayed, something Voice Bangladesh also found in its study last year.

A Gulshan coffee shop manager admitted having a "very confidential" financial agreement with BAT, allowing them to run promotional campaigns at the café since 2021.

According to the restaurant owners in Gulshan and Banani, BAT has agreements with at least 20 restaurants for promotional purposes in these two upscale areas.

Two restaurant owners in Chattogram said they had a verbal agreement with BAT to display its brands and that they received some money every month as part of the deal. However, they are not receiving any money from BAT for about a year now.

At least two five-star hotels in Cox's Bazar also have BAT products display areas in their lobbies.

An official of one of these two hotels acknowledged that BAT provides them with cigarettes and promotional materials, but said he is not aware of any financial agreement with the tobacco company.

An official of the other five-star hotel did not respond to our calls and texts.

Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen did not respond to our questions sent to the senior information officer of the health ministry on WhatsApp.

Modi unveils coalition cabinet dominated by his party

AFP, *New Delhi*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday unveiled his coalition government after a surprise election setback lost his Hindu-nationalist party an overall majority.

The 71 members of his government took the oath of office after Modi on Sunday, with 11 posts going to coalition allies who extracted them in exchange for their support -- including five in the top 30 cabinet posts.

But Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) old guard dominate the list, with key posts unchanged -- signalling broad policy continuity.

That includes BJP loyalists Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman and S.Jaishankar -- the defence, interior, transport, finance and foreign ministers respectively, staying on in their jobs.

Powerful BJP president Jagat Prakash Nadda was named as health minister.

Posts given to coalition leaders include civil aviation, to Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), the BJP's biggest ally.

Other coalition posts include smaller ministries such as heavy industry, food processing and fisheries.

There are no Muslim lawmakers among his third-term lineup, unlike his past two governments, both formed after his right-wing BJP won a majority.

Modi's decade as premier has seen him cultivate an image as an aggressive champion of the country's majority Hindu faith, worrying minorities.

Israeli forces take a position in a street during a raid in the al-Faraa camp for Palestinian refugees near Tubas city in the occupied West Bank yesterday.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Far right surges in EU vote

Macron calls snap elections in France

AGENCIES

The snap election called by President Emmanuel Macron after Sunday's bruising loss to the far-right in European Parliament elections will be France's most fateful legislative vote in decades, its finance minister said yesterday.

Macron's shock decision amounts to a roll of the dice on his political future and that of France. It immediately sent the euro down, also hitting French stocks and government bonds.

The June 30 and July 7 ballot could, for the first time, hand a great deal of power to Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN), if they can transform their rising popularity into a win at home too - where the vote would also be about trust that it could run a major European government.

If the eurosceptic, anti-immigration RN did score a majority, Macron would remain president for three more years and continue to be in charge of defence and foreign policy, reports Reuters.

But he would lose the power to set the domestic agenda, ranging from economic policy to security and immigration, reports Reuters.

Germany will not hold a snap election despite calls for Olaf Scholz to step aside after his ruling coalition's dismal performance in the EU election, a spokesman for the chancellor said yesterday.

"The regular election date is next autumn (2025). And that's what we plan to do," Scholz's spokesman told a government press conference.

ISRAELI OFFENSIVE IN PALESTINIAN ENCLAVE

Many in Gaza back to eating 'one meal per day'

AGENCIES

Israel's relentless bombardment and obstruction of humanitarian efforts are making it nearly impossible for aid agencies to reach starving Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The flow of aid into Gaza has remained scarce, with many people now eating "only one meal per day", said Al Jazeera reporter Hind Khoudary.

"This is not only in the south, but also in the north" of Gaza, said Khoudary, adding that markets are largely empty and what food available is hard to afford for most people.

Khoudary has sent an update from Deir el-Balah's Al-Aqsa Hospital, where she said an extra emergency department has been opened to deal with the massive influx of injured patients.

The hospital, running on just one generator, remains flooded with sick and injured patients, and is performing surgeries on an "hourly basis", she said.

Israeli forces have withdrawn from the eastern part of Deir el-Balah, but civil defence teams were able to bring the bodies of five people who were killed in the area.

There have been a couple of air strikes in the area after the Israeli forces withdrew, as well as intensive artillery shelling throughout the night.

Al Jazeera's Hani Mahmoud has spoken to residents of the Nuseirat refugee camp who witnessed the Israeli military's operation there on Saturday that killed and injured hundreds of Palestinians.

Anaas Alayan, one resident of the camp, said Israeli special forces committed mass "executions" on the street. "I went down to the street and found bodies everywhere," he told Al Jazeera.

The military, which rescued four Israeli captives during the operation, killed at least 274 Palestinians, including at least 64 children during the day-time assault, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

The camp is now left with a "trail of destruction", according to Mahmoud.

With many of Gaza's water wells and pipelines destroyed in the offensive, accessing water has become a daily struggle for Palestinians in the coastal enclave.

Anas al-Jamal, a pregnant woman in the enclave, tells Al Jazeera she has to leave her home every day to search for water to carry home. "The water scarcity is severely affecting me because I'm supposed to rest and avoid strenuous physical activity," al-Jamal told Al Jazeera. "We're really struggling."

Israel's military offensive has killed at least 37,124 people in Gaza, also mostly civilians, according to the territory's health ministry.

The toll includes at least 40 deaths over the past 24 hours, the ministry said yesterday.

The offensive has brought widespread devastation to Gaza and displaced most of its 2.4 million inhabitants, reports AFP.

Another AL leader

FROM PAGE 12

think much should be said before the investigation [has concluded]."

"We're still saying we're closer to the truth. Once the body is confirmed, we will be able to reveal a lot to you. I've heard the statements of those who committed the murder. They said they dismembered the body. It's not known exactly where they kept it [the body parts]."

About Akhtaruzzaman, one of the masterminds who fled to the US, the home boss said, "You've seen that two cases have been filed. One was filed where the incident took place [Kolkata]. The lawmaker's daughter also filed a case in Dhaka. This incident involves both countries.

"Since it took place in their country [India], it's their responsibility to bring back and imprison their accused. As far as I know, India has an extradition treaty with the United States. In that case, the Indian government may get the benefit.

"We need proof that the recovered body parts belong to Azim. That's why a DNA test has been arranged. If the DNA matches that of his daughter, we can confirm it was Azim."

A law enforcement source said they already have evidence that the body parts, which were recovered on May 28 from the septic tank of the flat where the murder took place, belongs to a human.

Meanwhile, Amanullah and his nephew Tanvir Bhuiyan appealed for bail before a Dhaka court, which rejected the pleas.

Besides Babu, three other arrestees in Bangladesh -- Celesty Rahman, Amanullah, and Tanvir Bhuiyan – have made confessional statements and are in jail.

Jihad Howlader and Siam Hossain were arrested by West Bengal CID.

Heartbreak for Tigers

FROM PAGE 1

the next stage with wins in their final two group games against Nepal and the Netherlands after their two-wicket win in their opening fixture against Sri Lanka.

To the dismay of the fans, the Tigers failed to get 11 off the final over, failing to put away at least one of three juicy full tosses offered by left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj -- Jaker Ali managed two runs, Mahmudullah Riyad was caught in the boundary line and Taskin Ahmed miscued the final full-toss delivery.

Bangladesh bowlers, especially the pacers, were on top of their game as they helped restrict a strong South Africa batting line-up to 113 for six on a tricky New York surface where the average first innings score this tournament has been below 120.

In the low-scoring affair -- which has been the norm at this venue as even Pakistan fell short of a 120-run target just the day before -- Bangladesh saw somewhat of a top-order meltdown with the Tigers left in a spot of bother at four for 50 in 9.5 overs.

However, in a rescuing act, Towhid Hridoy and Mahmudullah stitched a 44-run fifth-wicket stand and took the game to a point where it looked like a win was almost within Bangladesh's grasp.

Hridoy played the perfect aggressor role the slow pitch in New York demanded, smashing Maharaj for two maximums just when Bangladesh needed to up the tempo in the middle overs.

What probably would bug most Bangladesh fans and experts is how Hridoy's innings of 37 off 34 balls, which also saw two fours, came to an end. Kagiso Rabada had him lbw in the very first ball of the 18th over only on umpire's call with the ball hitting the right-hander high on his thighs and shown as just clipping the leg stump during a review -- a call that might as well have sided with Bangladesh had it not been for a shockingly fast decision by England's Richard Illingworth following a meek appeal from the Proteas.

Bangladesh could not recover from there with the final over mishap seeing the Tigers at the wrong end of yet another heartbreak in an ICC event.

Earlier, pacers Tanzim Hasan Sakib and Taskin Ahmed spewed venom soon after South Africa elected to bat, with Sakib claiming three wickets and Taskin accounting for one to reduce the Proteas to four for 23 in 4.2 overs.

David Miller and Heinrich Klaasen stitched together a 79-run fifth-wicket stand to help South Africa avert a further collapse but Bangladesh bowlers tightened their grip in the latter stage, conceding just 13 runs in the last three overs with Mustafizur Rahman giving away just four in the final over.

Compromise, hold dialogue

FROM PAGE 12

elections. How many seats a party would win should not be the fundamental question, it should rather be how the election system works...," he said.

Asked whether a dialogue on the polls-time government is needed to settle the sharp division among the two major political parties, Habibul said, "I have some observations [regarding the political crisis over elections]. I will leave some suggestions with the next commission..."

He said that large political parties like Awami League, BNP, and Jatiya Party will need to understand the matter. "Should this impasse continue for another 100 years if they don't settle the issues? I think a solution is needed."

The CEC said the Bangladeshi politicians are well educated and they have the wisdom to find out a solution. He hoped that the politicians will take steps to resolve the political crisis.

Habibul said there is still an ongoing debate over the nature of the election-time government and both the major parties have rigid stance on this. He said participation of political parties in the January 7 national polls fell short of the EC's expectations.

He said that some lawmakers and cabinet members had tried to influence the recently completed upazila polls, but they failed to do so due to the steps taken by the commission.

The CEC said he thought people's trust in the election system and EC increased slightly due to the steps taken by the incumbent commission during the last parliamentary polls and local government elections.

Habibul said the average turnout in the five phases of upazila polls was 36.45 percent. He said he was satisfied with the elections as those were held by and large peacefully.

Three of a family killed

FROM PAGE 12

MAG Medical College Hospital, said Indranil Bhattacharya, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Shahporan Police Station.

Four others, including Karim's brother Aga Rahim Uddin, his wife Tahmina Begum, and their six-month-old baby, who got trapped in the adjacent house, managed to get out unharmed.

Following the disaster, locals sprang into action and began removing the fallen debris. Their efforts were soon joined by the city corporation, police, fire service, and finally the army.

Abdul Jalil, a distant relative of the victim who also lives in the area, told this newspaper, "It's not just us; many people live at the foot of the hill in this area."

Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA), Sylhet, said, "Many low-income families in Sylhet live precariously at the foot of hills, exposing themselves to the dangers of mudslides. Safer alternatives for settlements are urgently needed to prevent future disasters."

Mudslides have claimed lives in almost every year in the recent past.

On June 6, 2022, four members of a family died in Jaintapur upazila. The year before, a child died in Sylhet Sadar upazila on October 7, 2023.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
AZIMPUR PWD DIVISION, NEWMARKET, DHAKA.
Phone No: 02-223360276
e-mail: ee_ajmpr@pwd.gov.bd

Corrigendum of e-Tender Notice (OTM)

Memo No-25.36.2600.142.07.009.24-1503

Dated: 26.02.1431 Bang. / 09.06.2024 Eng.

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by the Executive Engineer, Azimpur PWD Division. Newmarket, Dhaka.

Tender ID No.	Type of Corrigendum	Tender Documents Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Documents Closing/Opening Date & Time
994652	Corrigendum in Notice and TDS	20-Jun-2024 15:00	20-Jun-2024 17:00
993991	Corrigendum in Notice and TDS	20-Jun-2024 15:00	20-Jun-2024 17:00
993990	Corrigendum in Notice and TDS	20-Jun-2024 15:00	20-Jun-2024 17:00
993977	Corrigendum in Notice and TDS	19-Jun-2024 17:00	20-Jun-2024 13:00
995577	Corrigendum in Notice and TDS	19-Jun-2024 17:00	20-Jun-2024 13:00
993992	Corrigendum in Notice and TDS	19-Jun-2024 17:00	20-Jun-2024 13:00

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উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

Invitation Ref. No. 46.50.3029.250.02.001.2024-180

Date: 10-06-2024

e-Tender Notice No. 07/2023-24 (Re-Tender)

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Package No.	Name of scheme	Tender ID	Tender/proposal document last selling/downloading date & time	Tender/proposal closing/opening date & time
FP/23-24/Rev-73	Supplying of pathological equipment's and 01 No. of desktop computer for Commissioner Joyal Abedin Poura Blood Bank and Pathology Centre under Feni Pourashava, Feni,	997802	25 June, 2024 Time: 16.00hr	26 June, 2024 Time: 13.00hr

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10.06.24
Md. Azizul Hoque
Executive Engineer (PE)
Feni Pourashava, Feni

GD- 972

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Don't reward corrupt public servants

Reinstating a corrupt official sets a dangerous precedent

We are shocked to learn of the reinstatement of an official at the youth and sports ministry who, only a few months ago, was dismissed on charges of embezzlement. According to a report by this daily, the move has raised questions among the ministry officials themselves. Indeed, such a decision would make any honest employee disappointed, and it also sets a dangerous precedent at a time when the widespread corruption in public sector demands exemplary actions, not exemptions.

The official in question, Farhat Noor, and three others were found guilty of embezzling Tk 11.52 crore during an investigation conducted by a probe body formed by the ministry. Upon finding proof, the ministry decided to terminate the four officials, and the decision was endorsed by the Bangladesh Public Service Commission on February 12. But on June 5, the ministry issued an order through a gazette notification reinstating Noor in his old position, in Moulvibazar. The gazette further mentions that Noor pleaded for withdrawal of his dismissal in an appeal filed with the PMO on March 18.

Another report also caught our attention yesterday. According to Prothom Alo, Dr Fatema Doza, an associate professor at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), has been accused of many irregularities including being absent from work for one and a half years, presenting fake invitation to an overseas seminar, etc. She has even been charged with the abuse of domestic help. Several internal investigations found proof supporting the allegations, and yet, there has been no repercussion as she continues to hold on to her position, enjoying all the benefits that come with it.

How would the responsible government organisations justify their inactions? Why is it that government employees like Noor and Doza get away with their criminal acts with such impunity? Has the charge against Farhat Noor been disproven? As far as we know, there is no indication of that. What drove the ministry to backtrack on its own decision, then? And how is it that Fatema Doza has been able to carry on with her job for years when she has been found guilty of the charges against her? It goes without saying that these circumstances directly contradict the government's own stated policy of zero tolerance for corruption.

These two cases once again show how the public sector is being run without any functional accountability, and exhibit why there is a trust deficit between the public and the government. If there was a strong mechanism in place to ensure accountability in public service, so many government employees would not be so bold to carry out their corruption and irregularities. This state of affairs cannot continue in a democratic system. We urge the government to establish a modern, accountable bureaucracy where officials paid by the public are held responsible for any breach of conduct, and indeed crimes.

Cover all open drains before monsoon

Another death-by-fall in Chattogram highlights the urgency

Yet another life was lost in Chattogram's notorious open drains. These recurring drain-related fatalities—at least 11 since 2017—can no longer be written off as accidents. It's criminal negligence on the part of responsible agencies, and it is time officials at the Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) and the Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) accepted responsibility for them.

In the last seven years, the media hammered ad nauseam the urgency of covering the open drains and building retaining walls along the canals, but all that seemed to fall on deaf ears. In 2021, the CCC found 5,527 risky spots along the drains, canals and footpaths across a total of 19 square kilometres in the city. Such findings should have spurred urgent measures to mitigate the risks by building necessary infrastructure. However, three years on, only 80 percent of the risky spots along open drains have been covered with slabs and around 70 percent of retaining walls built along canals, as claimed by a top CCC official recently. Obviously, that did not prevent the death of seven-year-old Saidul Islam, who fell into an uncovered drain near his home at the Goshaildanga area of Agrabad, or other recent victims.

Usually, these open drains and canals become death traps for unsuspecting pedestrians during the monsoon season when, clogged with silt and waste, they overflow or get submerged. However, the circumstances of Saidul's death—he went missing on Saturday and his body was found a day later at a time when there was no waterlogging—reveal the severity of the risks. It is unfathomable why four ongoing projects worth Tk 14,389 crore, meant to free the city from the curse of waterlogging partly by renovating the canals and drains, did not take this into consideration. Mega projects are supposed to not just make life easier, but also keep it safe.

Instead of playing the blame game about who is responsible for installing slabs and building retaining walls, the CDA and the CCC must work collaboratively to make all the drains and connected canals safer. Any jurisdictional or fund-related issues delaying their interventions must be straightened out immediately. Also, with the monsoon season just around the corner, some temporary measures like installing warning signs in front of open drains will be very helpful.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

2010 FIFA WORLD CUP
SOUTH AFRICA

First Football World Cup in Africa

On this day in 2010, the 19th World Cup football tournament opened in the host country of South Africa, marking the first time that the event was played in the African continent. Spain won the tournament.

A philosophically incorrect, structurally frail budget

OPEN SKY

Dr Birupaksha Paul
is professor of economics at the State University of New York in Cortland, US.

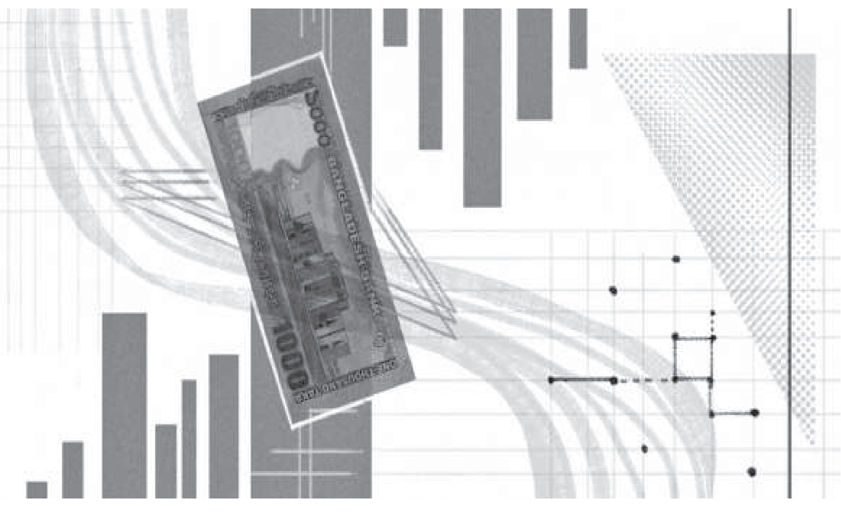
BIRUPAKSHA PAUL

The theory of rational expectations, originally proposed by economist John Muth in 1961 and later reenergised by Robert Lucas in the 1970s, asserts that people take rational decisions based on available information. And that is what people expected from this year's budget, whose steering wheel was in the hands of the new finance minister, someone with a respectable background in diplomacy and economics. But they were left frustrated.

Given the outcome of multiple desperate budgets prepared by the previous finance minister, who was greatly responsible for what the nation faces today, rational expectations were formed to see a sober budget with a touch of austerity, higher fiscal capacity, reasonably lower development allocations, and finally, pragmatic figures of inflation and growth. We didn't see that. A person who fell sick after eating biriyani for four days in a row was supposed to eat a vegan meal with the doctor's prescription. But biriyani wasn't dropped from the menu, suggesting that the sickness will continue. And thus, the budget is philosophically incorrect given the economy's critical situation involving the dollar crisis, forex reserve depletion, high inflation, and massive unemployment. When the finance minister claims that the overall approach is "contractionary," it turns into an object of ridicule because the budget is evidently expansionary.

The proposed budget is 11.6 percent bigger than the revised budget of FY2024. Had that expansion been serviced by increasing the fiscal capacity without expanding the burden of the fiscal deficit, it wouldn't have been a problem. But that hasn't happened. The budget deficit has increased by 8.3 percent, requiring funds from the banking sector which is already limping on one leg. And that makes the budget structurally frail and rationally unexpected. The increase in foreign borrowing will be as high as 19.74 percent, and that is a sign of a growing risk of financing.

Of course, contracting the body of current expenditure is tough because salaries and benefits can't be depressed. Rather, there is always an upward pressure on public salaries, and this is more so when price hikes are a persistent pain in the neck. But contracting development projects and abandoning some of them could have been carried out for a short time when the tax-GDP ratio has dwindled over the last 10 years, making it one of the lowest in the world. In contrast, the spectacular growth of tycoons and oligarchs in Bangladesh testifies that the tax administration isn't doing its job adequately to address the growing income inequality in society. The budget fails to address that.



FILE VISUAL: **REHNUMA PROSHOON**

The fiscal incapacity and the ensuing structural weakness originate from a perverse philosophy of pampering the superrich, refuelling the bank defaulters, and excusing the capital-market plunderers as well as money launderers. Tax dodgers, bank defaulters, and illicit fund-traffickers have formed the "Devil's Triangle," just like the Bermuda Triangle—a loosely defined area in the North Atlantic Ocean where ships, planes, and people are said to have mysteriously disappeared. The budget displayed no mechanism to break the triangle. Rather it offers an opportunity of whitening black or laundered money by paying only 15 percent tax. It's a glaring example of how the budget endorsed the instances of moral hazard and adverse selection.

The Nobel laureate economist George Akerlof theorised the situation of adverse selection when one party with access to more information takes advantage of it while the other party has no clue about it. If a person knows that he will die soon and buys life insurance, while the insurer has no access to that information, it's an example of adverse selection. The players of the black economy will create more barriers to information and take advantage of tax relief when policymakers pardon their evil deeds. Another Nobel laureate, Kenneth Arrow theorised moral hazard as a catalyst for price hiking mechanism in insurance. A situation where a person takes less care of his cell phone that is covered by insurance is an example of moral hazard. When the finance minister ensures that the money traffickers will have avenues to whiten their ill-gotten wealth, they will pay no attention to the law and governance.

How much money the government will obtain from whitening the black money is not a point; the main concern is that it will do more harm than good to the party manifesto of the Awami League where the prime minister spelled out zero tolerance against corruption. The opponents will take it as a bad reference of double standards in the future. The long-term loss will outweigh the short-term gain. The party didn't do any cost-benefit analysis before indulging in such an unethical outlet. If the budget is ethically weak, it must be philosophically incorrect.

Of course, the budget has several strengths such as expansion of the social safety net, higher tax rates for higher income, focus of science and technology, rural development, employment generation projects, improvements in health facilities, building roads and bridges, investing in education and research, and finally, its terrible eagerness to curb inflation. But the simultaneous target for a relatively high growth at 6.75 percent is economically contradictory because growth is inflationary, as economist Robert Phillips' seminal work on the Phillips curve has suggested.

While more than 80 percent of the economy is controlled by private stakeholders, assuming higher growth would necessitate higher credit growth from the banking sector that often gets dehydrated due to lack of liquidity. The ambitious budget would take a big chunk of liquidity, depriving the small and medium private enterprises while big parties will rob the banks. Targeting higher growth and thus placing a demand for Tk 1,37,500 lakh crore from the banking sector to plug the deficit gap is contradictory to the goal of taming inflation.

Interest rates are already skyrocketing, and further grabbing of funds by the government will simply put upward pressures on interest rates, bumping the production costs up. It will again ignite cost-push inflation, which is much harder than the demand-pull inflation to downgrade. That is why economists expected that the new finance minister will sincerely increase taxes on the superrich and drastically reduce the development budget. This is warranted now to reach a point of no borrowing from banks at least for one or two years in a row to eclipse inflationary flames. We didn't see that. When commitments don't match with actions, the budget becomes methodologically disturbing too.

To cut CO2 emissions, let's tackle overproduction

RMG NOTES

Mostafiz Uddin
is managing director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

Recently, a video from a factory of Chinese omnichannel brand Temu went viral. It showed mountains of Temu packages being piled on top of one another, with employees forlornly attempting to sort them. The video was described on social media as a dystopian nightmare.

Such videos are not rare. We have known for a long time that the world is producing too much. Overproduction is a significant global issue with wide-ranging economic, environmental, and social impacts. This problem is particularly evident in industries like fashion, food, and electronics. Overproduction contributes to increased waste and pollution. It leads to the depletion of natural resources.

There is an environmental impact. Unsold goods often end up in landfills, contributing to environmental degradation. There is also an economic impact as financial losses for companies due to unsold inventory. Meanwhile, price reductions and markdowns to clear excess stock can erode profit margins. Overproduction can lead to labour exploitation and poor working conditions, especially in industries like fast fashion.

It can also cause market saturation, negatively affecting small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Quantifying the exact financial impact of overproduction globally is challenging due to the vastness and diversity of industries. However, there are notable examples and estimates.

The fashion industry is a major culprit, with some estimates suggesting that 30 percent of clothes produced each season are never sold. In the UK alone, around 140 million pounds worth of clothing is sent to landfill each year.

This is insane. We live in a world where approximately 9.2 percent of the global population lives on less than $2.15 per day, according to research in 2019. These figures are likely to have worsened since the pandemic, which saw a transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich.

How can we be producing so much that are thrown away when so many people cannot afford basic levels of sustenance?

Consider all of the above and then remember that global leaders never tire of telling us about targets that have been set to mitigate the effects of climate change and limit global warming. These targets are outlined in international agreements, national commitments, and various initiatives by governments, organisations, and corporations. The main climate targets include the Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and which is the primary international accord guiding global climate action. This aims to limit global warming, keeping the global average temperature increase well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. It will also see countries pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The ultimate goal is to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the second half of this century.

So, what is causing global warming? We know rising CO2 emissions are a major contributor. And the fashion industry is responsible for approximately 2.1 billion metric tonnes of CO2 emissions annually, which is about four percent of the global total, according to a report by McKinsey & Company and the Global Fashion Agenda.

> **Quantifying the exact financial impact of overproduction globally is challenging due to the vastness and diversity of industries. However, there are notable examples and estimates. The fashion industry is a major culprit, with some estimates suggesting that 30 percent of clothes produced each season are never sold. In the UK alone, around 140 million pounds worth of clothing is sent to landfill each year.**

Major fashion brands have invested a lot of time and resources into reducing and mitigating their CO2 emissions in recent years. All sorts of options are now being considered, including futuristic carbon capture technologies.

While I don't want to be critical of such efforts, I wonder if we are jumping the gun. Would it not be better to focus all our efforts on tackling overproduction first of all?

I mentioned a statistic early about 30 percent of fashion products not being sold. This figure is hard to verify, and my guess is it is slightly exaggerated. Fashion has invested heavily in better logistics and more accurate forecasting models in recent times.

But let's cut the figure in half and suggest it is 15 percent. If 15 percent of clothing produced is unnecessary that means 15 percent of CO2 emissions are also unnecessary. By definition, if the fashion industry tackled overproduction, it could cut CO2 emissions by 15 percent. This would be a remarkable achievement.

As an industry, fashion and its supply chains spend a lot of time pondering how they can reduce emissions. Shifting to renewable energy is one obvious means of doing this, and the renewable energy transition in Bangladesh, which I expect to see gather pace in the coming years, is to be welcomed.

But if our industry carries on overproducing—like many other industries, it should be added—it will make an already huge problem that much more challenging. The world does not need everything it produces. Nor does the fashion industry. We routinely produce too much, which leads to unnecessary and harmful CO2 emissions.

Industry leaders should tackle this challenge head-on. Perhaps regulators could also take a look, and consider more stringent methods to clamp down on and penalise excessive production. One way of doing this is through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes, which compel companies to take more responsibility for waste production in their supply chains.

Another way is through better logistics and use of tools such as AI to better streamline and manage supply chains. Some brands are investing in better technologies but at the moment, it is often cheaper just to produce too much than to make the necessary investments. That's why regulation could be the only way to manage this issue.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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reporting@thedailystar.net

Advertisement: 01711623910
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01711623906

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What will happen when the 'Doomsday Glacier' disintegrates?

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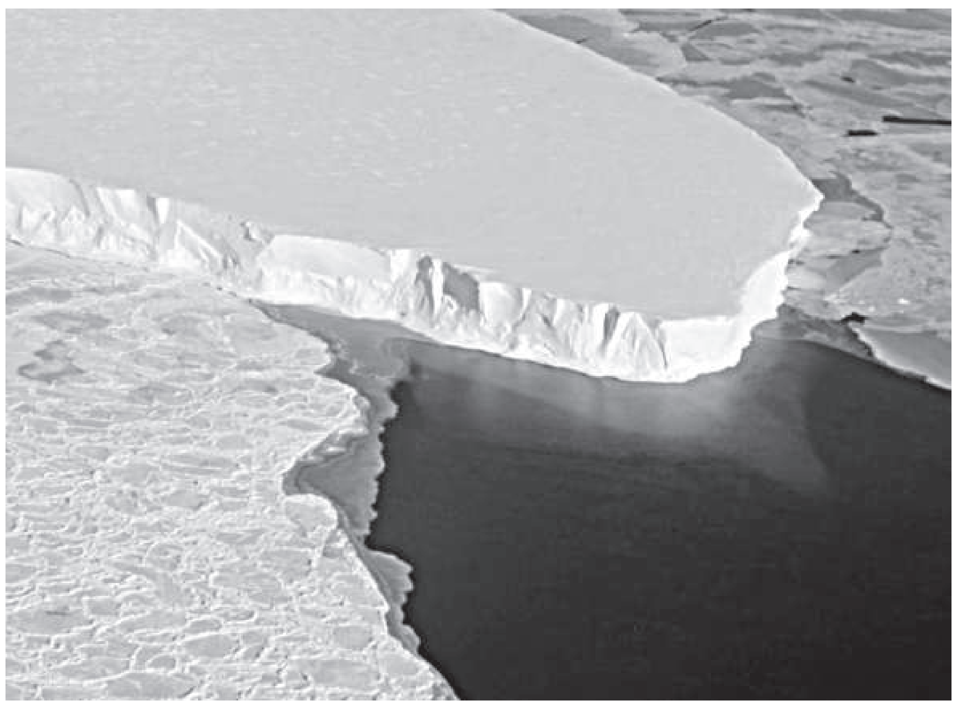
QUAMRUL HAIDER



The Thwaites Glacier in Antarctica.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Punishing heatwaves is not the only measure of global climate change that is undergoing an abnormally rapid change. Numerous other indicators, such as violent storms, long-lasting droughts, devastating floods, raging wildfires, and permafrost thawing, among others, suggest a more general global warming trend. An indicator that does not get much attention but will nevertheless have reverberating effects across the globe is the melting of glaciers and ice sheets, particularly in Antarctica.

As climate change drives global temperatures ever higher, glaciers and ice sheets in the polar and mountainous regions will inevitably melt. According to a paper published in Nature Climate Change (June 2020), Antarctica has warmed at over three times the global rate since 1989. As a result, glaciers in Antarctica, which contain about 90 percent of all the ice on Earth, are flowing into the oceans where they melt and raise the sea level. From 1979 to 1989, some 40 billion tonnes of glacial ice in Antarctica melted each year. A study published in 2019 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences reported that the amount jumped to 252 billion tonnes each year starting in 2009.

Since 1880, global sea levels have risen roughly 23 centimetres. Over the past decade, the sea level is rising at a much faster rate of 3.9 millimetres per year, as measured by NASA's satellite-based radar altimeters. The rise is mostly due to a combination of water melting from glaciers and ice sheets, as well as thermal expansion of seawater as it warms.

Scientists are particularly concerned about Thwaites Glacier, a massive block of ice in West Antarctica, approximately the size of Florida. It is nicknamed the "Doomsday Glacier" because if it were to collapse and melt, it could single-handedly cause global sea levels to rise by as much as 65 centimetres. As one of the fastest melting glaciers currently losing 50 billion tonnes of ice annually, Thwaites already accounts for four percent (0.15 millimetre) of the planet's sea level rise. In the 1990s, it was losing just over 10 billion tonnes of ice a year.

When all the glaciers in Antarctica will melt, sea level will rise some 70 metres, according to the US Geological Survey. Moreover, if the rest of the glaciers on Earth melts too, 7.6 metres will be added on top of Antarctica's drastic total, wiping out most of the low-lying countries in the world, while in urban settings along coastlines, it will threaten infrastructure vital for local jobs and regional industries.

The coastal edge of Thwaites that interacts with the ocean stretches 120 kilometres, while its thickness from bedrock to surface measures between 800 metres and 1,200 metres. A platform of ice called an ice shelf that floats above the Pine Island Bay acts as a brace, holding this frosty goliath back on the land, thereby slowing its journey to the sea. Thwaites also acts as a natural dam to the surrounding ice in West Antarctica and hence provides an important defence against the sea-level rise.

Ice shelves are highly vulnerable to a warming ocean. Accordingly, scientists believe that a complete collapse of Thwaites' ice shelf will spell the beginning of the end for the glacier. Without its ice shelf, the glacier will discharge all of its ice into the Amundsen Sea, which, after melting, will be devastating for coastal communities around the world. That is why scientists are interested in studying the interaction between ice shelves and oceans in an increasingly hotter world, in part because they are concerned about the stability of the ice shelves of Antarctica's other glaciers.

In a study published in May 2024 in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers at the University of California, Irvine, using high-resolution images from satellites and hydrological data, found evidence of the intrusion of warm, high-pressure seawater at depths many kilometres beneath the grounded ice of Thwaites, causing "vigorous melting."

The widespread contact between the warm seawater and the glacier is rapidly melting the submerged ice at the underbelly and detaching it from the bedrock. In other words, seepage of warm water under Thwaites' base is "eating away at the ice shelf," which, in turn, is slackening its grip on the underwater seamount that keeps the glacier stable. Consequently, it is highly probable that Thwaites could disintegrate much faster than previously thought, six times faster than in the 1980s.

The researchers also noted the development of cracks and crevasses on the ice shelf of Thwaites, indicating that it is being structurally weakened. Because cracking and fracturing can have reinforcing feedback effect, the ice shelf will be further weakened, thus hastening its disintegration. Indeed, all evidences suggest that the ice shelf's "final collapse" could occur sooner rather than later, probably in less than a decade.

Scientists are particularly concerned about Thwaites Glacier, a massive block of ice in West Antarctica, approximately the size of Florida. It is nicknamed the "Doomsday Glacier" because if it were to collapse and melt, it could single-handedly cause global sea levels to rise by as much as 65 centimetres.

The findings by the researchers are alarming because the disintegration of Thwaites due to the deadly punch-jab-uppercut combination of melting from below, ice-shattering and eroding ice shelf could trigger the collapse of other glaciers held in check by Thwaites, potentially raising the global sea level by more than three metres in the coming decades. This is surely an ominous sign of the impending effects of climate change from the world's largest glacier.

Previous computer models that forecast Thwaites' future did not account for seawater intrusions past the grounding line, which is the boundary between grounded and floating ice, although a study a decade ago concluded that such intrusions could double the speed of the glacier's melting. It is therefore expected that findings from all the studies will be used to fine-tune models to predict the Doomsday Glacier's future and make projections about sea-level rise more accurate.

Finally, there may be uncertainties about exactly what will happen in West Antarctica because predicting the speed of ice loss of glaciers and sea-level rise is not an easy task. And modelling glaciers, which are hydrologically dynamic, remote, and difficult to study, is a technological challenge. Yet, one thing is for sure. Glaciers will accumulate snow in winter and lose ice to melting in summer. But in a warming climate, melting will outstrip accumulation, resulting in a net loss of ice, thereupon adding to the already rising global sea levels.

Play should be a fundamental right for all children

Debra Efroymson
is executive director of the Institute of Wellbeing, Bangladesh.

DEBRA EFROYMSON

FILE PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Children need to play, and to ensure that they can, we need policies, training, and funding.

Children's busy lives of school, tutoring, homework, and chores leave little time for anything else—including active movement and play. Yet play is vital to children's physical, mental, and social wellbeing. Play is not a unique human construction: baby animals engage in play, using it to learn a variety of important skills.

When children play—preferably at least some of the time outdoors and among others—they get necessary exercise, gain coordination, learn how to cooperate and socialise with others, and gain relief from stress. Play builds resilience, instils confidence, teaches creativity, and is vital for children's full development.

Many years ago, I encouraged my winter interns from the Asian University of Women to organise a parklet near our office. A parklet involves temporarily or permanently converting one or more car parking spaces into a space for play.

When my interns returned, flush with excitement, I listened to their stories about the euphoria of the local children on being invited to come out of their homes and into the street to play. But what I particularly remember is the story of one girl who finally made it downstairs just as my interns were packing up. They offered her a hula hoop, which she cheerfully used.

"Did you have fun?" they asked her when she paused to rest.

"Yeah!" she exclaimed.

"Where do you usually play?" they then asked.

"Play?" she looked at them blankly. "I don't play."

Upon hearing their story, I was shocked. I joke with my staff about having climbed mango trees and raced around rice paddy as a child; in fact, I played house in the mountains and converted rocks into dolls. My best friend and I would play as monkeys in the front yard, running to hide every time a lion (car) passed on the street "trying to kill us." (We were right on point there.)

Play was a vital part of childhood; I couldn't imagine not being given the opportunity. Nor did all the time I spent playing take away from my achievements. On the contrary, I would argue that the active play and the imagination and creativity that play stimulated helped contribute to my academic and professional success.

Play was a vital part of childhood; I couldn't imagine not being given the opportunity. Nor did all the time I spent playing take away from my achievements. On the contrary, I would argue that the active play and the imagination and creativity that play stimulated helped contribute to my academic and professional success.

It is tragic that so many parents and guardians are unaware of the vital nature of play in children's lives, believing it is a frivolous activity, a waste of time, or even a dangerous activity that puts children in contact with potentially harmful objects and people. In the effort to protect our children and prepare them for a demanding educational and future professional environment, too often we harm those we most cherish.

In order to bring attention to the importance of play, an international coalition of organisations including BRAC has come together to successfully convince the United Nations to make June 11 the International Day of Play.

As the organisers of the International Day of Play point out, play is (or should be) a fundamental right for all children. And yet too many children can't play because they lack the time or the opportunity, busy helping their families, studying, or unable to go outdoors due to horrific traffic.

Children need to play, and to ensure that they can, we need policies, training, and funding so that play can become integrated into our educational institutions and communities. Those policies must ensure that all children have the ability to play, including those with disabilities, refugees, and other vulnerable children.

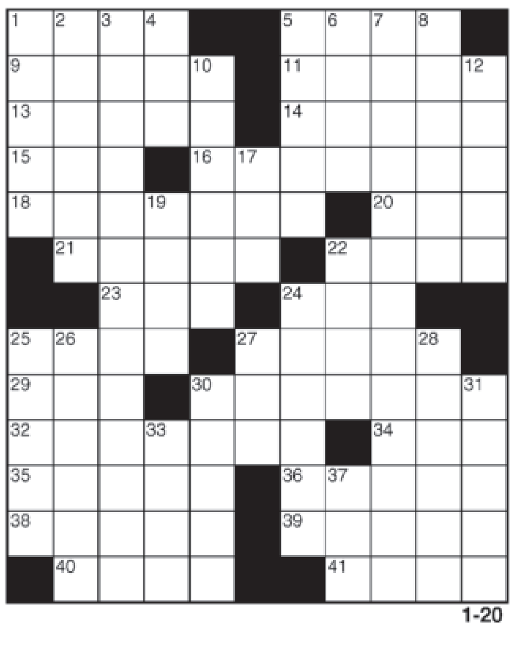
While virtually all children understand that play is important, one in three children in the world do not get to play. Children involved in the International Day of Play are calling on decision-makers and other adults to provide children with time and opportunity to play in diverse and inclusive ways, including in school, to listen to children's needs, and to support children in developing needed social and other skills through play.

Understanding the vital nature of play, and seeing how neglected it is at least in the cities of Bangladesh, I can only encourage my readers to learn more about the issue and join in the #InternationalDayofPlay. Our children will be healthier, happier, more resilient, more confident, and more able to take on the many challenges they will face in life. What's not to like?

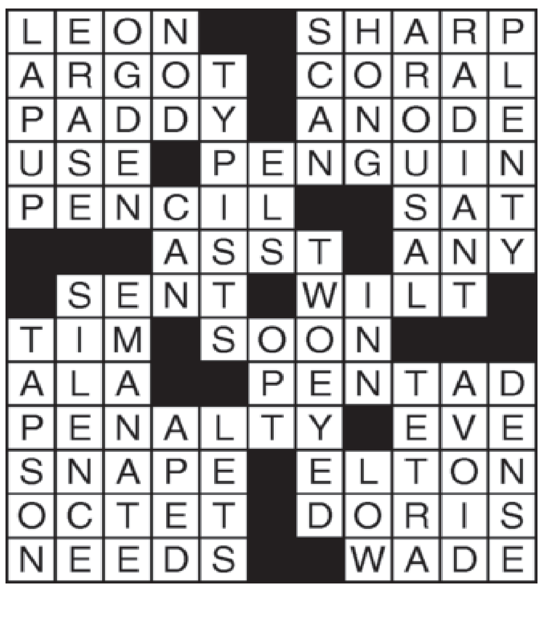
CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Dearth
5 Thin cut
9 Rose pest
11 Broken, in a way
13 Ill will
14 Plentiful
15 Building wing
16 Gym item
18 Station workers
20 Nonsense
21 Wave setting
22 Storage spots
23 Sturdy wood
24 Pot brew
25 Mailbox part
27 Bargains
29 Join together
30 Part of a London bus
32 Outside our atmosphere
34 "Exodus" hero
35 Furtive fellow
36 Made mistakes
38 Door part
39 Located
40 Unspoiled spot
41 Cry of distress

DOWN
1 Surgical tool
2 Orchard crop
3 Arthur C. Clarke book
4 Young fox
5 Sky sights
6 Flock member
7Arthur C. Clarke book
8 Rat out
10 Go ashore
12 Shoulder muscles
17 Zoo beast
19 Winter wear
22 Rosary unit
24 Conical abodes
25 Sweeping sound
26 "Of Mice and Men" character
27 Clinic nickname
28 Phone part
30 Occupied
31 Boy, slangily
33 Newspaper part
37 Carnival city



THURSDAY'S ANSWERS



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Great to have on ice at home —
Order a case!
Coca-Cola
Come on o... Have
h... ad...

ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

How to not handle a crisis communication:

A LESSON FROM COCA-COLA

The current controversy around Coca-Cola is a perfect example of what can go wrong when communication is not handled well. The company, in this case, had to eat at least some humble pie after it fostered bad publicity by its handling of the situation around its bottling firm in the Gaza strip. This link has led to calls for its boycott in several countries, while in Bangladesh, consumers are increasingly turning to local alternatives.

ZARIF FAIAZ

To douse the fire, Coca-Cola Bangladesh rolled out an ad dealing with the matter at hand. Yet the campaign has not only failed to silence its audience, it has made things worse.

The advertisement: a case study in poor execution

The recent advertisement by Coca-Cola Bangladesh was just a textbook case of how not to handle a crisis. The starting frame is a disaster, lacking any knowledge of the issue at hand and why people are upset. The copywriting and dialogues are subpar, failing to be up to the mark for such a delicate subject, which needed a lot of finesse and sensitivity. Instead of making reasonable arguments or even accepting the consumers' concerns, it just offers obscure, non-committal comments against a backdrop that leads to a conclusion of a statement that "Coca-Cola even has a factory in Palestine."

The hurriedly done, poorly researched narrative did not serve the cause but signaled exactly a tone-deaf crisis approach. These are clear indications that the campaign's creators did no homework to try to understand the socio-political context or the depth of feeling on the matter among the public.

Coca-Cola's iconic advertisements: a stark contrast

Coca-Cola has a storied history of producing iconic advertisements that have not only resonated with audiences but have also become case studies in effective marketing. From the "I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke" campaign in the 1970s, which promoted a message of unity and harmony, to the "Share a Coke" campaign that personalised the brand experience, Coca-Cola has consistently set high standards in advertising.

The campaigns worked because they were the result of significant research and insight, carefully and thoughtfully designed, resonant with deep values and emotions, and culturally intelligent. They showed a great understanding of the intended audience, and were carried out in a way that is oddly missing from the most recent Bangladeshi ad.

The fundamentals of effective crisis communication

Crisis communication is an art and a science. It requires a nuanced approach that balances transparency, empathy, and strategic messaging. Here are some best practices that Coca-Cola's advertising team should have adhered to:

Understanding the audience

Before crafting any message, it is crucial to understand the audience's concerns and perspectives. This involves thorough research and genuine engagement with the affected communities. In Coca-Cola's case, acknowledging the historical and political sensitivities surrounding the Gaza Strip would have been a prudent starting point.

Transparent and empathetic communication

In times of crisis, transparency and empathy are paramount. Brands must acknowledge the issue at hand, express genuine concern, and provide clear, factual information. Coca-Cola's ad failed to demonstrate empathy or offer any substantial information that could alleviate the public's concerns.

Strategic messaging

Effective crisis communication requires strategic messaging that is coherent, consistent, and aligned with the brand's values. The messaging should aim to rebuild trust and demonstrate a commitment to resolving the issue.

Engaging with stakeholders

Engaging with key stakeholders, including customers, employees, and community leaders, is essential in managing a crisis. This engagement should be ongoing and not limited to a one-off advertisement. Coca-Cola could have benefited from a more inclusive approach that involved dialogue with its Bangladeshi consumers and other relevant parties.

The recent advertisement from Coca-Cola in Bangladesh is a good example of how a lack of adept crisis communication can significantly hurt a brand's reputation. It is not the first company to screw up when trying to be sensitive, and likely won't be the last, but it serves as a perfect example of why we need to take a critical, empathetic, and transparent approach to delicate situations if we want polarized communities to trust us.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited

SAP SD Specialist

Deadline: June 12

Eligibility:

- Bachelor's or Master's degree in Computer Science/Software Engineering or relevant fields.

Minimum experience: 4 years

Standard Chartered Bank

Associate Director, Outbound

Deadline: June 12

Eligibility:

- Financial graduate, preferably with experience in consumer banking roles.

Minimum experience: 7 years

Optimizely

Full-stack .NET developer

Deadline: N/A

Eligibility:

- Prior hands-on experience in .NET development encompassing both Framework and Core.

Minimum experience: 3-5 years

Embassy of Sweden
Dhaka

Embassy of Sweden, Dhaka

Trade Facilitator

Deadline: June 19

Eligibility:

- University degree in Economics or Business Admin (or equivalent academic qualification).

Minimum experience: 2 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

> "Trust yourself. You probably know more than you think you do. Trust that you can learn anything."
>
> MELINDA FRENCH GATES

FREE GOOGLE COURSES

to level up your AI skills

Are you curious about artificial intelligence (AI) and its growing impact on the world? Whether you're a complete beginner or looking to expand your existing knowledge, here is a quick list of some introductory-level, free courses you can take in Google's Cloud Skill Boost platform to improve your knowledge and understanding of AI and the subject's many principles.

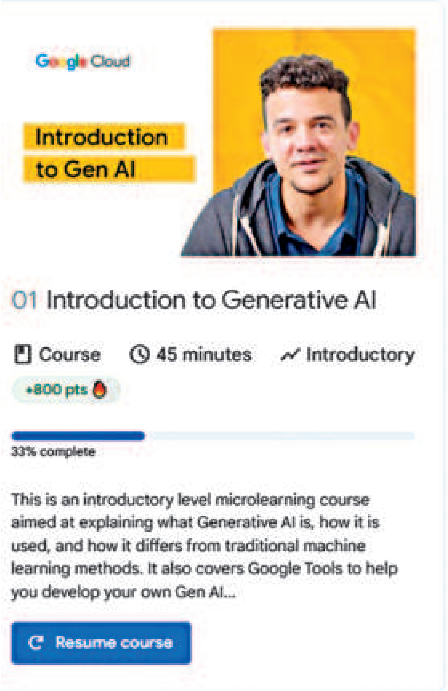
Building a strong foundation

If you're interested in learning about how AI tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini work, Google's 'Introduction to Generative AI Learning Path' is a good place to start. Consisting of video lectures, reading materials, and a quiz - the completion of which will earn you a 'Completion Badge, this learning path is a recommended option for beginner learners. It consists of the following three lecture-based courses.

Introduction to Generative AI: This introductory course demystifies generative AI, a powerful technology capable of creating entirely new data. You will learn how it works, its applications, and how it differs from traditional machine learning methods.

Introduction to Large Language Models (LLMs): Dive deeper into the world of LLMs. This course explores what these AI models are, the exciting possibilities they offer, and how to fine-tune them for even better performance.

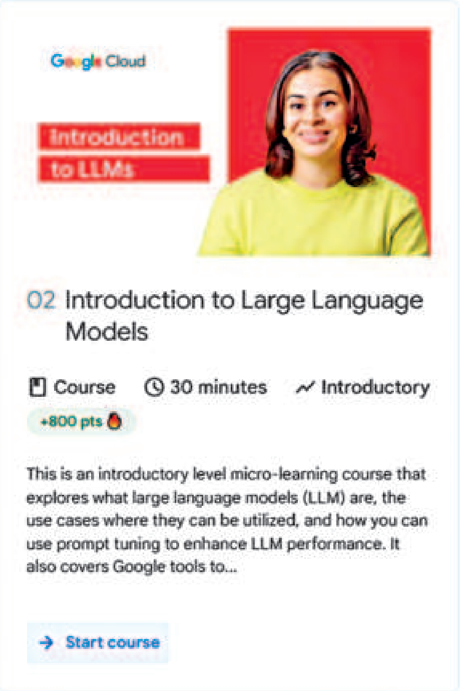
Introduction to Responsible AI: This course explores the concept of responsible AI, its importance, and Google's commitment to ethical AI practices. While introductory level, this course is a must-try if you want to get into the industrial standards and practices of AI.



01 Introduction to Generative AI

Course · 45 minutes · Introductory
+800 pts
33% complete

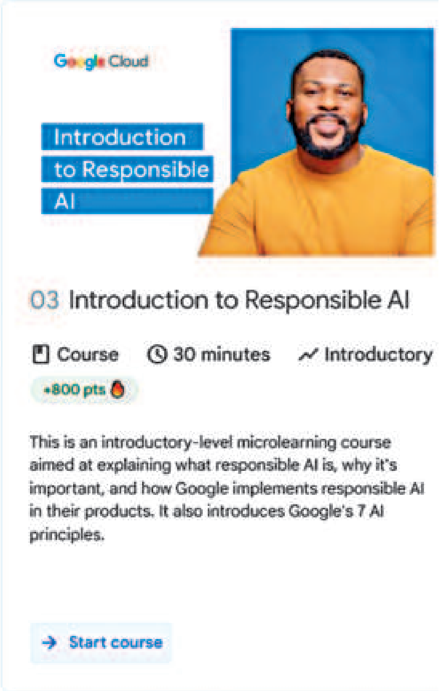
This is an introductory level microlearning course aimed at explaining what Generative AI is, how it is used, and how it differs from traditional machine learning methods. It also covers Google Tools to help you develop your own Gen AI...



02 Introduction to Large Language Models

Course · 30 minutes · Introductory
+800 pts

This is an introductory level micro-learning course that explores what large language models (LLM) are, the use cases where they can be utilized, and how you can use prompt tuning to enhance LLM performance. It also covers Google tools to...



03 Introduction to Responsible AI

Course · 30 minutes · Introductory
+800 pts

This is an introductory-level microlearning course aimed at explaining what responsible AI is, why it's important, and how Google implements responsible AI in their products. It also introduces Google's 7 AI principles.

Expanding your knowledge

For a broader understanding of AI's potential, explore these additional courses. These are also introductory-level courses, but you might still need other complementary introductory-level courses to fully grasp all the learning content.

Innovating with Google Cloud Artificial Intelligence: This course provides a high-level overview of how organisations can leverage AI and machine learning to transform their businesses.

Introduction to Vertex AI Studio: This course will acquaint you with Vertex AI Studio, a powerful tool for building and customising generative AI models through interactive lessons and hands-on labs.

Introduction to Image Generation: This course delves into diffusion models, a cutting-edge technology powering many image generation tools. Learn the theory behind these models and how they can be trained and deployed using Google Cloud's Vertex AI platform.

Deepening your expertise

If you're ready to take a step further and gain hands-on experience, consider these in-depth courses.

Prompt Design in Vertex AI: This interactive course delves into prompt design, a crucial aspect of working with generative AI. Through labs and challenges, you will learn to craft effective prompts, guide AI outputs, and apply these techniques to real-world marketing scenarios.

Responsible AI: Applying AI Principles with Google Cloud: This course is part of the 'Google Cloud Next 2023 Learning Path', with which you can explore how Google Cloud integrates responsible AI principles into its products and services, offering valuable insights for your own AI endeavours.

SPORT

What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV AND STAR SPORTS 1
T20 World Cup
Pakistan vs Canada
Live from 8:30 pm
Sri Lanka vs Nepal
Live from 5:30 am

(Wednesday)
SONY SPORTS 2
FIFA friendly
Azerbaijan vs Kazakhstan
Live from 10:00 pm
Moldova vs Ukraine
Live from 11:00 pm

PACERS DELIGHT
but Tigers suffer New York heartbreak

ASHFAQ-UL-ALAM

Before Bangladesh fans got their hearts shattered to a million pieces with an agonising four-run defeat to South Africa, they were treated with the sight of their pace trio making the opposition batters dance to their tunes on an unpredictable pitch at the Nassau Country Cricket Stadium in New York yesterday.

Although the Group D fixture of the ICC T20 World Cup ended in a gut-wrenching defeat for the Tigers, they had plenty to take from the game, especially from the bowling front as their pacers returned to the basics to torment the batters on another testing pitch.

The Tigers pace trio of Tanzim Sakib, Taskin Ahmed and Mustafizur Rahman dominated the Proteas and restricted them to 113 for four, which in the end proved four runs too many.

Tanzim was the star performer of the lot, finishing with a career-best of 3-18, while Taskin took 2-19. Mustafizur went wicketless but conceded a miserly 18 off his four overs, including a four-run final over.

The three pacers collectively conceded just 4.59 runs per over in the 12 overs they bowled, six of which occurred in the Powerplay.

The irony was, in a format where bowlers usually have to depend on their bag of tricks to contain the onslaught of batters, the Bangladesh pacers found all their success by sticking to the basics and letting the erratic pitch do the rest.

"We saw all matches have been low-scoring in New York. Tried to stick to the basics and that worked," Tanzim said after the conclusion of the first innings.

There was a deliberate attempt from the pacers of both teams to pitch the ball on a good length or maybe just a little behind to extract variable bounce from the pitch.

South Africa, who had played their previous two group-stage matches at the same venue, were well versed about the conditions and expectedly bowled well.

Bangladesh pacers, on the other hand, didn't have the height advantage of the Proteas pacers but it didn't matter as they made up for it with determination.

In the end, though, it all boiled down to Mahmudullah Riyad, who was presented with the perfect chance to complete a historic win -- a full toss from Keshav Maharaj with just six needed off two balls.

The batter had hit a six off a full toss in the previous match against Sri Lanka at a crucial stage but failed to deliver this time, getting caught right at the edge of the boundary.

Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto was proud of his bowlers but rued the defeat, feeling that it was a match they should have won.

"Tanzim really worked hard last couple of games, we needed new-ball wickets and he showed his character. This is a match we should have won, we nearly did but the last couple of overs they bowled well. It can happen in cricket," Shanto said after the match.

One team scoring 113 for six in 20 overs and the other team falling agonisingly short of it, is not something that usually happens in modern cricket, where flat pitches and dynamic batters often make the bowlers seem replaceable by bowling machines.

Cricket fans will remember the stadium in New York as the place where the game momentarily returned to its retro days. The Bangladesh fans will remember it as a place where the Tigers almost slayed the Proteas.

SCORES IN BRIEF

South Africa: 113-6 in 20 overs (Quinton de Kock 18, Klaasen 46, Miller 29; Sakib 3-18, Taskin 2-19, Rishad 1-32)
Bangladesh: 109-7 in 20 overs (Shanto 14, Hridoy 37, Mahmudullah 20; Rabada 2-19, Maharaj 3-27, Nortje 2-17)
Result: South Africa won by four runs.
Player-of-the-match: Heinrich Klaasen

Bangladesh players look dejected after falling short by four runs in their T20 World Cup fixture against South Africa in New York on Monday. Pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib's (R) sizzling effort - in which he returned three wickets for 18 runs to help restrict South Africa to 113 for six – went in vain as the batters failed to capitalise on a golden opportunity to snap their losing streak in T20Is against the Proteas. PHOTOS: **AFP**

Bangladesh
dreaming of humbling Lebanon

SPORTS REPORTER

With the curtain falling down on Group I fixtures of the second round of FIFA World Cup Qualifiers today, Bangladesh are looking forward to securing all three points against superior Lebanon, an outcome which will give the men in red and green a better draw in the upcoming Asian Cup Qualifiers.

The game is set to kick off at 10:00pm(Bangladesh Standard time) at the Khalifa International Stadium in Al-Rayyan City, Qatar.

Bangladesh are dwelling in the bottom of the four-team group, with only one point in five matches, two points less than third-placed Lebanon. This means a win will enable Bangladesh in surpassing Lebanon, following a 1-1 draw at Bashundhara Kings Arena in Dhaka last year where Sheikh Morsalin cancelled out a 67-minute Osman strike in the 72nd minute.

Nevertheless, securing a victory over Lebanon is going to be an uphill task for the charges of head coach Javier Cabrera, who, however, are thinking of pulling an upset against a side Bangladesh had beaten 2-0 in Dhaka in 2011, during the pre-qualifying match of 2018 World Cup Qualifiers. In the remaining meets between the two teams, Lebanon have been victorious.

Lebanon, on the other hand, will surely hope to end their campaign on a high, but Bangladesh captain Jamal Bhuiyan wants to capitalise against a reconstructing team under a new coach in Mirodrag Radulovic.

"Our goal is to secure three points against Lebanon, which is a big challenge. We will be trying to give our best because everyone believes we can collect three points," Jamal said in a video message sent by Bangladesh Football Federation.

"Lebanon changed three coaches in a year. If the coach is often changed, the structure falls down, and we discussed this thing. We also discussed their strong and weak points. So, if we can exploit those areas, then it's going to be a positive result for us."

Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera said, "We expect to be very competitive tomorrow [today], we came from a good effort and performance against Australia. We know that to complete a good window and quite a good group stage, we want to get a positive result. Our objective is to fight for everything, fight for three points and hopefully achieve at least one point in the last game.

"The motivation is not only to produce good results but also it will have an important impact on the ranking, that will also be decisive for the draw for upcoming Asian Cup Qualifiers. It is also important to get points, also for the 2025 SAFF Championship," the Spaniard added.

A typical Pakistan conundrum

NABID YEASIN

As it so often happens in major ICC events, Pakistan have very little in their hands regarding the prospect of advancing in the ongoing T20 World Cup in the USA and the West Indies.

And, as always, it is mostly a making of their own.

Even till the 14th over of the second innings during the Pakistan-India blockbuster clash in New York on Sunday, the broadcaster's win predictor accorded over a 90 percent chance for Babar Azam and Co in their chase of a meagre yet tricky 120-run target -- and it was only understandable as Pakistan needed 40 off the final six overs with seven wickets in hand.

However, Pakistan did what Pakistan usually do with their long-earned 'unpredictable' tag -- given due to their nature of flipping an imminent outcome on its head -- kicking in as they went on to lose the game by six runs.

Pakistan's Super Over loss to co-hosts USA in their tournament opener was definitely a major upset in the tournament. However, none can claim it was an absolute shocker -- especially for the way the USA have been playing in recent games and also due to Pakistan's pedigree of being at the wrong end of upsets on big occasions.

For Pakistan to progress, on top of winning against Canada today, at the same ground where they had let India snatch the game away from their grasp, and then against Ireland in their final group game on June 16, Babar and Co will have to hope for either India or the USA to lose their final two group fixtures.

Then again, if the clash between India and the USA -- both of whom have won both their matches so far and lead the points table -- gets washed out in New York on June 12, that would also end Pakistan's chances of progressing with both India and USA making it to Super Eight.

Meanwhile, if Canada manage to pull off an unlikely upset over India and the USA go on to lose their remaining games then it would bring the net run rate into the equation in determining whether Pakistan, Canada, or the USA would progress.

However, among teams that are usually touted as title contenders before the mega T20 event, Pakistan may be the only side to be familiar with such complex scenarios. Having lost their first two matches against India and Zimbabwe in the 2022 T20 World Cup, Pakistan were backed into such a corner that needed them to win their final group game and the materialisation of the unlikely event of the Netherlands beating South Africa in the group phase -- and that's what exactly happened.

Despite their see-saw nature in such events, Pakistan are one of the most successful sides in the T20 World Cup -- with them playing the semifinals six times in eight previous editions, ending as runners-up in 2022 and 2007, and lifting their solitary trophy in 2009.

The odds may be stacked heavily against Pakistan, but they will hope for a typical Pakistan solution for the typical Pakistan conundrum that they are faced with.

Two former champions in opposite arcs

STAR SPORTS DESK

Two former champions, Australia and Sri Lanka, are faced with completely polarising scenarios of advancing in the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup ahead of their third group-stage fixtures on Wednesday.

Australia, with two wins in two matches so far, are overwhelming favourites to seal an early-bird entry into the Super Eight phase as the 2021 champions take on Namibia, while Sri Lanka will aim to blow away Nepal in Antigua to avoid an embarrassing early exit from the main event – one that has been no short of horrendous for the 2014 champions so far.

The men in yellow could not have started their campaign in a better fashion, taking down eternal rivals England by 36 runs after shrugging off Oman in their tournament opener. Despite the rich vein of form, the Pat Cummins-led side will not be complacent since an upset could set the stage for them in a potential must-win game against Group B leaders Scotland -- whereas a win has additional incentives since it will leave holders England's campaign hanging by the thinnest of threads.

Sri Lanka, meanwhile, having lost to South Africa and Bangladesh, not only need to win but win big -- so that the islanders could somehow stay mathematically alive before taking on another Super Eight-aspirants from Group D in Netherlands in the teams' final group-stage clash.

On the other hand, as far as the associates are concerned, results in their favour will mean a world to them and their fans. Nepal are yet to win a T20 World Cup match after four outings while Namibia, who stunned Sri Lanka in the 2022 edition and have hard-earned a victory over Oman this time, will have another taste of humbling a Test-playing nation and, more importantly, an unforeseen shot at the Super Eight.

SHORT CORNER

Di Maria on target as Argentina down Ecuador 1-0

Angel Di Maria scored the only goal as Argentina warmed up for the defence of their Copa America crown with a 1-0 friendly victory over Ecuador in Chicago on Sunday. Di Maria made way for Messi on 56 minutes but the Inter Miami star was unable to help Argentina add to the scoreline. The reigning world champions face Guatemala in Landover, Maryland, on Friday to cap off their Copa America preparations.

Fans get 8 months jail for racism targeting Vicinius Jr

Three Valencia fans were handed eight-month jail terms on Monday for racist abuse towards Real Madrid star Vinicius Junior at a La Liga match last year that sparked international outrage, a court ruling showed. The defendants were also slapped with a two-year match ban.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website*

Afghanistan chase football milestone

AFP, *Hong Kong*

Afghanistan hope to achieve a footballing milestone on Tuesday by snatching a spot in the third and final phase of Asian qualifying for the 2026 World Cup.

The team ranked 151 in the world are on the brink of history and a place at the 2027 Asian Cup under their English coach Ashley Westwood.

Once on the books of Manchester United, he took over the Afghan team seven months ago and has masterminded a significant upturn in fortunes for the footballing minnows.

They play away at Kuwait on Tuesday in the final round of games in the second qualifying stage knowing they need to better India's result at Qatar to progress further. Afghanistan held already qualified Qatar, the Asian champions, to a precious 0-0 draw on Thursday in a "home" game for the Afghans that was played in Saudi Arabia.

"When we took over in November just before the first game against Qatar, which we lost 8-1, (if) you told us that we'll be giving ourselves a chance of qualifying with one game to go, we wouldn't have believed it," Westwood said afterwards.

India are also trying to reach the final stage of World Cup qualifying for the first time.

Igor Stimac's side currently occupy the second qualifying berth from Group A on goal difference from the Afghans.

Just to complicate things, Kuwait are also in with a shot of progressing, with the group going right down to the wire.

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BAT violating tobacco control law

The tobacco company running promotional campaigns in top restaurants, hotels

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

British American Tobacco Company (BAT) has been promoting sales of cigarette, a controlled product, in upscale restaurants and hotels in big cities in a clear violation of tobacco control laws, The Daily Star has found.

The largest tobacco company in Bangladesh has also been secretly partnering with luxury hotels and restaurants in major cities like Dhaka, Chattogram and Cox's Bazar, supplying them with cigarettes and promotional materials.

In some cases, BAT, as part of the deal,hosts events at some of these restaurants, which leads to increased food and cigarette sales in those eateries. BAT also has financial arrangements with the restaurant owners to display the tobacco company's promotional materials, six restaurant owners in Dhaka and Chattogram told The Daily Star.

The Daily Star is not naming the restaurants and hotels as they all spoke on condition of anonymity.

The findings by this newspaper are consistent with a study report by an NGO, Voice Bangladesh, published last year.

Based on a survey of 102 restaurants in Dhaka,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Members of the fire service, army, and police working to recover the bodies of three members of a family who got buried under a mudslide in Sylhet city's Majortila area. The bodies were recovered around 7:00am yesterday, six hours after the incident. The mudslide was triggered by heavy rains over the last few days.

PHOTO: **SHEIKH NASIR**

Three of a family killed as mudslide buries house

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

Tragedy struck Sylhet city yesterday morning when a mudslide in Majortila claimed the lives of a young family after their tin-roofed house caved in beneath the debris.

Aga Karim Uddin, 31, his wife Shammi Akhter Ruji, 25, and their two-year-old son Nafji Tanim lived at the foot of a hill in Majortila's Chamelibagh residential area under the city corporation's Ward 35.

Pounded by heavy downpours for the past several days, the saturated hillside gave way and collapsed onto a small cluster of houses at the foot of the hill, burying Karim's house completely, roof and walls, under a large chunk of mud around 7:00am.

Around six hours later, their bodies were recovered and sent to Sylhet

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3

ACC not doing any favour to ex-IGP Benazir

Says anti-graft body chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdullah

The Anti-Corruption Commission is not providing any special privilege to former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed, said ACC Chairman Moinuddin Abdullah.

He said the media reports, which suggested the ACC facilitated Benazir going abroad and withdrawing money from his bank accounts, were false.

Moinuddin said this yesterday at the award ceremony for the ACC Media Award 2020-2021, during a discussion with Reporters Against Corruption.

"On the day the news about Benazir Ahmed was published in a national newspaper, our commissioner [investigations] was abroad for medical treatment. During this time, allegations of corruption against Benazir Ahmed were submitted. Since one commissioner was out of the country, we couldn't hold a commission meeting. The commissioner returned on April 17 ... On April 18, we decided to initiate an investigation.

"We also formed an investigative team and sent letters to various departments to enquire about his bank accounts and properties. We need to gather all the information before proceeding to court,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Blinken in Middle East to push Gaza ceasefire

Hamas sticks to its conditions for accepting any proposal for truce; 40 more Palestinians killed

REUTERS, *Cairo*

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in the Middle East yesterday hoping to deliver the ceasefire that President Joe Biden proposed last month, in an all-out push by Washington to secure an end to the Gaza offensive.

Ahead of his arrival, both sides doubled down on hardline positions that have scuppered all previous attempts to end the fighting, while Israel pressed on with assaults in central and southern Gaza, among the bloodiest of the offensive.

"We are committed to total victory," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement released by his office, quoting remarks he made on Sunday to relatives of Israelis killed in Gaza.

- UNSC to vote on Biden's plan for ceasefire
- Tanks thrust deeper towards the north in Rafah
- Gaza death toll rises to 37,124

Hamas, for its part, said Washington must push its ally Israel to halt the fighting.

Speaking after meeting Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in Cairo on the first stop on his trip yesterday, Blinken said Hamas was the only side that had yet to agree to Biden's ceasefire proposal, which Washington says Israel has already accepted.

"My message to governments throughout the region, to people throughout the region, is if you want a ceasefire, press Hamas to say yes," Blinken told reporters before departing Egypt to visit Israel.

The Hamas and Islamic Jihad movements, however, yesterday said that they were sticking to their conditions for accepting any proposal for a ceasefire in Gaza.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Security Council was scheduled to vote later yesterday on the US-drafted resolution backing a proposal for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

The Israeli offensive in Gaza has now entered its ninth month. At least 37,124 Palestinians have been killed and 84,712 have been injured in Israel's military offensive on Gaza since October 7, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement yesterday. Some 40 Palestinians were killed and 218 injured in the previous 24 hours, the ministry added.

In Rafah, the city on the southern edge of Gaza where Israel launched an offensive last month in defiance of White House pleas, residents said yesterday tanks thrust deeper towards the north in the early hours of the morning. They were on the edge of Shaboura, one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods at the heart of the city, a Hamas stronghold.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

3 Rohingyas killed in Cox's Bazar camp

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

Three Rohingyas were killed over establishing supremacy at a refugee camp in Ukhiya upazila, Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The deceased are Md Ilias, 31, and Md Ishaq, 54, and Firoz Khan, 18.

The incident took place at Block F of Camp 4 Extension around 5:00am, said Additional Deputy Inspector General Md Iqbal, also the commander of the Armed Police Battalion (APBn)-14.

"Rohingya criminals from the nearby hills swooped on the camp in small groups and attacked the victims. They locked into a gunfight and clashed with the Rohingyas in the camp, leaving the three killed and seven others injured."

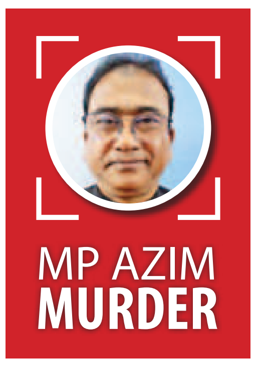
The injured are now undergoing treatment at Cox's Bazar General Hospital.

Shamim Hossain, officer-in-charge of Ukhiya Police Station, said the bodies were sent to Cox's Bazar General Hospital for autopsy.

Another AL leader may be involved

Investigators say after interrogating Jhenaidah ruling party leader Babu

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN



At least one other top leader of Jhenaidah Awami League may have been involved in the murder of MP Anwarul Azim Anar's at a New Town flat in Kolkata, investigators said.

They claimed to have gotten the clue while interrogating Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, relief and social welfare affairs secretary of Jhenaidah AL, who is now on a seven-day police remand.

Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan, the coordinator of the killing, in his confession had also mentioned the involvement of a top ruling party leader of the district.

Sources in the Detective Branch of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

Ashraful Alam, mayor of the Kaliganj Municipality, admitted that rival ruling party men, who stood strongly against slain lawmaker Azim during the last election, might have links with the murder.

"Many already started internal campaigns to run for Jhenaidah-4 even though Azim's death has not been officially confirmed," he said.

A source in the investigating agency said they are already making a list of suspected AL leaders, who had communicated with Babu and were against Azim.

Speaking to reporters at the secretariat yesterday, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said, "Let the investigation finish. Many may be arrested. We don't

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

Compromise, hold dialogue on key issues

CEC to political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Habibul Awal

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal has said dialogues between political parties and reaching an understanding are necessary to ensure free, fair, acceptable and inclusive elections.

"I earnestly request political parties to try to reach an understanding on some fundamental questions regarding elections by reducing hostilities," the CEC said at a meet-the-press programme yesterday.

Reporters Forum for Election and Democracy, an organisation of journalists responsible for covering news on EC, organsied the event at the Election Commission Secretariat.

Habibul said five months have passed after the January 7 national election, but he has not seen any initiative to hold any dialogue between political parties.

"Everyone knows what are the fundamental questions regarding the

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3

Cattle from different villages being brought into Dhaka via the Buriganga yesterday as markets in the capital gear up for Eid-ul-Azha, which is less than a week away.

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

CHECKING GRAFT

Finance, telecom ministers slated in JS for 'failure'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Jatiya Party and two independent lawmakers in parliament yesterday came down heavily on the ministries of finance and information technology for widespread corruption.

Speaking on cut motion during passage of supplementary budget for fiscal year 2023-24, JP MP Mujibul Haque Chunnu and independent MPs Pankaj Nath (Barishal-4) and Hamidul Haque Khandker (Kurigram-2) blasted Finance Minister Abul Hasan Mahmood Ali and State Minister for Posts, Telecommunications, and Information Technology Zunaid Ahmed Palak.

In the budget, 66 cut motions have been proposed on the demands for grants of 20 ministries and departments, but the discussion was held only on the finance and information technology ministries.

A cut motion is a veto used by members of a legislature against a specific allocation in budget proposals.

The rest of the proposals were put to the vote by Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury without discussion.

In protest of massive corruption in

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

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KSRM
শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

Fear forced Hindus to sell their land to ex-IGP Benazir

SHARIFUL ISLAM *and* **EMRUL HASAN BAPPI,** *back from Gopalganj*

A cluster of shanty-like homes belonging to Hindus are accessible only by a makeshift bamboo bridge over a roadside canal at Patikelbari village of Gopalganj Sadar upazila. The rickety structures declare the financial constraint of the 100 or so Maitra family.

The current generations of the Mitras were never rich, but they were never this destitute either. They had over 27.5 acres of farmland, enough to support them "fairly well."

All that changed about four years ago – they were forced to sell all but five acres of their farmland to former police chief Benazir Ahmed.

"If I begin to tell my story, I would not be able to fight back my tears," said Swarup Maitra, 55, one of the Mitras who had to give in to Benazir's extraordinary power and great appetite for poor people's land.

The former top cop, now said to have left the country although there is no official confirmation, is currently being investigated by the Anti-Corruption Commission for amassing huge wealth while in office.

Benazir, who faces a US sanction for his alleged involvement in extrajudicial killings when he was Rab chief, allegedly employed two tactics to acquire land: direct intimidation and indirect pressure.

The ACC has so far found that he and his family bought at least 613.41 bighas of land in different districts, including 605.77 bighas in Gopalganj and Madaripur that once belonged to Hindus, a religious minority.

He built most of his assets, including an eye-catching resort called Savanna Eco Resort and Natural Park in his hometown of Gopalganj, when he headed Rab (January 2015 to April 2020) and police force (April 2020 to September 2022).

In Gopalganj, Benazir engaged Taimur Islam, an inspector of a police station, to acquire the vast swath of over 600 bighas of farmland.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

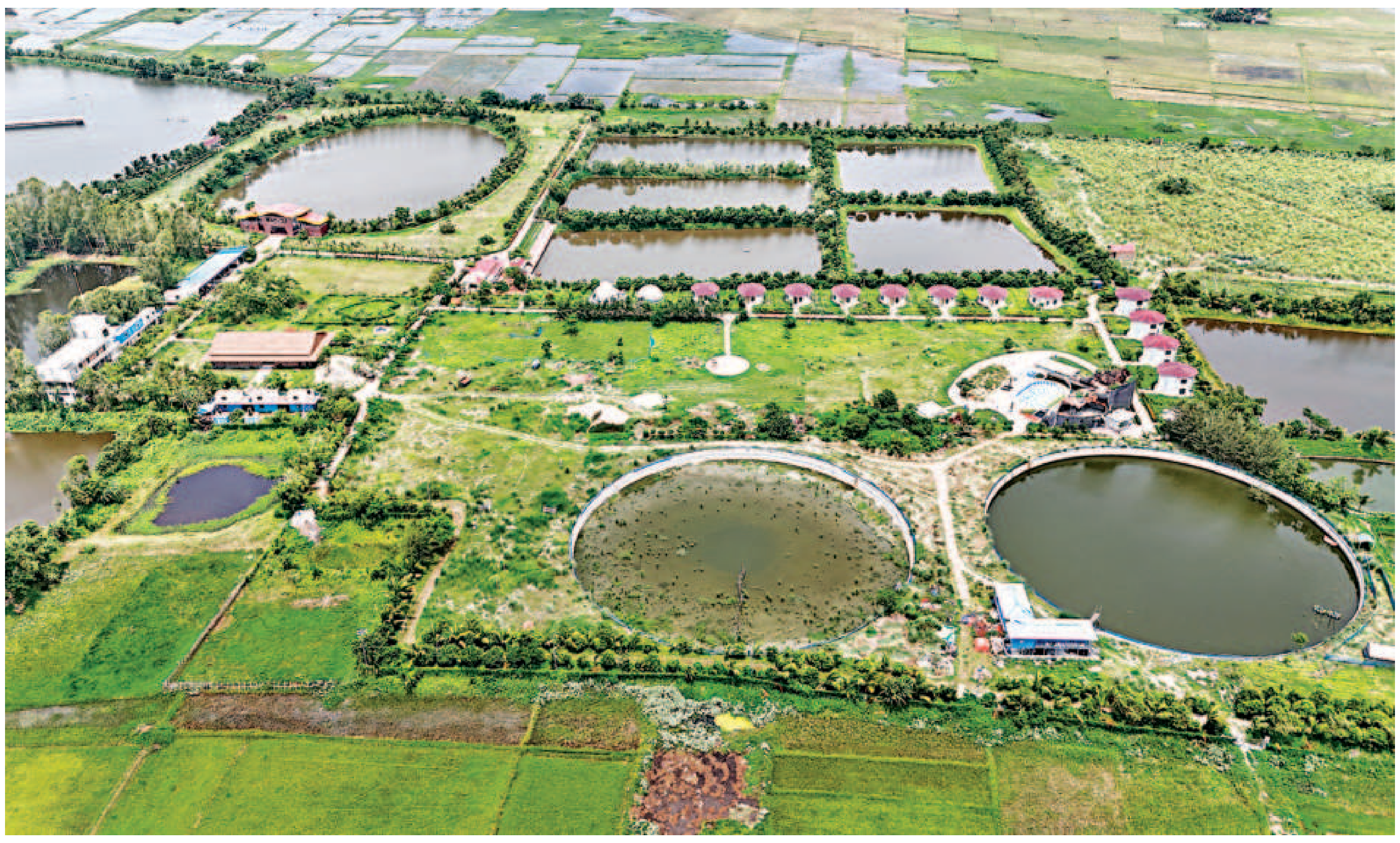


PHOTO: NAIMUR RAHMAN

An aerial shot of Savanna Eco Resort and Natural Park in Gopalganj. The property, owned by former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed and his family, has been attached following a court order over graft allegations against the ex-top cop. The photo was taken last week.

PM likely to visit India in September

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who returned from New Delhi on Monday after attending the oath-taking ceremony of her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, is likely to visit India again in September, according to sources.

According to sources in the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi, Hasina's trip to Delhi on June 21-22 was being talked about, but since she just returned from India, her next visit Delhi would be delayed.

Hasina had a meeting with Modi at the Rashtrapati Bhaban after his swearing in on June 9. She also invited Modi to visit Bangladesh.

Some Indian media indicated that Modi may visit Bangladesh by the end of this month. But sources in the Bangladesh High Commission said they were not aware of this.

Hasina is likely to visit Beijing on July 9-12.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

COMPLEX, TEDIOUS ADMISSION PROCESS

Gruelling 3 days for DU freshers

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

An excited Imran Hossain reached Dhaka University from Chattogram earlier this week to secure his admission to the prestigious institution.

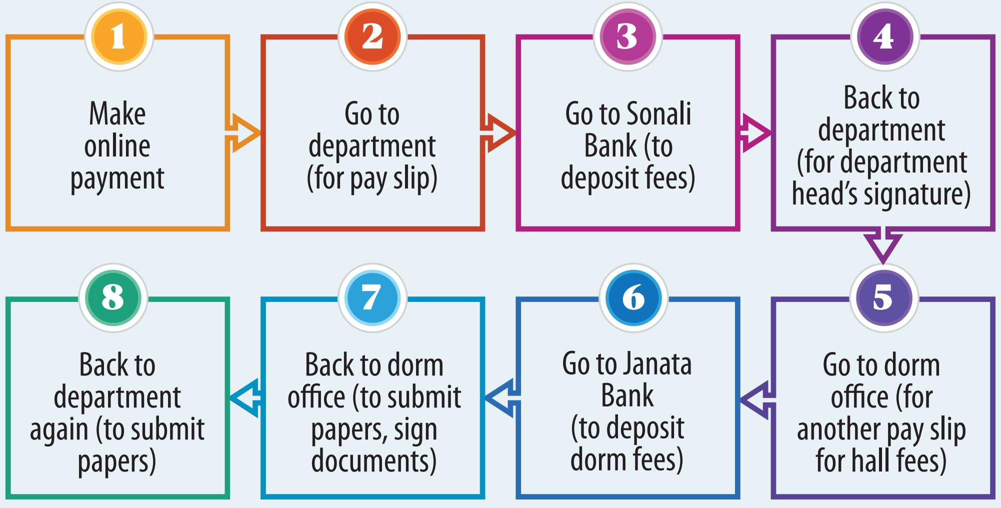
But he had no idea about the tedious admission process he would have to go through. He said the guidance he received from the university authorities was inadequate and he spent two days waiting in queues and going from one building to another in the scorching heat.

"The process is very complex and takes a lot of time and energy. I am exhausted," Imran told The Daily Star.

On June 9, he paid online the admission fee of Tk 7,830. The next day, he went to the business faculty around 10:30am with a printed copy of the receipt and started waiting for his turn.

When he submitted the receipt two hours later, the officials handed him a pay slip to deposit a development fee of Tk 5,000 to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1


1
Make online payment
2
Go to department (for pay slip)
3
Go to Sonali Bank (to deposit fees)
4
Back to department (for department head's signature)
5
Go to dorm office (for another pay slip for hall fees)
6
Go to Janata Bank (to deposit dorm fees)
7
Back to dorm office (to submit papers, sign documents)
8
Back to department again (to submit papers)

How could an IGP possess so much wealth?

Questions HC about Benazir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court bench yesterday expressed astonishment at the amassing of huge wealth by former IGP Benazir Ahmed.

"Irregularities and corruption of a government official are being discussed and criticised at home and abroad. How could an inspector general of police become the owner of so much wealth? We are stunned," the HC bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu said during the hearing on a writ petition regarding the construction of eight bridges in Jashore.

Three government engineers, including the chief engineer of the Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED), appeared before the HC bench yesterday to explain their positions on the construction of the bridges as per its previous directive.

The HC told the engineers that they must work in the interest of the country and that the court would look into the irregularities if they committed any.

It also directed the authorities concerned to complete the construction of the bridges in next six months maintaining the appropriate height clearance in accordance with relevant rules, petitioner's lawyer M Shamsul Haque told The Daily Star.

Iqbal Kabir Zahid, an adviser to Bhairab River Reform Movement, filed the writ petition with the HC following a report run by Bangla daily Prothom Alo on June 11 last year under the headline "River Killing" due to low-height bridges in Jashore.

Following the petition, the HC on November 27 last year directed the officials concerned to maintain appropriate height clearance of the bridges as per the Inland Waterway and Embankment Construction Control Rules, and to submit a report to this court through an affidavit.

Lt Gen Waker-Uz-Zaman made new army chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lieutenant General Waker-Uz-Zaman, chief of general staff of Bangladesh Army, has been promoted to general and appointed as the chief of army staff.

He will be serving as the army chief for three years from June 23, according to an ISPR press release.

Waker, who took over as chief of general staff (CGS) on January 1, 2024, will succeed General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed.

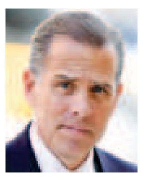
Waker was commissioned in the Corps of Infantry on December 20, 1985.

Having an illustrious career of more than three and a half decades, Waker brings with him a huge experience. His key staff appointments include staff officer at an infantry

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Hunter Biden found guilty on gun charges

REUTERS, *Wilmington*



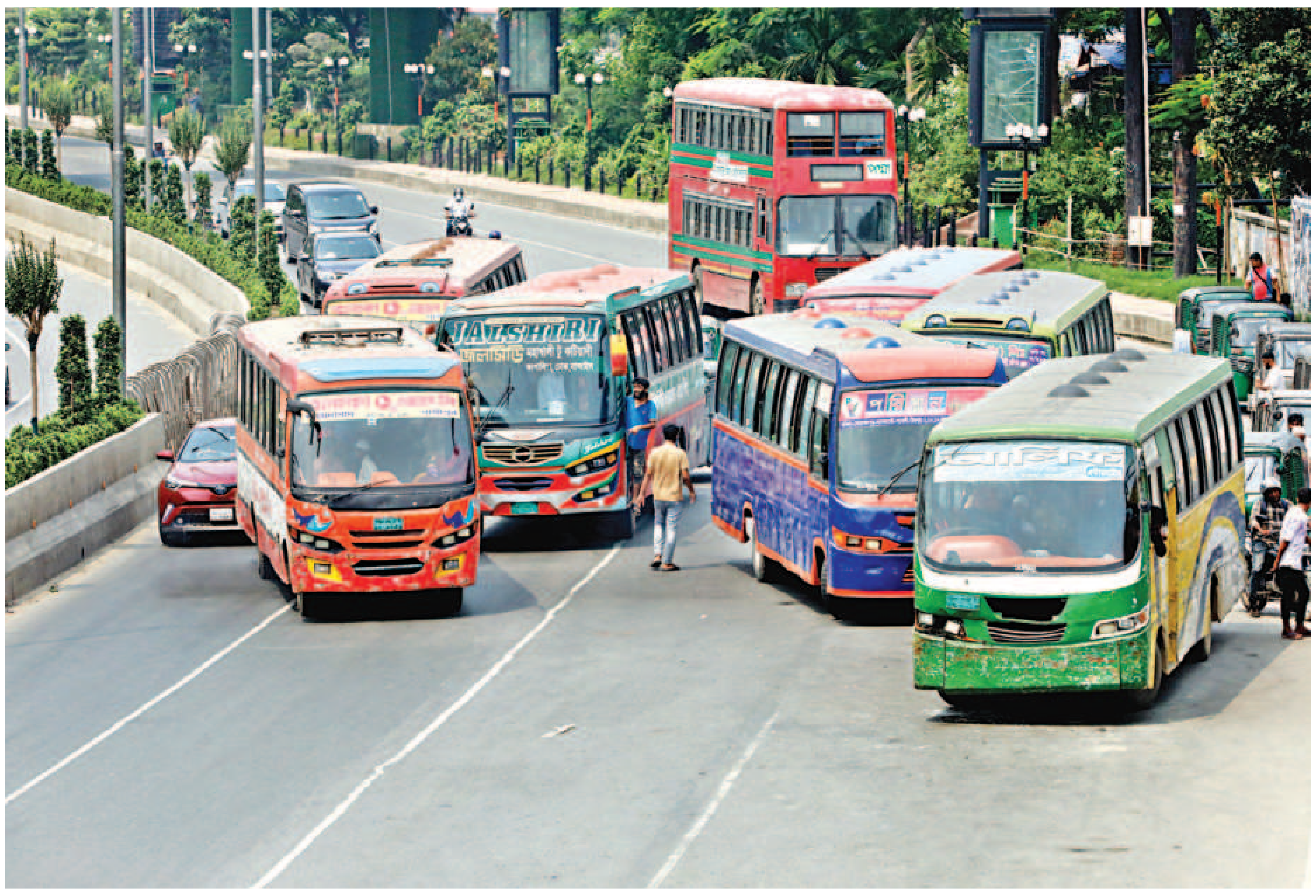
US President Joe Biden's son Hunter Biden was convicted by a jury yesterday of lying about his drug use to illegally buy a gun, a verdict Democrats may seize upon to counter Donald Trump's claim of a justice system weaponized against him.

A jury in Wilmington, Delaware, federal court found him guilty on all three counts against him, making Hunter Biden the first child of a sitting US president to be convicted of a crime.

A verdict of the 12-member jury must be unanimous on each count.

The trial followed the May 30 criminal conviction of Trump, the first former US president to be found guilty of a felony and the Republican challenger to Joe Biden, a Democrat, in the November 5 election.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Buses pick up and drop off passengers obstructing traffic on the Airport Road in the capital's Kuril area. This not only puts bus passengers at risk but also causes tailbacks. The photo was taken around 1:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DISCARDED CYLINDER

1 dies, 40 fall ill after inhaling toxic gas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was killed and at least 40 others became sick after being exposed to toxic gas in the capital's Adabar Beribadh area early yesterday.

The gas quickly spread across the neighbourhood after workers at a scrap metal shop broke open an old and discarded cylinder around 3:00am, police said.

According to victims, around 200 residents of 30 homes at Shyamoli Housing (2nd Project) rushed out onto the street after experiencing severe breathing difficulties during their sleep. Many were seen vomiting.

During a visit to the spot yesterday afternoon, this correspondent noticed partially burnt and dried-up tree leaves near the shop.

A senior fire service official said it was ammonia gas. Ammonia is a colourless highly irritating gas with a sharp odor.

The victims were taken to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital (SSMCH) and Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for treatment.

One of them, Kabir Hossain, 45, from Lakshmipur's Ramganj upazila, died at the DMCH.

According to the emergency unit staff at SSMCH, the first victim with breathing difficulties and eye irritation came in at 4:00am and within 15 minutes, over a hundred people with similar complaints arrived.

"Most of them needed oxygen support. Initially, we

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Govt approves price for 40MW power import from Nepal

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh has agreed to buy 40 megawatts of electricity from Nepal at Tk 8.17 per unit, including transmission cost, under a five-year agreement.

The Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase yesterday approved the price, ending a long negotiation over hydropower import from the Himalayan nation via India.

Mahmudul Hossain Khan, secretary (coordination and reforms) of Cabinet Division, said Nepal will get $0.640 per unit while India will receive 0.0595 rupee as trade margin.

He said the transmission cost that India would get has not been mentioned in the summary of the meeting.

However, a Power Division official said Bangladesh will pay $0.697 per unit (Tk 8.17), including power price, transmission charge, and trade margin.

He said the transmission charge would vary from time to time.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

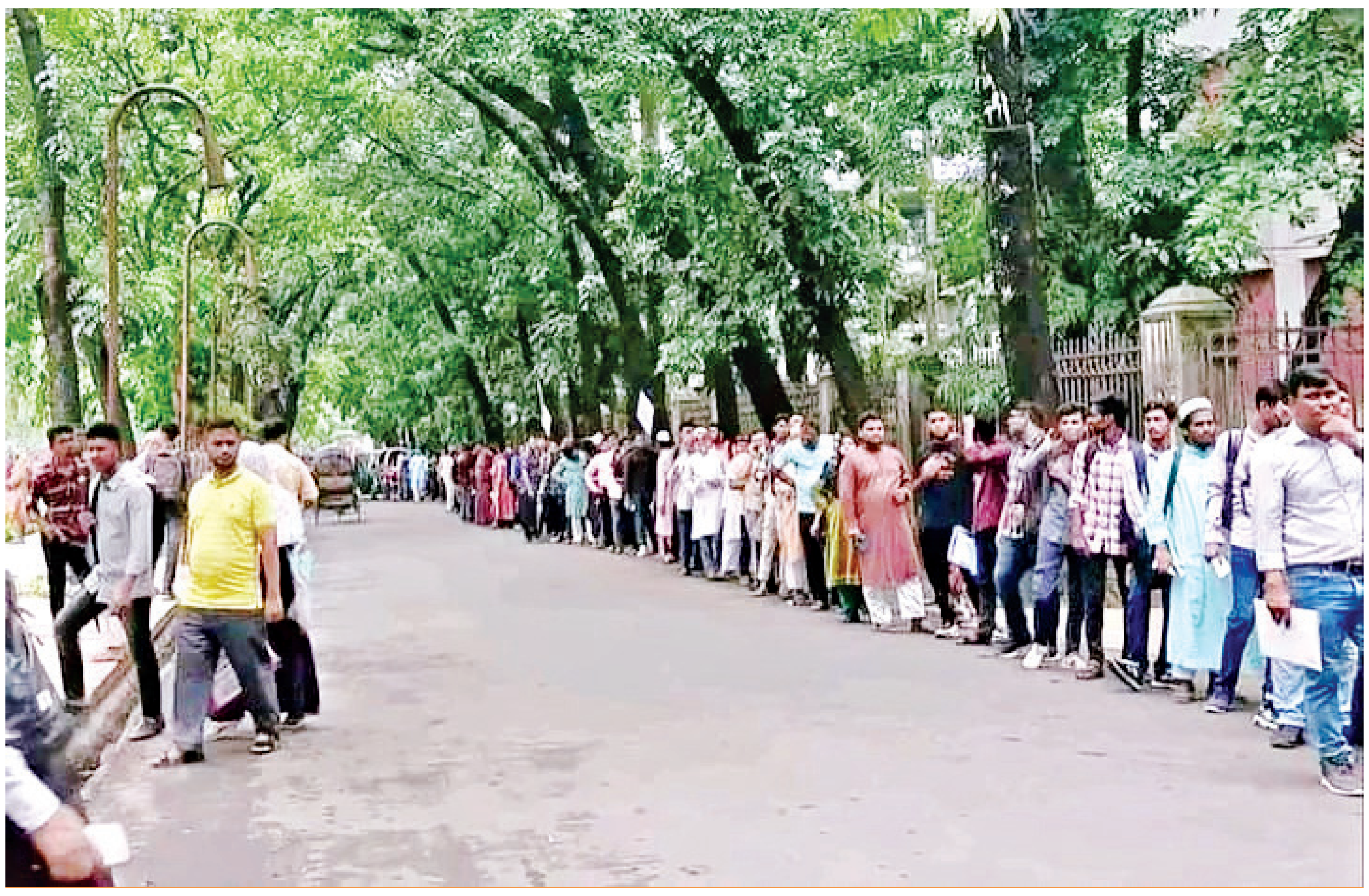


PHOTO: COLLECTED

A 200-metre long queue of students in front of the Sonali Bank branch on Dhaka University campus. The photo was taken on Monday.

Two teachers of St Scholastica's Girls' School sued for sexual abuse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Chattogram*

Two teachers of St Scholastica's Girls' School and College in Chattogram city's Patharghata area have been sued for sexually abusing a fifth-grade schoolgirl for over a year.

The accused are Rakib Uddin, 35, who teaches fourth grade, and Surjit Pal, 33, who teaches fifth grade.

Of the duo, Rakib was detained last night for interrogation, confirmed Obaidul Haque, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

Earlier in the day, the 11-year-old victim's mother filed the case with Kotwali Police Station, said Atanu Chakraborty, assistant commissioner (Kotwali Zone) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

"We've accepted the case and received some screenshots of messages sent by the teachers to the victim as supporting evidence. We've launched an investigation into the allegations of sexual abuse brought against the teachers."

According to the case statement, the 11-year-old had been sexually abused by both teachers for more than a year.

Since 2023, the two teachers have sexually harassed and molested the girl on several occasions. Whenever she tried to resist them, they reprimanded her in class and threatened to fail her in exams.

Gruelling 3 days for DU freshers

FROM PAGE 1

Sonali Bank's branch on campus.

Imran went to the branch at the administrative building around 12:30pm, only to find a queue of over 300 people. He could not pay the fee until four hours later.

"I did not even have lunch for fear of failing to make the payment," he said.

Imran then went to his department to submit the pay slip and other documents, but was told to come back the next day "because the documents that I submitted require signatures from the department chair."

Around 9:30am yesterday, he went to the department and collected the papers. He was then asked to submit the papers to the dormitory office. Upon submitting the papers at the Muktijoddha Ziaur Rahman Hall, he got another pay slip for depositing Tk 2,500 to Janata Bank.

Imran went to the bank's TSC branch around 10:30am and saw a queue stretching to the Bangla Academy gate, around 300 metres from the bank.

After several hours, he deposited the money and rushed back to his dorm and submitted the payment slip, but hundreds of others were still in the queue.

"The dorm office told me to leave the slip and other papers and come back the next day. I spent two days shuttling between the dorm, faculty, and bank, and hopefully, the process will end tomorrow.

Imran is one of around 6,000 freshers who have been suffering because of the lack of coordination among different offices on campus.

Besides, the mere three-day window, starting Monday, for the admission of such a large number of students is causing the long queue.

The admission committee had earlier requested the department heads to make sure students could pay the dorm and development fees online, but the department heads did not show interest, said a member of the committee.

But three department heads from the social sciences and arts faculties said they were not informed of the matter.

This correspondent talked to at least 50 freshers and their guardians, and all of them expressed disappointment that the payments could not be made online.

A man who came to the campus from Rajshahi for the admission of his daughter said he had been staying at a relative's home for the last few days and spending hours on campus.

"Almost everything is done online these days. But we are having to queue under the sun. The process is slow, complex and bureaucratic and it is because the officials involved are not too eager to make it simple and fast," said the father who works at a government department and is not willing to disclose his identity.

Nur Jahan, who was in a queue near the administrative building in the afternoon, said it was difficult for her and her daughter to spend hours under the glaring sun. "I let her stand in line and went to get some water for her. We could become sick from this ordeal."

Prof Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan, who teaches international relations, said, "When we got admitted in the early 90s, we faced such hassles. But it's 2024, and the admission process has not changed much. It means the university has not progressed institutionally."

Moreover, the administrative officers and employees do not behave well with the students, he said.

Contacted, DU Vice Chancellor Prof ASM Maksud Kamal said there is a lack of coordination between the admission authorities and heads of departments and institutes.

"The university has started making the process online, but I am not sure why the entire system is not online. I took charge a few months ago and I hope that this problem will not be there next year," he said.

Hunter Biden found guilty on gun charges

FROM PAGE 1

Trump, convicted on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records to cover up a sex scandal, accuses Democrats of pursuing that case and three other criminal prosecutions to prevent him from regaining power in his rematch with Joe Biden.

Congressional Democrats have pointed to cases including the Hunter Biden prosecution as evidence that Joe Biden is not using the justice system for political or personal ends, having said last week he would not pardon his son if convicted.

The Hunter Biden case was brought by US Department of Justice Special Counsel David Weiss, a Trump appointee.

Weiss has also charged Hunter Biden with three felony and six misdemeanor tax offenses in California, alleging he failed to pay $1.4 million in taxes between 2016 and 2019 while spending millions on drugs, escorts, exotic cars and other high-ticket items.

Hunter Biden has pleaded not guilty to those charges. A trial is scheduled for September 5 in Los Angeles.

The Delaware trial included prosecution testimony by Hunter Biden's ex-wife, former girlfriend and sister-in-law, who gave firsthand accounts of his spiraling addiction in the weeks before and after he bought the gun in October 2018.

Prosecutors also showed text messages, photos and bank records that they said showed Biden was deep in the throes of addiction when he bought the gun and knowingly broke the law by answering "no" to being a drug user on a government screening form.

Biden's lawyers sought to show he was not using drugs when he bought the gun and did not intend to deceive because he didn't consider himself a drug user when he filled out the form.

The defense called Hunter Biden's daughter, Naomi Biden, who testified that her father seemed to be doing well when she saw him shortly before and after he bought the gun.

The sentencing guidelines for the gun-related charges against Biden are 15 to 21 months, but legal experts say defendants in similar cases often get shorter sentences and are less likely to be incarcerated if they abide by the terms of their pretrial release.

Not all is lost for Tigers

FROM PAGE 12

event came 17 years ago when they beat hosts West Indies in their tournament opener – the only time they beat a Test-playing nation before the Sri Lanka win in this edition -- in the inaugural edition of the T20 World Cup in 2007.

However, things are looking positive for the Tigers this time around. The Najmul Hossain Shanto-led Bangladesh, who were rocked just ahead of the T20 World Cup as they hit the nadir in the shortest format following a shocking 2-1 series defeat against the USA, have made a commendable turnaround result-wise.

Thanks to a two-wicket win over Sri Lanka in their tournament opener and a closely-fought game against the Proteas, Bangladesh are now second in the five-team group. With two points in two matches, Bangladesh remain just behind group leaders South Africa, who have all but confirmed their spot in the Super Eight with six points from three wins in as many games.

Bangladesh, who also have a positive net run-rate of 0.075, will now need to do what is expected of them in the final two group games -- beat associate nations the Netherlands and Nepal.

Meanwhile, things could get a bit tricky for Bangladesh if they go on to lose any one of their last two group-stage games as then the Tigers will have to depend on the results of some other fixtures going in their favour.

Shrugging off the close defeat they suffered against the Proteas, the Tigers will now need to grind harder and adapt to the different conditions in the Caribbean in order to avert any upset in their upcoming matches and have a smooth sailing into the Super Eight.

1 dies, 40 fall ill after inhaling toxic gas

FROM PAGE 1

struggled to tackle the situation. We gave first aid to many while some were admitted. Four are still undergoing treatment at the hospital," said a hospital staff.

Imran Ali, manager of Shyamoli Housing (2nd Project), said, "My wife, two children and I were sleeping in our tin-roofed home when suddenly, we started having difficulty breathing and our eyes started burning.

"We rushed to the lane in front of our home where many people had already gathered. Many were vomiting while some complained of palpitations," said Imran, who along with his family, had treatment at SSMCH.

Abdur Rahman Tuhin, deputy manager of Smart Technology BD Ltd, said all 20 staff members of their firm lived near the scrap shop, and they all fell ill.

"Deceased Kabir is a cousin of one of the staffer. Kabir stayed with him on Monday night. He fell seriously ill and later died," Tuhin added.

Adabar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mahbubur Rahman, said Kalu, the owner of the metal scrap shop, had fled the area after the incident, but police detained him in the morning.

"Kalu told police that he bought a very old gas cylinder a few days ago. When workers were trying to break open the cylinder at the shop early yesterday, it leaked, causing the gas inside to spread to the surrounding area."

The OC said experts at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) were examining the cylinder to determine the type of gas.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Fakhruddin, senior station officer at the Mohammadpur Fire Service and Civil Defence, said they reached the spot around 4:00am when the gas was still leaking from the 25-30kg cylinder.

"It was ammonia gas," said the officer, who has training and experience in working with toxic gases.

PM likely to visit

FROM PAGE 1

Her China visit was underscored after Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen met her recently. Wen reiterated China's commitment to boosting investment in Bangladesh and enhancing bilateral relations.

Hasina is likely to join the 79th session of the UN General Assembly, which will begin on September 10. She is also likely to attend the BIMSTEC summit in Thailand in October, according to diplomatic sources.

Fear forced Hindus to sell their land to ex-IGP

FROM PAGE 1

"About four years ago, Taimur asked us to sell the land. As we refused, he said that Benazir had already acquired all the surrounding land and would make sure that we cannot access our land," Swarup told The Daily Star.

Eventually, they had to sell their three bighas of land for Tk 3.8 lakh per bigha, nearly half the market price. With the little money shared among his three brothers, there was no way they could buy any farmland elsewhere.

Another victim of Benazir's allegedly forceful land acquisition is Swarasati Roy, 60, from Borokhola village in Rajoir of Madaripur. Having forced to give up her 31 decimals of land, her only livelihood means, she now works at other people's homes to earn a living.

Two to three years ago, Taimur said she was not the real owner of the land and threatened that Benazir would take it anyway. Eventually, she caved, and had to accept only Tk 2 lakh for the land she bought 20 years ago with loan money and the proceeds from the sale of a cow.

She and her day labourer son now live on a five-decimal homestead, their last remaining piece of land.

Others, including Apurba Maitra of Patikelbari village of Gopalganj, were targeted with clever tactics.

The man had 10 kathas of farmland in two plots, growing rice on one plot and watermelon on the other.

Suddenly one day, Benazir's men laid large pipes through his land to sand-fill the ex-IGP's Savanna Eco Resort and Natural Park project site. The plot that fell within Benazir's project was automatically filled with sand.

Swarup Maitra

Swaraswati Roy

Biplob Baul

Tarun Baul

"We failed to grow anything for two years. At one point, we were compelled to sell the land to Benazir," said Apurba, who now works as a day labourer.

Like them, several hundred people in Gopalganj Sadar and Madaripur's Rajoir upazilas were forced to sell their family land.

During a two-day visit to Machkandi, Bairagitol and Patikelbari villages of Gopalganj Sadar and Borokhola village in Rajoir, The Daily Star spoke to at least 40 people. They all said they would not have sold their land if it were not for the terror induced in their hearts by the very thought of Benazir.

CLEVER TACTICS

According to locals, Benazir first bought a piece of land in the area in 2016-2017. The floodgate had since opened as the mighty cop went on a land acquisition spree, with Inspector Taimur Islam intimidating the poor and mostly Hindu villagers to sell their land.

Benazir's men would fly drones and make a map, marking various plots in white and red, presumably to determine which land to target, said Tarun Baul of Bairagitol village.

He recalled that Taimur would eventually approach the targeted land owners and say, "You know Benazir and how powerful he is. If you decline to sell your land, he would surely take it anyway. You will lose both your land and the money. If you agree to sell, I will help you get a handsome price."

When someone refused to sell their land, Benazir would buy the surrounding land and block the entry to the land in the middle. This would ultimately force people to give in, said Sanjay Baul of Bairagitol village whose 30 bighas of family land were "forcefully acquired" by Benazir in 2018-2019.

"Two locals left for India with their families after selling their land to Benazir," said Biplob Baul.

One of them is Pranshanta Baul, 40, who left the country along with his wife and four children about a year ago.

"I was compelled to sell my 51 decimals of agricultural land at Tk 2 lakh after Benazir's men filled it up with sand. What would I do back home? So I came to India," he told The Daily Star by phone from Thakurnagar, West Bengal.

RAB-POLICE MEMBERS AT RESORT

Benazir engaged members of the police and Rab for his personal project as well. Locals said that until he went into retirement in 2022, several police and Rab officials were tasked with supervising the construction work of the resort.

Two sub-inspectors -- Bachchu Miah and Shahjalal -- were seen at the site most of the time by locals.

Benazir's then staff officer Masud Alam, who later became Madaripur police super, also visited the site frequently, sometimes even negotiating the land purchase, locals said.

Rab Additional SP Shaheda Sultana would also visit the site.

NO ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE

Savanna Eco Resort and Natural Park was built on a portion of the purchased land at Machkandi and Bairagitol villages. There are several upscale cottages having architecture replicating the Masai houses of the African Savanna.

For land development at the site, Benazir's men dug up a huge pond spanning about 30 bighas of land in Bairagitol and brought the sand and soil from there, locals said.

According to its website, there is a farm within the resort, several ponds, a swimming pool, boat ride facilities, play zones for children, a country club, a helipad and other facilities.

Until June 3, people could visit it for an entrance fee of Tk 100. The government has since taken over the resort.

Mahfuzur Rahman, assistant director of Gopalganj environment office, said the resort was built with a temporary site clearance, but it does not have the final environmental clearance.

A few years ago, the LGED built a road there to facilitate local people's transport. But locals cannot use it anymore, as the resort authorities set up a huge iron gate, allowing only the resort-goers to use it.

"We learned that locals cannot use the road. Our job is to build roads. The local administration can take steps so that people can use the road," said SM Jahidul Islam, engineer of LGED in Gopalganj Sadar.

'OBEYED THE ORDER'

Taimur Islam, officer-in-charge at a highway police station, denied that he intimidated anyone to sell their land.

"Benazir Shaheb went into retirement two years ago. The villagers did not lodge any complaint to the local MP, union parishad chairmen and members. I do not know why they are bringing such allegations now."

Victims said they never had the heart to seek legal redress against Benazir.

Taimur said Benazir's staff officer sometimes called him, asking him to verify the land document, and he simply obliged.

"I was tasked with planting some trees. During the time, IGP's staff officer occasionally called me and I used to visit him. Masud Shaheb can tell everything as he was later made the SP of Madaripur to look after the project. He did everything. They are senior officers, they know everything," Taimur told The Daily Star by phone.

Sub-inspectors Bachchu and Shahjalal did not pick up the calls or respond to the text messages.

Earlier, Bachchu admitted to daily Prothom Alo that he supervised the construction work at the resort site on instructions of senior officials. He defended his action, saying he only "obeyed the orders" of his supervisors.

Masud Alam denied his involvement in the project.

"Never in my life did I commit any misdemeanor. After joining as the SP of Madaripur, I never visited the area where Benazir sir's project is located. I did not go there even if it was necessary," he said.

Rab Additional SP Shaheda did not respond to our calls and text messages over the last one week.

AN OFFENCE

Former IGP Nur Mohammad said senior police officials cannot engage members of the police for their personal or business work.

"That would be an offence," he told The Daily Star.

Government officials can buy land, but in keeping with the regulations and with legitimate income. In Benazir's case, it must be seen whether this was followed and what is the source of the money, said Nur, who was an Awami League lawmaker in the previous term.

Benazir did not respond to our calls and text messages on WhatsApp.

In a Facebook live on April 20, Benazir refuted the allegations of buying land through intimidation.

"Purchasing land through coercion and intimidation is impractical as it is Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's home district and the project area is adjacent to her constituency," he said.

In addition to his land, the ACC has so far discovered that Benazir and his family have shares in 19 companies, two savings certificates, 22 bank accounts and 10 BO accounts.

All his bank accounts have since been frozen, although ACC investigators say a large sum of money has been withdrawn by the time the freeze order could take effect.

Lt Gen Waker-Uz-Zaman

FROM PAGE 1

brigade, School of Infantry and Tactics and Army Headquarters.

He commanded an infantry battalion, the only independent infantry brigade of Bangladesh Army, and an infantry division.

Waker was a distinguished instructor at School of Infantry and Tactics, Non-commissioned Officers' Academy and Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations Training. He also served as the military secretary at the Army Headquarters.

Prior to taking over as the CGS of Bangladesh Army, Waker had been the principal staff officer of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Armed Forces Division under the Prime Minister's Office.

He is an alumnus of the Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur and Joint Services Command and Staff College, UK.

He has a master's degree in defence studies from National University of Bangladesh. He also completed Master of Arts in defence studies from King's College, University of London.

As the head of the Armed Forces Division, Waker was directly involved in the UN Peacekeeping Affairs of Bangladesh Armed Forces.

He was also nominated as a Gender Champion and Gender Advocate of Bangladesh for UN Peacekeeping Affairs.

As the principal staff officer, he also headed the Bangladesh National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention as chairman.

Under the Blue Helmet, Waker completed two tours of duty as observer and staff in UNAVEM (Angola) and UNMIL (Liberia) respectively.

He had the rare privilege of commanding the National Victory Day Parade for three consecutive times.

He was awarded the coveted "Army Medal of Glory" (SGP) and "Extraordinary Service Medal" (OSP) for his remarkable contributions to the modernisation of the army.

Waker was a keynote speaker in different seminars and symposiums at home and abroad.

CSO
The Daily Star
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON
Health Expenditure: A Critical Challenge in ensuring health care in Bangladesh
Date : June 11, 2024.
The Daily Star Centre, Dhaka

Speakers at a roundtable titled "Health Expenditure: A Critical Challenge in Ensuring Health Care in Bangladesh," jointly organised by Civil Society Forum (CSO) and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

RISING MEDICAL EXPENSES

The poor sink deeper into poverty: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The poor are getting poorer due to increasing out-of-pocket healthcare expenses, said speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

An overhaul is needed in the health sector, they added, demanding a strong political will to make health services more responsive to the public's needs.

They made the remarks at the roundtable titled "Health Expenditure: A Critical Challenge in Ensuring Health Care in Bangladesh", jointly organised by The Daily Star and Civil Society Forum (CSO) at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

In a keynote presentation, Sayed Rubayet, convener of the CSO Forum, said Bangladesh has the highest out-of-pocket health expenditure -- 73 percent -- among neighbouring countries.

He added that over 8.61 million people in the country were pushed below the national poverty line due to out-of-pocket payments in 2016.

Due to the sorry state of country's healthcare, Bangladeshis accounted for 57.5 percent of medical tourists in 2019 alone, said Rubayet, also the country director of Ipas Bangladesh.

Number of Bangladeshi medical tourists surged by 83 percent from 2017 to 2019, he added.

Echoing Rubayet, Mohammad Mainul Islam, professor of Population Science Department at Dhaka University, said education and health are fundamental sectors requiring increased investments.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Overhaul of health sector
- Political will
- Increased investments
- Utilisation of allocated budget
- Health insurance for all

Syed Ashfaqul Haque gets bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted bail to Syed Ashfaqul Haque, former executive editor of The Daily Star, and his wife Tania Khondoker in a case filed over the death of Preeti Urang, a teenage domestic worker who fell from their flat in Dhaka's Mohammadpur in February this year.

Ashfaqul has been in jail since his arrest on February 6, the day Preeti fell and died. He and his wife were previously denied bail three times by the lower court.

The HC bench of Justice Md Rezaul Hasan and Justice Fahmida Quader delivered the bail order after holding a hearing on a High Court rule on the matter.

The HC also observed that remand should not be used as a tool by the police. It also said the court should not grant police remand just because they ask for it.

Besides, the court said the petitioners (Ashfaqul and Tania) were taken on remand twice but the police could not get any additional information from them.

Ashfaqul's lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that Ashfaqul will come out of jail once the jail authorities receive the written copy of the verdict.

On April 22, the HC bench issued a rule asking the state to explain in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Eid journey may not be hassle free

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Roadside cattle markets and unfinished road expansion work, alongside closing all the garment factories on the same day, are likely to cause suffering to Eid holidaymakers, particularly the north-bound people.

Unfit vehicles breaking down and road crashes on highways, which usually see a rise during Eid rush, may intensify their sufferings.

Eid-ul-Azha will be celebrated on June 17. Highway Police identified 118 congestion-prone stops on different highways; of them, 35 lead to the north.

Meanwhile, trains heading for northern destinations are likely to be delayed due to ongoing works on the east and west sides of Bangabandhu Bridge.

The situation will worsen once pressure of passengers increases manifold following closure of offices and factories.

During an Eid preparatory meeting on May 30 at BRTA headquarters, officials said there are over 200 roadside cattle markets across the country, which often cause traffic congestion.

Besides, the speed of vehicles that carry sacrificial animals is relatively slow, which causes traffic congestion, officials told the meeting headed by Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader.

Md Shahabuddin Khan, additional inspector general of highway police, said there are 202 cattle markets beside the highways, of which 60 are very important.

They have already talked to district police and the market authorities to keep the nearby roads congestion-free, he added.

Mosharref Hossain, general manager of Hanif Paribahan, said they are expecting a huge passenger pressure from June 13 to 15.

He said it's almost certain that the highway from Nabinagar to Chandra will see huge traffic congestion on Saturday, the day all garment factories will be closed.

A huge number of garment workers will add to the chaos, he said. Besides, many city buses will hit the streets to serve the passengers, intensifying the problem, he added.

Shahabuddin Khan said they always request garment authorities to close factories in phases but more than 80 percent of factories will close on the same day.

"This time, we have asked the factory owners, particularly BGMEA, to arrange transport at their factories so that workers can get into home-bound vehicles from there," he said.

Mosharref Hossain said the expansion work of Dhaka-Rangpur Highway from Elenga to Hatikumrul is still underway, which may cause traffic congestion, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Waliur Rahman, project director of the road expansion works, said vehicles breaking down near Bangabandhu Bridge was the main reason behind the congestion in the last Eid rush.

REASONS FOR TRAFFIC CONGESTION ON ROADS

- 200 roadside cattle markets
- Garment factories closing all in one day
- Unfinished road expansion works
- Unfit vehicles breaking down on roads

REASONS FOR SUFFERING ON RAILWAYS

- Ongoing dev work on Bangabandhu Bridge east and west stations
- Lack of capacity of single line on Joydebpur-Ishwardi route
- Speed, weight restrictions on the bridge

At least 83 events of vehicle breakdowns, road crashes, and similar incidents took place near Bangabandhu Bridge in six days during the Eid rush, he said.

The road from Elenga to Bangabandhu Bridge will be used as a one-way road once the pressure of vehicles intensifies and in that case, a nearby road will be used as a bypass road for the vehicles heading for Dhaka, he added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

No market at Anwara Park

Atiqul tells rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam has assured that no market will be built on Anwara Park in the capital's Farmgate area, following Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's instructions.

"At a meeting with the prime minister, she was informed about the plan to build a market on park. She instructed that no market will be built on the park. The Prime Minister's decision is final," Mayor Atiqul said at a rally held in front of the DNCC building, organised by the park protection committee yesterday.

"The prime minister emphasised that the Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL) do not need income from the market; they are already earning income from passengers," he added.

The mayor expressed his support for the movement and announced that authorities had already been informed of the prime minister's direction.

The Public Works Department owns the park, while DNCC maintains it. Since 2018, a section of the park has been used by DMTCL as a project office and storage for metro rail construction materials. DMTCL reportedly aims to construct a commercial plaza on the park grounds now.

The rally saw solidarity from at least 30 organisations.

Every village will be under civic amenities: PM

Hasina provides 18,566 more houses to homeless as Eid gift

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government is working to ensure civic amenities for all the rural people.

"We'll bring every village under the coverage of civic amenities and the people of every village will enjoy those," she said.

The premier said this while handing over 18,566 more houses among the homeless and landless families across the country under Ashrayan-2 project.

She opened the distribution of the houses along with ownership documents through a videoconference from her official residence Gono Bhaban, connecting to Kaliganj upazila of Lalmonirhat, Eidgaon upazila of Cox's Bazar, and Char Fashion upazila of Bhola.

Talking about the cyclone Remal-hit people, Hasina said thousands were affected by the cyclone. The government has already prepared area-wise lists of the houses which were completely or partially damaged, she said.

She said the government will construct new homes in case of completely damaged houses, and will extend support to reconstruct the partially damaged houses.

VOTER LIST

HC asks for list of Rohingyas included in it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday sought a list of Rohingyas, who have been made Bangladeshi voters illegally across the country.

The officials concerned including chief election commissioner; LGRD secretary; secretary at the EC and registrar general of birth and death registration have been asked to submit the voter list of Rohingyas by August 8 to the court.

The HC bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque passed the order during hearing of a writ petition filed by a local voter of Cox's Bazar.

Petitioner's lawyer Mohammad Siddique Ullah Miah told reporters that the Rohingays fleeing from Myanmar have no right to become voters in Bangladesh. But many of them have illegally become Bangladeshi voters, which is a threat to security, he said.

DNCC issues birth certificates to 49 Rohingyas

Registrar general seeks answer; mayor refutes allegation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty-nine Rohingyas have recently been issued birth certificates by the health department of Dhaka North City Corporation.

It was informed in a letter given on June 5 to DNCC's chief executive officer from the Office of the Registrar General of the Birth and Death Registration Branch of the Local Government Department.

The Special Branch (SB) of Bangladesh Police has informed about the birth registration of 49 Rohingya citizens, said the letter.

These illegally registered birth certificates have been suspended from the BDRIS system.

The letter also says the registrars and registration assistants who were in charge while issuing those birth certificates, should appear at the registrar general's office within five working days and give an explanation. If not, action will be taken against them as per law.

The secretary of the organisation, Mohammad Masud Alam Siddique, wrote a letter to the chief health officer of DNCC on Sunday in this regard.

When asked about this, DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam said birth registration numbers given by the registrar general's office have been verified and not a single one was issued by DNCC.

He said those who were involved in the illegal

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

ATM
SAVE GREEN OF DHAKA
FREE PUBLIC PARKS
SAVE GREEN SPACE
CLIMATE JUSTICE NOW

Demanding that Anwara Park in Farmgate is not turned into a market, a group of people formed a human chain in front of the DNCC building in Gulshan-2 yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

A seller showcases litchis at Kalitola Market in Dinajpur. The sale of litchis, a popular seasonal fruit, has gained momentum despite high prices attributed to low production due to bad weather. The prized Bedana variety from the north is being sold at Tk 1,000 to 1,500 per 100 pieces. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: **KONGKON KARMAKER**

Two boys go missing in Ctg canal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Chattogram

Two children reportedly went missing after they fell into the Chaktai canal near the sluice gate in the Chaktai area of Chattogram city yesterday.

"We heard that two boys, both around 10, went missing when they went swimming in the canal around 3:30pm," said Jasim Uddin, assistant director of Chattogram Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Syed Ashfaqul

FROM PAGE 3

eight weeks why the couple should not be granted bail in the case filed by Preeti's father over her death caused by negligence.

The court also granted ad-interim bail to Tania for six months that day.

Deputy Attorney General Yasmin Bithi opposed the bail petition. The full text of the HC order is yet to be released.

Preeti, 15, from Moulvibazar, died after falling through an opening at Ashfaqul's eighth-floor flat around 8:00am on February 6. Police took Ashfaqul and Tania into custody within hours of the incident.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 12

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

'Exam results don't determine life's outcome'

Speakers stress overhaul of education system

STAR REPORT

Outcomes of exams are determined not only by students' preparation, but also by family, society, schools, the education system, and management, said speakers at an event yesterday. They also stressed the need to address existing issues in the education system concurrently, while attending a conference held at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh (KIB) in Dhaka for students who did not pass their Secondary School Certificate examinations.

Titled "Challenged Students Convention", the event was organised by Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), which brought together 200 students who faced challenges in passing their exams, along with their parents and teachers.

Addressing students, author Muhammed Zafar Iqbal said, "You are not a liability, you are the asset of this country. Maybe you failed today, but one-day you'll outshine others."

Author Anisul Hoque said, "Exam results don't determine life's outcome. I hope that everyone here today will take their failure as a new challenge and move forward."

Economist Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad said the primary reason many students drop out is the lack of opportunity to study at home.

"If we cannot improve the quality of education, it will be impossible to achieve any national goals," he added.

Nurul Islam Nahid, former education minister, said, "We need to take initiatives to increase stipends for students, especially for those facing economic hardships."

"Besides, we must ensure adequate compensation to attract talented individuals to the teaching profession to ensure quality education," he said.

Former Education Secretary Nazrul Islam Khan proposed nationalising schools to ensure uniform standards and adequate resources. He also urged authorities to provide teachers with a conducive working environment and better benefits like pensions.

Eminent artiste Nasiruddin Yousuff Bachchu urged authorities to initiate dialogues among students, parents and teachers to pinpoint reasons for student's failure.

Other recommendations included bolstering teacher recruitment, providing education for minorities in mother tongue, raising awareness on child labour and preventing child marriage, implementing mid-day meal programmes, and strengthening school monitoring mechanisms.

11pc of population at risk

FROM PAGE 5

These initiatives, implemented through the Directorate of Public Health and Engineering, aim to establish 10,65,000 arsenic-free water sources by 2025.

Solutions include deep tube wells, piped water supply systems, rainwater storage, and solar-powered pond sand filters. These efforts are expected to reduce the arsenic contamination risk by 5-6 percent by 2025.

Besides, in response to a question from Faridunnahar Laili, a lawmaker from the reserved women's seats, the minister discussed plans to expand the Dhaka Mosquito Control Department.

The government has revised the department's organisational structure and is planning to establish a full-fledged Dhaka Mosquito Control Directorate.

This expansion will include the creation of new manpower, the purchase of machinery and standard insecticides, and the establishment of a permanent lab for mosquito pest testing, he said.

The poor sink deeper

FROM PAGE 3

Prof Syed Abdul Hamid of Institute of Health Economics at DU said the country needs a health budget of 12-15 percent, but it is currently receiving only five percent.

Yet, the allocated amount is mostly not spent. He identified three reasons why the allocated budget could not be spent. "One is bureaucratic, the second is our weakness at the facility level and inefficient administration, and the third is the lack of training for our service providers," he said.

Mentioning the manpower crisis within the health sector, he said the process of appointing such a large number of personnel is critical, bureaucratically complex, and lengthy.

"We need to reconstruct our existing facilities and appoint more personnel to justify an increased budget," he said.

He also sought to reform the existing procurement and auditing policies, stating that they were faulty and corrupt.

Prof Farhana Dewan, co-convener at CSO Forum and president of Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh, said, "Most doctors do not want to work at the community level. We need to introduce a system where those who do not want to work at the community level are removed from their jobs."

Makduma Nargis, vice-president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said, "We have faults in our medical system, and due to these faults, the health sector could not see a reform."

She called for a strong monitoring system to ensure that budget allocations are spent properly and that health services are provided according to standards.

Advocating for an urgent need in the health sector, Shams EI Arifeen, senior scientist at icddr,b, said, "We need to understand the need for reform first, and it should be implemented at the policy level. The reform should be carried out politically, not bureaucratically," he added.

Kishwar Imdad, country director of Marie Stopes, suggested the introduction of health insurance for all to reduce out-of-pocket expenditures and ensure proper utilisation of the budget.

Ahmed Ehsanur Rahman, a scientist at icddr'b, recommended bringing private medical services under regulation to reduce such expenditures.

Shishir Moral, a special correspondent at the Bangla daily Prothom Alo, said usually over 20 percent of health budget allocation are embezzled.

Mentioning that most out-of-pocket expenditures occur when buying medicines, he advocated for strengthening Essential Drugs Company Limited and asked CSO organisations to negotiate with the government to prevent further increases in medicine prices.

Esrat Jahan, a regional inclusive health specialist in South Asia, said the budget does not address the health issues of physically challenged people, even though 42 percent of them are suffering from chronic illness.

She called for an inclusive and multidisciplinary approach to address the needs of these people.

While delivering a welcome speech, Golam Mortaza, editor at The Daily Star Bangla, said the country's healthcare service will reach an acceptable standard only when the country's ministers and high-level government officials receive treatment at government hospitals.

The event was moderated by Tanjim Ferdous of The Daily Star.

> **There are three reasons why the allocated health budget could not be spent. One is bureaucratic, the second is our weakness at the facility level and inefficient administration, and the third is lack of training for our service providers.**
>
> **PROF SYED ABDUL HAMID**
> Institute of Health Economics, DU

DNCC issues

FROM PAGE 3

activities mentioned the addresses of the DNCC areas like Mirpur and Mohammadpur.

"We will reply to the letter with our explanation shortly," he said.

"If we find the involvement of any DNCC official or employee, we will definitely take action against them," he said.

On May 26, a letter was given to the Registrar General of Births and Deaths from the Special Branch of Bangladesh Police.

In that letter, it is said 102 individuals obtained Bangladeshi passports with birth certificates from different parts of the country illegally. The permanent addresses mentioned in those passports were found to be incorrect during investigation.

The letter also mentioned that those persons collected the birth certificates with the help of syndicates of brokers, dishonest officials and employees, local public representatives, and so on.

Those who got the birth certificate are Rohingyas, citizens of Myanmar.

The letter requested to take action against those involved in these activities.

Landslide risk

FROM PAGE 5

"Over the years, hundreds of hills have been completely or partially destroyed across the division. The issue of hill conservation has long been in talks, but no initiative has been taken," she added.

Dr Narayan Saha, former head of the forestry and environmental science department at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, said unsustainable use of land and rampant hill-cutting are two major reasons behind the landslide vulnerability in Sylhet.

AKM Rafiqul Islam, director of DoE, Sylhet Divisional Office, said, "We have adopted zero tolerance against those razing hills illegally. We will take necessary action against the accused after investigation."

Eid journey

FROM PAGE 3

RAILWAYS

BR will launch its special train service from today for people who bought advance tickets since June 2.

Delays in schedules of trains connecting the capital with the north-western regions have been common over the last few years due to a lack of capacity on the single line, alongside speed and weight restrictions on the existing railway at Bangabandhu Bridge.

The situation deteriorates when the pressure of passengers intensifies before Eid day, and this situation may recur this year too.

Contacted, Asim Kumar Talukder, general manager (west) of BR, said development works are ongoing at two stations on both sides of Bangabandhu Bridge.

So, they have to operate trains through two lines instead of four lines, which causes delays of more than half an hour for every train heading for northern destinations.

At least 54 trains, including 42 intercity trains, operate between Dhaka and northern districts, showed BR documents.

IRCON INTERNATIONAL LTD.
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
Khulna-Mongla Port Rail Line Project, Khulna, Bangladesh

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NIT No. IRCON/9043/BD.KHU-MON/TENDER/SALE-SCRAP STEEL/DIGRAJ /176/2024-02 Dt. 11.06.2024

Open Tender in Single packet bid system invited on prescribed forms from bonafide firms/companies/having financial capacity for execution of the work for "Sale of Scrap Steel lying at Digraj Store in connection with Khulna-Mongla Port Rail line Project).

Estimated Cost of work :	BDT 38,19,133.80
Earnest Money Deposit :	Tk 3,82,000/- (BDT Three Lakh Eighty Two Thousand Only) by Pay Order
Completion Period :	One (01) month
Cost of Tender Document :	Tk. 5,000 /- (Pay Order in favor of Ircon International Limited)
Last Date & Time for Bid Submission:	Dt.02.07.2024 upto 15.00 Hrs. Opening at 15.30 Hrs.

For further details and updates, Bidders may visit IRCON office, House No. 411, Road No. 4, Sonadanga R/A, Phase-2, Khulna-9100,

Project Manager/KMRLP
Ircon International Ltd.
Contact No. 01783965380, email at kmprlbd9043@ircon.org

help to learn skills to earn!

UCEP Bangladesh

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

UCEP Bangladesh is inviting applications from qualified candidates to fill the following vacant positions at UCEP Institute of Science & Technology (UIST):

Name of positions	No. of vacancies	Job locations
Principal	04	Chattogram, Dhaka, Gazipur & Rangpur
Chief Instructor - Electrical Technology/ Computer Science & Technology	08	
Junior Instructor/Instructor - Electrical Technology /Computer Science & Technology	08	
Officer, Career Counselling and Employment Support	04	

For details, please visit https://jobs.ucepbd.org or www.bdjobs.com. The last date for applying is June 29, 2024.

Applications without requisite qualifications and experience will not be considered.

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
Phone: 02-222218331-31, Website: www.pksf.org.bd

OPEN TENDER NOTICE

Memo no: 53.23.0000.001.03.023.24.3512 Date: 11 June 2024

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) was established by the Government of Bangladesh for poverty alleviation through employment generation. PKSF invites Tender in sealed envelopes from competitive tenderers for **"Procurement of Medicine under PPEPP-EU Project of PKSF"** under **Package No:** PKSF/PPEPP-EU/2023-2024/GD-06 of PPEPP-EU Project of PKSF financed by European Union (EU).

The tender document including specification for "Procurement of Medicine under PPEPP-EU Project of PKSF" should be submitted using prescribed **'Tender Document'**, which can be collected from PKSF during office hours from **12/06/2024** to **08/07/2024** upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **BDT. 1000/- (Taka One Thousand)** only in cash.

Tender documents should be submitted at the office of PKSF by **2:00 pm** on or before **09/07/2022** Tender documents will be opened at **2:30 pm** on **09/07/2022** in presence of the tenderers or their representatives.

Interested suppliers are requested to visit the link: **https://pksf.org.bd/tender/** for detail tender notice and instructions regarding the tender procedures.

PKSF reserves the rights to accept or reject any or all the bid documents without showing any reason whatsoever.

Deputy Managing Director-1

World Health Organization
Bangladesh

VACANCY NOTICE

World Health Organization (WHO) invites applications from the interested and eligible candidates for the following position under following contractual modality:

- **NPO (Divisional Coordinator) / TNP**

For further details on submission of applications including detailed post description please visit our websites:

https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/employment
https://careers.who.int/careersection/ex/jobsearch.ftl

Qualified ***female candidates*** are highly encouraged to apply.

WHO has a smoke-free environment and does not recruit smokers or other tobacco users.

IUB

INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH (IUB)

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Department of Life Sciences, SELS
- Assistant Professor

Facilities & Protocol
- Deputy Director

Purchase & Procurement Department
- Procurement Officer

Application Deadline: **Tuesday, June 25, 2024**

For detailed information and to apply, please visit:
http://iub.ac.bd/news-and-events/jobs-at-iub or **scan the QR code**

United Nations Development Programme
জাতিসংঘ উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচী

UN DP

Procurement Notice: Request for Proposal
Quantum Reference number: UNDP-BGD-00545

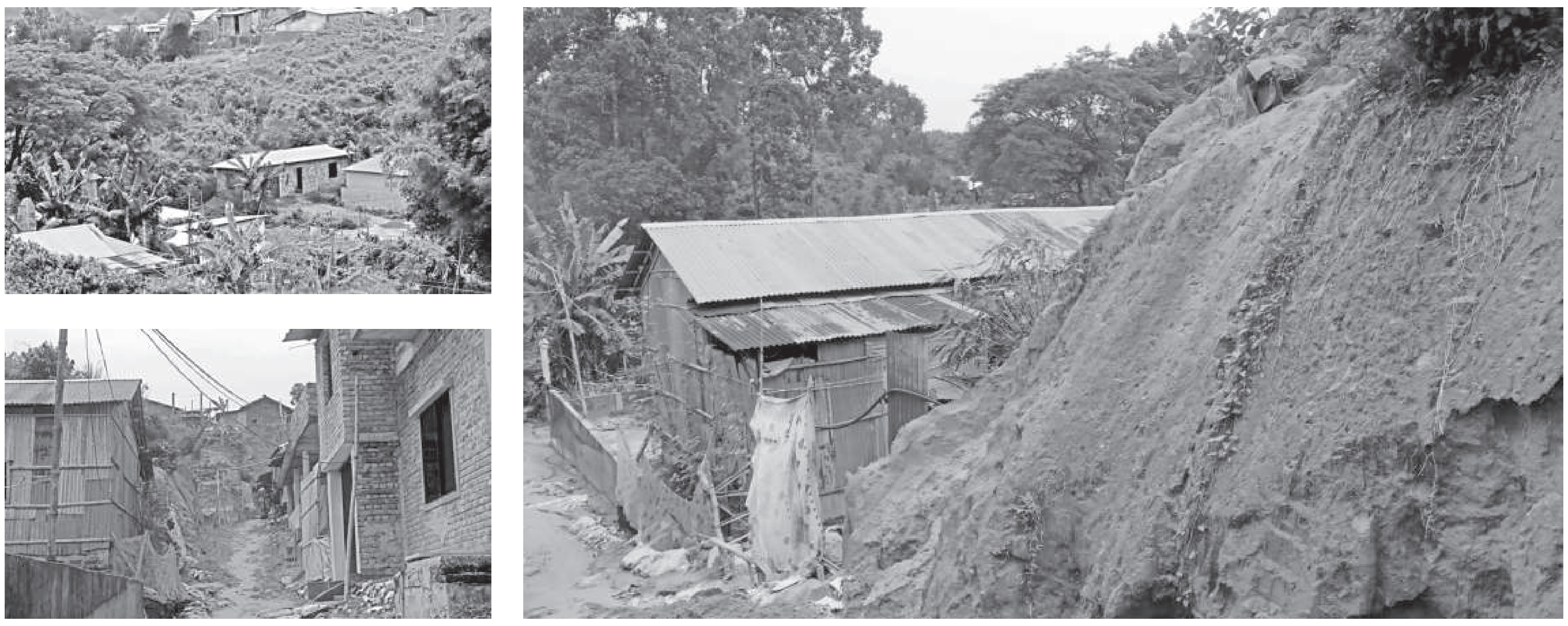
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh is seeking proposals from interested firms for the following requirement:

Contracting a firm for the smart transformation of PFM (Public Finance Management) related services of LGIs (Local Government Institutions) under a2i project of UNDP Bangladesh.
Deadline for submission of proposal is at 4:30 p.m. (Bangladesh Local Time), 24 June 2024.

Proposals may be submitted on or before the deadline indicated by UNDP in the procurement notice. For learning more against RFP, pre-proposal meeting link & submission documents through quantum platform, please visit the below link:
https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_negotiation.cfm?nego_id=20866

For any technical query, please write to us through bd.procurement@undp.org mentioning the reference no: **UNDP-BGD-00545** in the email subject line within **13 June 2024**.

DHAKA WEDNESDAY JUNE 12, 2024
JAISHTHA 29, 1431 BS
The Daily Star



Visiting different areas in Sylhet recently, this correspondent observed that numerous hills were razed to pave way for construction of houses. The photos were taken in the city's Chamelibagh area.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Landslide risk looms large

Illegal hill razing continues unabated in Sylhet

MINTU DESHWARA, *from Sylhet*

Threat of landslides during monsoon looms large in Sylhet as illegal razing of the district's hills continues unabated.

On June 10, three of a family were killed in Sylhet as a mudslide buried their house, raising concerns about such incidents recurring in the coming days.

Environmentalists alleged that culprits have long been cutting down hills illegally in the region, while the Department of Environment continues to remain largely silent.

Visiting different areas in Sylhet recently, this correspondent observed that numerous hills were razed to pave way for construction of houses.

"Over 30 percent of Sylhet's hills have been razed in the last two and half decades. At present, there are 1,875 hills in the four districts under Sylhet division, encompassing an area of 4,811 acres," said Md Badrul Huda, assistant director of DoE in the district.

"In the last six months, 19 individuals and institutions were fined a total of Tk 1,13,77,313 during nine drives against illegal hill cutting in Sylhet. Also, 11 cases were filed against 39 accused," he added.

However, Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon's Sylhet unit, alleged that at least 50 percent of the hills in Sylhet have been destroyed, far higher than the DoE's figure.

A section of government officials and local influential people have been abetting the hill destroyers in exchange for bribes, he alleged.

Thousands of low-income families are living amid risk across different hills in Howladarpara, Akhalia, Peermahalla Brahmanshmashan Jahangirnagar, Tarapur Tea Garden, Baluchar, Airport Road, Khadimpara, Khadimnagar, Jonaki, Islampur Majortila, and Monglirpar areas of Sylhet city, and also in different areas of Habiganj and Moulvibazar districts, he added.

"The hill area in Majortila is now a bustling hub of soil trade. Hills are continuously being razed to extract soil, while the loose earth gets washed away in rain and runs off to waterbodies, causing siltation. This must be stopped," said AH Arif, a Sylhet city resident.

Saheda Akhter, coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association's Sylhet unit, said, "According to the land survey data in 1956, there were 1,025 hills in six upazilas of Sylhet district, and hundreds of others in three other upazilas. Also, in different places it was claimed that there were a total of 1,900 hills across Sylhet division. However, there is no exact information in this regard."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

AL MP seeks black money investment in stock market

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League MP Noor Mohammed from Jamalpur-1 demanded in parliament yesterday that the government allow investment of black money in the stock market.

He made this demand during a general discussion on the proposed budget for fiscal 2024-25.

He said as the stock market has been at a low point for the last two months, allowing black money to be invested will help in the share market's recovery.

Noor requested the finance minister to reconsider the proposed 25 percent tax on imported cars for MPs, particularly for new MPs.

Meanwhile, Nilufar Anjum, a lawmaker from Mymensingh-3, highlighted the high unemployment rate among educated youth and requested a temporary allowance for them before they secure jobs or start businesses.

11pc of population at risk of arsenic contamination

Says LGRD minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LGRD Minister Tazul Islam informed parliament yesterday that 11 percent of the country's population is at risk of arsenic contamination.

Citing the 2019 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and Unicef, he confirmed this statistic during a question-answer session with Awami League MP from Noakhali-2, Morshed Alam.

The minister highlighted various government projects aimed at protecting the public from arsenic.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company Limited
Road Transport & Highways Division
House-04, Road-21, Sector-04, Uttara, Dhaka-1230.
www.dhakabrt.gov.bd

DHAKA LINE

Corrigendum-03

Memo No. 35.06.0000.010.07.002.24-**468** Date: June 11, 2024

The Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) for "Selection of a Consulting Firm to perform the consultancy service for Operational Design and Business Model (ODBM) for Dhaka BRT Company Limited", vide REOI Memo No. 35.06.0000.010.07.002.24-316, dated: 25/04/2024 is hereby amended as follows:

REoI Ref.	Title	Original Text	Amended Text
Sl. No. 7	EOI Closing Date and Time	Date: 24/06/2024, Time: 15:00 hrs BST	Date: 27/06/2024, Time: 15:00 hrs BST
Sl. No. 8	EOI Opening Date and Time	Date: 24/06/2024, Time: 15.00 hrs BST	Date: 27/06/2024, Time: 15:00 hrs BST
Sl. 12 (V)	CONSULTANT ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION	Consulting firms who have previously engaged in the technical assistance (TA) phase of the project are ineligible to participate in this consultancy to avoid potential conflicts of interest.	Consulting firms who are engaged in the preparation of RFP related to the said Procurement are ineligible to participate in this consultancy service to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged. This corrigendum will be an integral part of the published REOI.

SD/-
Md. Kamruzzaman
Deputy General Manager
E-mail: dgmmaint.dbrtcl@gmail.com

GD- 980

Office of the Chief Engineer
University of Dhaka
Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh
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Fax: 880-2-9667222
E-mail: registrar@du.ac.bd
vcoffice@du.ac.bd

প্রধান প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
ঢাকা-১০০০, বাংলাদেশ
ফোন: ৮৮-০২-৯৬৭৪৭৮১ (অফিস)
ফ্যাক্স: ৮৮-০২-৯৬৬৭২২২

মেমো নং :১০২২(২)/প্রকৌঃ

তারিখ : ২৭ জৈষ্ঠ /১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ
১০/ ৬ /২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

টেন্ডার নোটিশ
(সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি-OTM)

ক্রমিক নং	কাজের নাম	টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্টস বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ	টেন্ডার বক্স বন্ধের তারিখ ও সময়	টেন্ডার খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্য সংগ্রহের স্থান
	ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা শেখ কামাল টাওয়ারে Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) সরবরাহ কাজ।	২৬/০৬/২০২৪ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত	২৭/০৬/২০২৪ দুপুর: ১২.০০ টা পর্যন্ত	২৭/০৬/২০২৪ দুপুর: ১২.৪৫ মিঃ	প্রধান প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর, ঢাঃ বিঃ।

[ছাপানোর সাইজঃ (৩"x৪")]

১০/০৬/২৪
(মোঃ আনিছুর রহমান)
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, জোন-২
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

GD-978

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
ঢাকা মেট্রোপলিটন পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স
ডেভেলপমেন্ট বিভাগ
৩৬নং শহীদ ক্যাপ্টেন মনসুর আলী সরণি, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০।

স্মারক নং-০৭-২০১৯(ডেভেলপমেন্ট)/১৩৭৮ তারিখ- ০৯-০৬-২০২৪ খ্রিঃ।

নিলাম তফসিল বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১। নিলাম তফসিল বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-৩৮-৮২/০১/২০২৩-২০২৪খ্রিঃ।
২। ডিএমপি'র রাজারবাগ পুলিশ লাইন্স স্কুল এন্ড কলেজের (১০ তলা ভিত বিশিষ্ট) ভবন নির্মাণের লক্ষ্যে লে-আউটে পতিত বিদ্যমান একতলা সেমিপাকা ভবন ও অন্যান্য স্থাপনাদি (যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে) নিলামে বিক্রয়ের জন্য প্রকৃত নিলামকারীদের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরযুক্ত খামে নিলাম তফসিল আহবান করা হলো।
৩। জামানতের টাকা ঃ উদ্ধৃত মূল্যের ১০% (শতকরা দশভাগ) হারে।
৪। কার্যসম্পাদনের সময় ঃ ১৫ (পনের) দিন।
৫। নিলাম তফসিল মূল্য ঃ ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা মাত্র নগদ (অফেরতযোগ্য)।
৬। নিলাম তফসিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ঃ ২৪-০৬-২০২৪খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত (অফিস চলাকালীন)।
৭। নিলাম তফসিল গ্রহণ/দাখিলের তারিখ ঃ ২৫-০৬-২০২৪খ্রিঃ (বেলা ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত)।
৮। নিলাম তফসিল খোলার তারিখ ঃ ২৫-০৬-২০২৪খ্রিঃ সময় বিকাল ১৫:০০ ঘটিকায়।
৯। যে সকল দপ্তরে তফসিল পাওয়া যাবে ঃ (ক) উপ-পুলিশ কমিশনার (ডেভেলপমেন্ট), ডিএমপি, ঢাকা'র কার্যালয় (৫ম তলা, রুম নং-৫০৩), ডিএমপি সদরদপ্তর, ৩৬নং শহীদ ক্যাপ্টেন মনসুর আলী সরণি, রমনা, ঢাকা।
(খ) উপ-পুলিশ কমিশনার (ওয়েলফেয়ার এন্ড ফোর্স), ডিএমপি, ঢাকা'র কার্যালয়, রাজারবাগ পুলিশ লাইন্স, ঢাকা।
(গ) নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী এর কার্যালয়, গণপূর্ত বিভাগ-১, ১৫, আব্দুল গণি রোড, ঢাকা।
১০। নিলাম তফসিল গ্রহণ এবং খোলার অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা ঃ উপ-পুলিশ কমিশনার (ডেভেলপমেন্ট), ডিএমপি, ঢাকা'র কার্যালয় (৫ম তলা, রুম নং-৫০৩), ডিএমপি সদরদপ্তর, ৩৬নং শহীদ ক্যাপ্টেন মনসুর আলী সরণী, রমনা, ঢাকা।
১১। জামানতের টাকা যে কোন তফসিলভূক্ত ব্যাংক হতে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার, পুলিশ কমিশনার, ডিএমপি, ঢাকা এর অনুকূলে নিলাম দরপত্র তফসিলের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।
১২। নিলামকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে তাদের হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, মূল্য সংযোজন কর নিবন্ধিকরণ, টিআইএন এর সত্যায়িত কপি ও ব্যাংক সলভেন্সির সনদপত্র অবশ্যই সংযোজন করতে হবে।
১৩। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন প্রকার কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন অথবা সকল নিলামে অংশগ্রহণকারীর তফসিল বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।

৯/৬/২০২৪
(মোহাম্মদ মোমিনুল ইসলাম ভূইয়া পিপিএম)
বিপি-৭৪০৬১০৯৮১০
উপ-পুলিশ কমিশনার (ডেভেলপমেন্ট)
কমিশনারের পক্ষে
ঢাকা মেট্রোপলিটন পুলিশ, ঢাকা
ফোন-৪৮৩১৯৫৪৯, ফ্যাক্স-৪৮৩১৯৫৫১
E-mail:dcdevelopment@dmp.gov.bd

GD-983

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
মহিলা ও শিশু বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়
বাংলাদেশ শিশু একাডেমি,চট্টগ্রাম

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১	মন্ত্রণালয় / বিভাগ	: মহিলা ও শিশু বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়।
২	সংগ্রাহক সত্তার নাম	: মহাপরিচালক, বাংলাদেশ শিশু একাডেমি, ঢাকা এর পক্ষে জেলা প্রশাসক, চট্টগ্রাম।
৩	সংগ্রাহক সত্তার জেলার নাম	: চট্টগ্রাম।
৪	যে কাজের দরপত্র	: ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরে বাংলাদেশ শিশু একাডেমি পরিচালিত চট্টগ্রাম জেলার শিশু বিকাশ কেন্দ্রের নিবাসীদের জন্য খাদ্য ও শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, প্রসাধনী এবং বিবিধ মালামাল সরবরাহ।
৫	দরপত্র নং ও তারিখ	: বিএসএ/চট্টগ্রাম/২০২৪-৫৬, তারিখ: ০৬/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ
৬	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	: উন্মুক্ত বাজেট (ও,টি,এম)
৭	বাজেট এবং তহবিল উৎস	: উন্নয়ন বাজেট
৮	দরপত্র প্যাকেজ নং	: ০৩টি।
৯	দরপত্র প্যাকেজ নাম	: ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরে বাংলাদেশ শিশু একাডেমি পরিচালিত চট্টগ্রাম জেলার শিশু বিকাশ কেন্দ্রের নিবাসীদের "ক' গ্রুপ- খাদ্য (পচনশীল ও অপচনশীল), "খ' গ্রুপ- শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, প্রসাধনী ও অন্যান্য "গ' গ্রুপ- বিবিধ আনুষঙ্গিক মালামাল সরবরাহ।
১০	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	: বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ থেকে ২৩/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১১	দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও দরপত্র খোলার সময়	: ২৪/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ, দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা। ঐদিন বেলা ১২.১০ মিনিটে দরপত্রদাতা বা তার মনোনীত প্রতিনিধির উপস্থিতিতে দরপত্র বক্স খোলা হবে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)
১২	দরপত্র দাখিল / গ্রহণ	: অতিরিক্ত জেলা প্রশাসক(শিক্ষা ও আইসিটি), জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম এর অফিস কক্ষ।
১৩	দরপত্র বিক্রয় কার্যালয়ের নাম ও ঠিকানা	: শিক্ষা ও কল্যাণ শাখা, জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম এবং বাংলাদেশ শিশু একাডেমি, ৯৩৯, ও. আর. নিজাম রোড, চট্টগ্রাম।
১৪	দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা	১) বৈধ সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান সিডিউল ক্রয়ের মূল্য নগদে পরিশোধ করতে হবে। ২) পূর্বে অনুরুপ কাজ করার অভিজ্ঞতা সনদপত্র, ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ব্যাংক স্বচ্ছলতা, আয়কর এবং ভ্যাট প্রদান (২০২৩-২০২৪) সনদ এর অধিকারী হতে হবে।

	গ্রুপ	সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	সিডিউলের মূল্য	টেন্ডার সিকিউরিটির পরিমাণ	মন্তব্য
১৫	ক	খাদ্য (পচনশীল ও অপচনশীল)	৫০০/-	সিডিউল মোতাবেক	বাংলাদেশ শিশু একাডেমি, চট্টগ্রাম
	খ	শিক্ষা,স্বাস্থ্য,প্রসাধনী ও অন্যান্য	৫০০/-	সিডিউল মোতাবেক	
	গ	বিবিধ আনুষঙ্গিক মালামাল	৪০০/-	সিডিউল মোতাবেক	

১৬	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা	: জেলা প্রশাসক, চট্টগ্রাম।

শর্তাবলী:
ক) পিপিএ ২০০৬ এবং পিপিআর-২০০৮(সংশোধিতসহ) এ প্রদত্ত ক্রয় সংক্রান্ত পদ্ধতি যথাযথভাবে অনুসরণ করা হবে।
খ) দরপত্র দাতা দরপত্র দাখিলের সময় দাখিলকৃত মূল্যের জামানত হিসেবে 'ক' গ্রুপে ৭৮,০০০/- টাকা, 'খ' গ্রুপে ১৫,০০০/- টাকা এবং 'গ' গ্রুপে ২৪,০০০/- টাকার পে-অর্ডার জেলা শিশু বিষয়ক কর্মকর্তা, চট্টগ্রাম এর অনুকূলে দাখিল করতে হবে।
গ) গৃহীত দরদাতার নিকট হতে উদ্ধৃত দরের ১০% পারফরমেন্স সিকিউরিটির অর্থ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে কার্যাদেশ প্রদান করা হবে।
ঘ) 'গ' গ্রুপের ক্ষেত্রে বরাদ্দ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে কার্যাদেশ প্রদান করা হবে।
ঙ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।
চ) দরপত্র ক্রয়ের তারিখ হতে দরপত্র খোলার তারিখের নির্ধারিত সময় পর্যন্ত দরপত্র দাখিল করা যাবে।
ছ) বিশেষ নির্দেশনা: বিস্তারিত তথ্য দরপত্র সিডিউলে বর্ণিত আছে।

১০/৬/২৪
আবুল বাসার মোহাম্মদ ফখরুজ্জামান
জেলা প্রশাসক
চট্টগ্রাম

GD- 977

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Apu aces as antagonist this Eid

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

> **In 'Writer', I play the role of a dangerous murderer, who is the overseer of a crocodile conservation project, but is actually a killer. I tried to bring a different look and feel to this character.**

Rashed Mamun Apu has carved a niche for himself in Bangladesh's entertainment industry with his compelling portrayals of negative characters in films like ***Poran***, ***Damal***, and ***Prohelika***. Known for his strong presence on both cinema and OTT platforms, Apu is set to captivate audiences once again with his upcoming web-series ***Golam Mamun***, premiering on June 13.

With several projects lined up for release after Eid-ul-Azha, including M Raahim's directorial ***Jongli***, his career shows no signs of slowing down. Fresh from an enriching trip to Bulgaria for the screening of his film ***Kath Golap***, Apu sat down with The Daily Star for an exclusive interview to discuss his recent experiences, upcoming projects, and future aspirations in the world of showbiz.

You recently visited Bulgaria. How was the experience?

I went to Bulgaria for a film festival, which featured my film ***Kath Golap***. It was an incredible experience– meeting directors, producers, and artistes from around the world. I received a lot of positive feedback about the film, which was very gratifying. I also had discussions about future projects with several directors. Overall, it was a fruitful trip.

PHOTOS: **COLLECTED**

You travelled to several European countries as well. How was the response from the Bangladeshi diaspora there?

I received an overwhelming amount of love from the expats. It was an unforgettable experience, and the affection from people is truly a treasured memory.

What are your expectations regarding your upcoming web-series 'Golam Mamun'?

I'm quite optimistic about the Shihab Shaheen directorial web-series. The director needs no introduction here. I play a negative character in this series as well. It was a challenging role that provided me with a lot of new experiences. We shot in various locations during an intense heatwave.

How frightening is your character in 'Golam Mamun'?

It's quite terrifying. Everyone in the cast performed exceptionally well, and my character, though appearing intermittently, is very menacing. There are moments where my expressions alone will scare the audience. I've had to portray various terrifying expressions throughout the series.

Is it true that your film 'Jongli' won't be released during Eid?

Yes, initially, I was told it would be released during the Eid festivities. However, now, it is slated for release a month after Eid. ***Jongli*** is a highly engaging film with a gripping plot. Viewers will see me in a very different role, and there is a big surprise in store for them.

Tell us more about your other upcoming film 'Writer'. When is the premiere?

In ***Writer***, I play the role of a dangerous murderer who is the overseer of a crocodile conservation project but is actually a killer. I tried to bring a different look and feel to this character. I always strive to immerse myself deeply in each role so that it leaves a lasting impression on the audience. Initially, ***Writer*** was scheduled for release during Eid, but apparently, it has been postponed as well.

What are your plans for this Eid?

I will be in Dhaka for this Eid. Having just returned from Europe, I haven't made any specific plans yet. Honestly, the joy of Eid is something I associate with my childhood. Nevertheless, I still look forward to it. I wish all my fans and everyone else a joyous Eid in advance. May the happiness of Eid bless everyone.

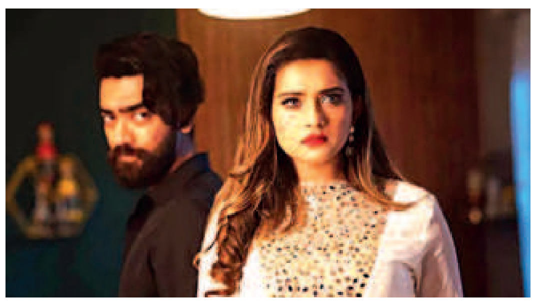
Daniel Craig stuns with long hair in 'Knives Out 3' teaser

The knives are out, but the scissors are sheathed as Daniel Craig debuts a long hairdo in a first look from Rian Johnson's next mystery movie.

Rian Johnson shared a photo marking the first day of shooting for ***Wake Up Dead Man***, the third film in his ***Knives Out*** series, set for 2025. The image features Daniel Craig as Detective Benoit Blanc in a three-piece suit.

Wake Up Dead Man will be distributed by Netflix as part of Johnson's USD 450 million two-sequel deal. The possibility of a thorough theatrical release for the film, by the streamer, is still uncertain.

Tanjin Tisha makes web-film debut with 'Poison'



Actress Tanjin Tisha makes her debut in a web-film with ***Poison***, directed by Sanjay Samaddar. The film, which premiered on June 10 on Deep Play, follows the tumultuous journey of a heroine named Rupa Mirza, played by Tisha.

Director Samaddar skillfully portrays a complex narrative, offering a raw look at a heroine's struggle for success in a ruthless industry.

Initially hesitant about taking on the lead role, Tisha confessed, "Becoming Rupa Mirza required thorough dedication. I hope the audience appreciates my performance and isn't disappointed."

The film also stars actor Abu Hurayra Tanvir as a struggling hero, marking his first collaboration with Samaddar and Tisha.

Poison is now available for streaming on DeeptoPlay.

NEWS

No competitive politics left in Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12

by providing tiny loans of sums less than $100 to the rural poor, angered Hasina with a 2007 plan to set up a political party.

The 2006 Nobel laureate accused the ruling Awami League of being involved in corruption, saying Bangladesh lacked a genuine political opposition.

"Bangladesh doesn't have any politics left," Prof Yunus, 83, said last week in his office in Dhaka. "There's only one party which is active and occupies everything, does everything, gets to the elections in their way.

"They get their people elected in many different forms -- proper candidates, dummy candidates, independent candidates -- but all from the same party," he added.

However, Law Minister Anisul Huq said he completely disagreed with Prof Yunus' comments.

"It's not only I who disagree, but the people of the country will also disagree," he told Reuters by telephone, calling the remarks an "insult" to the people of the country.

"Democracy is fully functional in this country," he added.

Prof Yunus, an economist who won the Nobel for his work on microcredit, was forced out of Grameen Bank in 2011 by Hasina's government, which said he had stayed on past the legal retirement age of 60.

As Bangladesh's longest-serving prime minister, Hasina has been credited with turning around the economy, though critics have also accused her of human rights violations and suppression of dissent.

The US State Department said January's elections were not free and fair while the British government's foreign office also condemned acts of "intimidation and violence".

At the time, the main opposition BNP denounced the exercise as a "sham" election, calling for its cancellation, Hasina's resignation and the formation of a non-party neutral government to hold a fresh one.

Just before the election, a court in Bangladesh had sentenced Prof Yunus to six months in prison for violations of labour law, which he denied.

Although he is not in prison after securing bail in that case, Prof Yunus faces more than 100 cases regarding the violations and graft accusations, which he dismissed as "very flimsy, made-up stories".

Huq denied the accusations against Prof Yunus were false, however, adding, "He has gone to the highest court of the country, which found there was a case against him."

As an example, Huq cited taxes paid by Prof Yunus after the Supreme Court ruled against him in a tax-evasion case, but declined comment on others as being sub-judice.

Prof Yunus' supporters say Hasina's government has sought to discredit him because he once considered setting up the political party, called "Citizens' Power".

Hasina, who denies the contention, called Prof Yunus a "bloodsucker" of the poor in 2011.

"Is it a crime for a citizen to try to make a political party?" Prof Yunus asked, saying he dropped the idea of such a party after just 10 weeks, on realising that he was not suited to politics.

Reviving a competitive political landscape in Bangladesh will be difficult, Prof Yunus said.

"Restarting will be very painful because we have brought it to a point where it has completely disappeared."

Govt approves price for 40MW power import

FROM PAGE 2

Nepal had asked $0.700 per unit while Bangladesh wanted to pay $0.500 during the negation on "40MW power import for five years under the tripartite agreement among Nepal Electricity Authority, NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Limited, and Bangladesh Power Development Board".

The agreed power import price from Nepal is lower than the price the BPDP has been paying for power from India's Adani Power Plant and the country's private power plants.

The unit power price of Adani's coal-fired Godda Power Plant was Tk 14.02, independent power plants Tk 14.62 and rental power plants Tk 12.52, according to BPDP's annual report of fiscal year 2022-23.

The Power Division official said purchasing price of power has increased over the last one year mainly due to devaluation of taka.

He said import of power from Nepal for the first time would boost Bangladesh's commitment to increase the share of green energy in the gas and coal-fired energy mix for power production.

Bangladesh has been interested in purchasing 500MW from Nepal.

Power from the Himalayan nation will be transmitted via the Nepal-India Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur Cross Border Transmission Line and the India-Bangladesh Barampur-Bheramara Cross Border Transmission Line, reports the Kathmandu Post.

On December 6 last year, the government approved the purchase of 40MW of power from Nepal using the power grid of India.

Mahmudul Hossain said the import of hydropower from Napal would start after the final agreement involving the three parties.

Hamas accepts

FROM PAGE 12

Israeli Army Radio said the soldiers died in an explosion in a building in Rafah's Shaboura neighbourhood. Hamas said it had ambushed troops by detonating explosives previously planted in the building.

At least 37,164 Palestinians have been killed and 84,832 have been injured in the offensive that began on October 7, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement yesterday. Some 40 Palestinians were killed and 218 injured in the previous 24 hours, the ministry added.

In Jordan, King Abdullah told a conference on the humanitarian response for Gaza that access for aid to its 2.3 million population, most of whom are now homeless, could not wait for a ceasefire or be subject to a political agenda.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi told the gathering on the Dead Sea that nations should force Israel to stop what he called the use of hunger as a weapon and remove obstacles to the distribution of humanitarian aid in Gaza.

Police detain Jhenaidah AL general secy

FROM PAGE 12

He will be arrested if any involvement is found during interrogation, they said.

Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (DB) of the DMP, yesterday said, "The killing took place in India. But the criminals are Bangladeshis. They came back after the murder. We are investigating whether they shared pictures of the murder after their return."

He also said, "We are also probing whether they [killers] got financial benefits from anyone by sharing the pictures."

Meanwhile, detectives have sent mobile phones of arrestees Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan, his nephew Tanvir Bhuiyan, Celesty Rahman, and Babu for forensic examination following a court order.

In the application to the court, detectives mentioned that Shimul, Babu, Tanvir, and Celesty exchanged various information among themselves through WhatsApp after killing Azim.

Apart from this, it is necessary to know whether any information related to abduction and murder, including photos and videos, has been deleted, it said.

According to detectives, lawmaker Azim was killed in a flat in New Town of Kolkata on May 13.

On May 18, his daughter informed the detectives about the lawmaker missing.

In response to a query about Azim's involvement in smuggling, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said, "We have always been saying that the MP's constituency is a crime-prone area. We need to know what happened there. We are investigating, we will tell you everything after the probe."

In another development, the preliminary forensic report has confirmed that the body parts recovered from the septic tank of Kolkata's flat on May 28 and the bones recovered near a canal in South 24 Parganas district are those of a man.

Akhilesh Chaturvedi, inspector general of West Bengal CID, told media yesterday that they will now

49 migrants die

FROM PAGE 12

deaths and disappearances along the migration route since 2014, including 480 due to drowning.

The latest "tragedy is another reminder of the urgent need to work together to address urgent migration challenges and ensure the safety and security of migrants along migration routes," said agency spokesperson Mohammedali Abunajela.

Those migrants who successfully reach Yemen often encounter further threats to their safety. The Arabian Peninsula's poorest country has been mired in civil war for a decade.

It's service charge, not extortion

FROM PAGE 12

In response, the home minister said the scope for extortion was widespread.

Extortion is taking place in many places, he said, adding, "We have repeatedly asked you [transport leaders] for a list of places from where you take the service charge, we will not allow any charge outside those places."

He said, "We have taken measures regarding the operation of Nasimon-Karimon on highways. We don't want any illegal vehicles to run on highways. We are working to make the highways safe. Our Highway Police is working."

Talking to reporters after the discussion, the minister claimed that police "do not stop vehicles to extort".

"Our police personnel stop vehicles at different times to check their fitness. If they find a vehicle has mechanical issues or is carrying something illegal, they stop it. It is not extortion; it's part of their regular duty."

Additional Inspector General of Police Md Shahabuddin Khan, also the chief of Highway Police, said their goal is to ensure safety on roads. "Discipline on the highways should be ensured by enforcing the law."

Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun, who presided over the discussion, said police will perform their duties to make this year's Eid journey safe and smooth. No vehicles carrying sacrificial animals would be stopped on roads without specific information.

Police knew about shooter cop's mental illness

FROM PAGE 12

in 2010.

Meanwhile, a police team on Monday night collected Kawsar's prescriptions and medicines from his village home in Doulatpur, Kushtia.

Contacted, his wife Nilufar Yasmin Sathi said, "He was supposed to come home on Eid. That's why I bought his medicines. Policemen came at night and took all the medicines."

Nilufar said she took some photos of the medicines and the documents, but the officers made her delete those from her phone.

However, Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station, said the police team visited the house to see if the family was okay. "We did not take medicines or prescriptions," he said.

Close to midnight on Saturday, Kawsar was on duty near the Palestine embassy when he fired 38 shots from his service SMT-9 submachine gun, killing constable Monirul Islam and injuring another man who happened to be there.

He was arrested later and a court placed him on a seven-day remand.

STRESS MANAGEMENT TRAINING

IGP Mamun said, "Bangladesh Police is a professional force. They receive basic training on stress management from both experienced police officers and psychiatrists."

Before they are deployed, members of the force are briefed about the job location and conditions, he said.

In the orientation course, recruits are briefed about the stress they may face at work, he added.

"If needed, we will enhance the training."

[Our Kushtia correspondent contributed to the report.]

India to focus on solving border issues with China

Says FM Jaishankar

REUTERS, *Mumbai*

India will focus on finding solutions to the border issues with China that has long strained ties between the neighbouring countries, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said yesterday after assuming charge for a second straight term.

India and China share a 3,800 km (2,400 mile) border - much of it poorly demarcated - over which the nuclear-armed nations also fought a war in 1962.

They have engaged in a military standoff since July 2020 when 20 Indian soldiers and four Chinese troops were killed in the worst clashes in five decades. "With Pakistan, we would want to find a solution to the issue of years-old cross-border terrorism. That cannot be the policy of a good neighbour," Jaishankar said.

SNAP POLLS

French right-wing leader backs Le Pen alliance

AFP, *Paris*

The leader of France's main right-wing party yesterday said he backed an alliance with the far right of Marine Le Pen in snap legislative elections, triggering a crisis within his own party and fury from the government.

The stunning announcement by the Republicans (LR) leader Eric Ciotti in a lunchtime television interview is the first time in modern French political history that a leader of a traditional party has backed an alliance with the far-right National Rally (RN).

President Emmanuel Macron called the polls on June 30, with a second round on July 7, in a gamble after the RN scored more than double the number of votes of his centrist alliance in EU elections.

People walk towards a devastated building at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City yesterday. The medical facility, the largest in the Gaza Strip, was reduced to rubble after an Israeli operation in March, the WHO said.
PHOTO: AFP

ISRAEL'S FREEING OF HOSTAGES

Gaza civilian killings could be war crimes: UN rights office

AGENCIES

The UN human rights office said yesterday the killings of civilians in Gaza during the Israeli operation to release four hostages, and also armed groups' holding of captives in densely populated areas, could amount to war crimes.

Israel said the operation, accompanied by an air assault, took place on Saturday in the heart of a residential neighbourhood in central Gaza's Nuseirat area where Hamas had kept the hostages in two separate apartment blocks.

The operation killed more than 270 Palestinians, according to Gaza health officials, reports Reuters.

"The manner in which the raid was conducted in such a densely populated area seriously calls into question whether the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution - as set out under the laws of war - were respected by the Israeli forces," Jeremy Laurence, spokesperson for the UN human rights office, said.

Laurence added that the holding of hostages in such densely populated areas by armed groups was "putting the lives of Palestinian civilians, as well as the hostages themselves, at added risk from the hostilities."

"All these actions, by both parties, may amount to war crimes," he said.

Meanwhile, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) has suspended the delivery of aid to Gaza via a temporary US military pier in order to assess the security situation, a spokesperson said Monday.

Stephane Dujarric linked the move to the Israeli hostage rescue operation over the weekend, reports AFP.

"World Food Programme colleagues tell us that we are temporarily pausing operations at the floating dock until a thorough assessment of the security situation is conducted to ensure the safety of our staff and our partners," said Dujarric, spokesperson for the UN secretary-general.

"We've all seen what happened in Gaza over the weekend. We've seen some of the media reports. We've also taken note of very public statements by the US Central Command that the floating pier had not been used in the operation by the Israeli forces regarding the hostages," he said.

4 US instructors stabbed in China

White House expresses deep concern

AFP, *Beijing*

A suspect has been arrested over the stabbing of four American college teachers in northeastern China, police said yesterday, with Beijing describing the attack as an "isolated" incident.

The four were on an academic exchange and worked as instructors at Iowa's Cornell College, which said they were wounded in a "serious incident". White House expressed "deep concern" about the stabbing incident.

The attack took place on Monday in a public park in Jilin province, where police confirmed they had arrested a 55-year-old man. "The suspect, named Mr Cui, was arrested the same day (as the attack)," the local police said.

Beijing confirmed that "four foreign teachers" had been attacked. "All the wounded were taken to hospital... and received proper treatment. None of them are in danger of losing their life," spokesman Lin Jian told reporters.

"The police preliminarily judged that the case was isolated. Further investigation is underway."

"China is generally recognised as one of the safest countries in the world," Lin added. "China... will continue to take relevant measures to effectively protect the safety of all foreigners in China," he said.

China urges greater BRICS role as Western sanctions mount

REUTERS, *Beijing*

China has urged the BRICS bloc of nations to take on greater responsibilities and establish itself as being inclusive to the world, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said yesterday, in the wake of Western sanctions and trade restrictions imposed on the country.

Many Chinese companies have faced Western sanctions over their support for Russia's war in Ukraine, and the European Commission is set to announce tariffs this week on Chinese EVs in a bid to protect European carmakers.

This week, the Group of Seven wealthy democracies is expected to send a tough warning to smaller Chinese banks to stop helping Russia evade Western sanctions, Reuters reported, citing sources.

বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
হেড অফিস
৮, রাজউক এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১০০০।
সেন্ট্রাল একাউন্টস ডিপার্টমেন্ট

নং- ০৮.১/সিএডি/২০২৪-
জুন ১২, ২০২৪

ভ্যালুয়ার ফার্ম নিয়োগের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

০১।	প্রকিউরিং এনটিটির নাম	সেন্ট্রাল একাউন্টস ডিপার্টমেন্ট, বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক পিএলসি., হেড অফিস, বিডিবিএল ভবন (লেভেল-৮), ৮, রাজউক এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১০০০।
০২।	দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা (পিপিআর)-২০০৮ অনুসরণে উন্মুক্ত দরপত্রে (Open Tendering Method)-এ।
০৩।	তহবিলের উৎস	বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক পিএলসি. এর নিজস্ব তহবিল।
০৪।	কাজের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক পিএলসি. এর স্থায়ী সম্পদ (Land, Building & Vehicle) মূল্যায়ন।
০৫।	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয় ও জমা গ্রহণের ঠিকানা	সেন্ট্রাল একাউন্টস ডিপার্টমেন্ট, বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক পিএলসি., হেড অফিস, বিডিবিএল ভবন (লেভেল-৮), ৮, রাজউক এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১০০০।
০৬।	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	সর্বশেষ ২৭/০৬/২০২৪ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
০৭।	দরপত্র দাখিলের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	৩০/০৬/২০২৪ তারিখ দুপুর ৩.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
০৮।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	৩০/০৬/২০২৪ তারিখ দুপুর ৩.৩০ ঘটিকা, স্থান : সেন্ট্রাল একাউন্টস ডিপার্টমেন্ট, বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক পিএলসি., হেড অফিস, বিডিবিএল ভবন (লেভেল-৮), ৮, রাজউক এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১০০০। সকল দরদাতা/দরদাতার প্রতিনিধির (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) উপস্থিতিতে দরপত্র খোলা হবে।
০৯।	দরপত্রদাতার যোগ্যতা	(ক) স্থায়ী সম্পদ ভ্যালুয়েশনের কাজে ন্যূনতম ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা ; (খ) ভ্যালুয়ার ফার্ম-কে অবশ্যই Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) কর্তৃক নিবন্ধিত চার্টার্ড একাউন্ট্যান্ট ফার্ম হতে হবে; (গ) আর্নেস্ট মানি ৩৫,০০০.০০ টাকা (ফেরতযোগ্য) যে কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংকের পে-অর্ডার; (গ) এছাড়া, দরপত্র সিডিউলে উল্লিখিত অন্যান্য শর্তাদি।
১০।	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	১,০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য)।

বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক পিএলসি. কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন প্রকার কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীত যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করে। অনিবার্য কারণ বশত টেন্ডার খোলা সম্ভব না হলে পরবর্তী কার্য দিবসে একই সময়ে টেন্ডার খোলা হবে।

(মুহাম্মদ ফাইদুর রহমান)
ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার

GD-982

Russia destroyed half of Ukraine's power generation

Says Zelensky, urges allies to supply more air defence systems

AFP, *Berlin*

Russian strikes on Ukraine's energy facilities have destroyed half of its electricity generation capacity since winter, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday.

Months of Russian strikes have caused severe energy shortages in Ukraine, leading to scheduled power outages and blackouts.

"As a result of the strikes of Russian missiles and drones, nine gigawatts of capacity have already been destroyed. The peak of electricity consumption last winter was 18 gigawatts. So half now doesn't exist," Zelensky told a conference in Berlin.

Zelensky also urged allies to supply more air defence systems, saying: "It is missile and bomb terror that helps Russian troops advance on the ground."

"Air defence is the answer," he said. Ukraine's state power operator said it was extending scheduled outages around the country because of increased consumption.

"Today... the period of application of hourly outage schedules throughout Ukraine has been extended -- restrictions will be imposed from 2:00 pm to 11:00 pm," Ukrenergo said in a statement.

The company had announced outages on Monday between 4:00pm-10:00 pm and had said outages would continue between 2:00pm-7:00pm yesterday.

"The reason is that consumption continues to grow. At the same time, due to extensive damage, Ukrainian power plants cannot produce as much electricity as before the attacks," the company said.

Zelensky said the strikes showed Russian President Vladimir Putin was trying to "hone the practice of destroying energy facilities" including connections between the Ukrainian and European energy systems.

Ukrenergo chairman Volodymyr Kudrytsky said last week that it could take "years" for Ukraine to restore its full generating capacity.

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CLIMATE FINANCE
WEALTH TAX

PHOTO: AFP

Protesters hold placards during a protest near the US embassy in Manila, Philippines yesterday, to call on leaders of the Group of 7 (G7) to deliver climate finance to developing countries in anticipation of the 50th G7 Summit on June 13 in Italy.

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The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Acute suffering as gas crisis hits hard

It's another wake-up call for the energy sector

We are worried about the weeks-long gas crisis that followed the shutdown of an LNG regasification terminal in Cox's Bazar's Moheshkhali after being damaged by Cyclone Remal. According to a report, the crisis has plagued many households, factories, and vehicles running on compressed natural gas (CNG). For many residents in Dhaka and elsewhere, cooking has become a daily struggle. The situation is no better for the industrial sector, where factory closures and operational disruptions have resulted in significant economic losses and job insecurity for thousands of workers. Meanwhile, CNG filling stations have been overwhelmed with long queues of cars and auto-rickshaws. The power supply in rural areas has worsened as well.

Reportedly, the crisis will continue for some more time as the damaged LNG unit—which reduced our LNG supply by almost half, and was taken to a dry dock abroad for repairs—is not expected to be back for another two weeks. That means more outages, more disruptions, and more sufferings. The Moheshkhali unit is one of the two floating storage and regasification units (FSRUs) in Bangladesh that convert LNG, or liquefied natural gas, back to gas before supplying it to the national grid. While the present crisis has again brought into focus the country's poor LNG import/supply infrastructure—it was only recently that we commented on the risk of surplus LNG regasification capacity as well as gas compressor stations lying idle amid insufficient supply—it also exposed deeper systemic issues surrounding our energy policy.

At the heart of it is the over-reliance on imported LNG amid dwindling local gas reserves. As experts have repeatedly said, a short-term, small-scale dependence on LNG import is reasonable, but tying it with our long-term energy future is not sustainable. Yet this is what the government has been doing, and doing rather badly as it cannot pay for the import thanks to the dollar crisis. What we need to focus and indeed invest more on is diversifying our energy sources so as not to be so vulnerable to economic and natural shocks like Cyclone Remal. That, right now, should start with exploring local gas, including the 48 gas wells that the government flagged for exploration in three years. We should also invest more on renewable energy sources which haven't yet got the traction they deserve.

So, while we call on the government to do everything necessary to address the present gas crisis, we should also keep an eye on the future. Exploring and extracting local gas must be a priority going forward, and the national budget must reflect that priority before it is passed. The government should also work on our vulnerable energy supply/distribution infrastructure, which is seldom discussed despite the sufferings it caused in recent years.

Rehabilitation must come before eviction

DSCC drive against Harijan families raises alarm

We are outraged by the Dhaka South City Corporation's (DSCC) recent eviction of multiple families at the Miranzilla Harijan Colony in Bangshal. The way these vulnerable and marginalised members of our society have been made homeless, without any proper rehabilitation plans, sets a dangerous precedent that could have alarming impacts.

The sweeper colonies in the city are like ancestral homes for the Harijan community and others, who were mostly brought here during the British period. Generations grew up in these colonies, doing the same cleaning jobs for pitiable wages, which means almost none of them can save up enough to enjoy a comfortable retirement, release themselves from the grips of poverty, or leave the colonies. Therefore, the DSCC cannot just write off those no longer employed by the city as "illegal residents". Besides, how can the DSCC justify expanding a kitchen market by evicting marginalised people who have no other place to call home?

Ironically, a DSCC official has told this daily that the kitchen market expansion decision was taken in 2016; they are just implementing it now. This means that the DSCC had eight years to rehabilitate the now-evicted Harijan families but did nothing. How does this feudalistic attitude, reclaiming their land without any consideration for the gravity of the situation of the Harijans, align with the idea of a social welfare state?

While we understand that the decentralisation and development needs of the city would ultimately drive the relocation (or migration) of many families and communities, such actions should not take place in a haphazard manner. The higher authorities must come up with a long-term plan for the communities likely to be evicted as the city corporations increasingly reclaim their land for development or commercial purposes. In the meantime, immediate steps should be taken to rehabilitate the evicted families of the Miranzilla Harijan Colony. These communities also need special allocations under the social safety net to reduce their vulnerability from extreme poverty, job loss, or old age. The state must steer them out of poverty so that they do not have to live in constant fear of eviction or at the mercy of others.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

ЕЛЬЦИН
БОРИС НИКОЛАЕВИЧ

Election of Boris Yeltsin

On this day in 1991, Boris Yeltsin was easily elected president of Russia (then part of the Soviet Union) in the republic's first direct, popular election, and he was president of independent Russia until the eve of 2000.

EDUCATION IN FY2024-25 BUDGET

A futile debate achieving little

Dr Manzoor Ahmed
is professor emeritus at BRAC University, chair of Bangladesh ECD Network, adviser to Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), and associate editor of the International Journal of Educational Development.

Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

MANZOOR AHMED

For the past 15 years since the Awami League government took over, there has been pre-budget discussion every year about the need for increasing the miserably low public expenditure for education and health. And then the proposed annual budget paid little heed to the plea for a change in priorities, causing frustration and disappointment. The proposed FY2024-25 budget has been no different—it follows the same pattern.

The new budget can be described as a "crisis response" one that the government has prepared in the face of the formidable challenges of unabated inflation, economic slowdown, revenue shortfall, dwindling foreign exchange reserves, and a rising annual debt burden. Allocations have been tightened for every sector, while there is a nominal increase in the total budget from the previous one and a high level of deficit financing. There is, therefore, no expectation of any significant increase in education and health allocations as borne out by the proposed budget. Nor is there an indication of any shift in strategy and priority responding to long-standing issues in education and human development, which have been periodically raised by educationists and concerned citizens.

Out of a Tk 7,97,000 crore budget, education allocation is Tk 94,710 crore or 11.88 percent of the budget and 1.69 percent of GDP. Allocations proposed for sub-sectors of education are: Tk 44,108 crore for secondary and higher education; Tk 38,819 crore for primary and mass education; and Tk 11,783 crore for technical and madrasa education. The education allocation for the outgoing fiscal year was Tk 88,162 crore or 11.5 percent of the budget and 1.76 percent of GDP. The revised budget was, however, reduced to Tk 74,597 crore. The proposed education budget is only nominally higher than the allocated amount for the past year, which is actually a reduction if the inflation of over nine percent is counted.

Noteworthy is the fact that the education sector is not able to use all of the funds allocated for it in the outgoing financial year. As much as Tk 14,000 crore will not be spent, as the revised allocation indicates. It is difficult to make a case for increased budget when the fund available cannot be fully utilised.

As this author as well as other education activists have often pointed out, the education authorities—the two ministries—have to make a case for public investment priorities in education and be persuasive about it. When the national budget fails to give due recognition to the needs and priorities of a vital sector such as education, it is as much the failure of the education ministries as it is of the finance ministry, who presents the budget on behalf of the government.

It is not, but should have been, in the public domain what the two ministries asked for in respect of increasing allocations and whether any innovative thinking found a place in their budget submission. There was no opportunity for public discussion when the budget proposals by the two education ministries were being formulated. There hasn't been a great receptivity on the part of the two education ministries, the political leadership and the administrative decision-makers regarding the civil society education advocates' pleas for re-thinking the needs for 21st century education. There is rhetoric aplenty about Smart Bangladesh and a smart new generation, but the serious and holistic planning and systematic efforts for achieving results have been lacking.

VISUAL: **REHNUMA PROSHOON**

Educationists have argued that the various initiatives taken by the two ministries have been fragmented, partial and treating the symptoms of diseases rather than the roots of problems. These initiatives have not been based on a holistic and coordinated sector-wide effort to achieve well-articulated medium- and long-term educational objectives. Cases in point are the introduction of the new curriculum and student assessment without preparing the ground; the sub-sector activities such as the series of primary education development programmes (PEDP5 or the fifth round is supposed to be under consideration now); the decision again to shift Classes 6 to 8 from secondary to primary schools (after several failed attempts since 2010 Education Policy was announced); various largely ineffective and frequently re-formulated teachers' training projects; and token efforts towards building a decentralised, responsive and accountable system of school education.

Academics and researchers have put forward an agenda for re-imagining education for the 21st century through their advocacy, such as Education Watch reports. This agenda includes moving towards a greater and genuine decentralisation of education governance; attracting talented people to the teaching profession and keeping them there; a major initiative to widely and effectively apply the blended approach (merging tech-based and teacher-supported learning); building partnerships between government and non-state actors; and establishing a permanent education commission to guide and monitor education system changes. These could be the components of an education sector plan and a 10-year megaproject for education. All of these would lay the ground for equitable, quality and inclusive school education for all children, thus building the foundation for an education system fit for a higher-middle-income and eventually a developed country. Such a sector plan would demand larger resources and efficient use of the resources.

The annual budget is not the instrument for a major overhaul of the education system. It can, however, reflect and help prepare the ground for a transformative change, if such a change is envisaged by the policymakers. The new budget, as the ones of past years, following a much trodden path, has not helped a move in this direction.

WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

Ending child labour needs decisive interventions

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FATARAZ ZAHAN

Child labour, a global problem, is a narrower concept of working children. In terms of national and international laws, child labour is unlawful. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that there are 160 million child labourers worldwide (as of 2020)—63 million girls and 97 million boys—most of whom are engaged in agriculture, followed by service and industrial sectors, as well as in domestic labour. The majority of them are from the Asia-Pacific region. Nevertheless, the number of children engaged in labour worldwide decreased by 85 million between 2000 and 2020, according to ILO.

Bangladesh has also significantly reduced child labour, but there is still work to be done to completely eradicate the practice. This progress has been facilitated by a number of international agreements that set out legal guidelines and frameworks for action, including the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (C182) and the ILO's Minimum Age Convention (C138). Over the past 20 years, there has been a noticeable improvement in the rate of child labour reduction. The National Child Labour Survey 2022 finds that Bangladesh has 39.96 million children (51.79 percent boys and 48.21 percent girls) aged five to 17 years. Out of the entire child population, 3.54 million are working children. The report also highlights their involvement in various sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, construction, wholesale, retail, and transport. Some 60.8 percent of them are employees, and 99 percent of them informally employed. Despite government initiatives, child labour is still a common practice especially in the rural region of Bangladesh.

However, the government has put in place some measures to lessen child labour, like raising the minimum working age and offering children training and education opportunities. The National Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010 was aimed at addressing the deep-rooted issue of child labour by implementing a comprehensive strategy. The policy was a big step in the right direction towards solving the problem. Its main objectives are to enhance the legal system, provide access to education, and end dangerous kinds of child labour. The National Child Labour Elimination Action Plan (NPA) is another initiative that aims to operationalise the policy by providing strategies for intervention and clearly defined targets.

Socioeconomic conditions, poverty, limited access to education, and deeply ingrained cultural norms have normalised the idea of children contributing to family income through labour. These contextual factors necessitated a targeted and multifaceted approach to address child labour effectively. There have been numerous international organisations, governments, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working towards the goal of ending child labour for decades. Most Bangladeshi children have low-income parents who engage in a range of risky occupations. These kids' physical and emotional health are in danger due to the nature of their jobs, and their basic rights to an education and a healthy upbringing are being infringed. It also has an impact on children's physical and emotional well-being as well as their access to education.

Socioeconomic conditions, poverty, limited access to education, and deeply ingrained cultural norms have normalised the idea of children contributing to family income through labour. These contextual factors necessitated a targeted and multifaceted approach to address child labour effectively.

Numerous reports, including those from local NGOs and the ILO, claim that child labour is still common in a number of industries, including manufacturing, household work, and agriculture. The inadequate monitoring and evaluation of the National Child Labour Elimination Policy has drawn criticism. The policy's poor implementation, monitoring and evaluation have been attributed in large part to a lack of resources, a lack of enforcement, and low stakeholder awareness. The strategy received praise for its emphasis on social security and education, but it has not been enough to solve the underlying issues that lead to child labour in Bangladesh. Because of this, the government has been pushed to step up efforts, such as by tightening the enforcement of labour laws, expanding access to social services and education, and collaborating with civil society organisations.

It is important to note that while the government is dedicated to protecting children, only comprehensive action can have a beneficial effect on reducing or eliminating child labour at all societal levels. National action is, therefore, crucial. However, in order to behave in complete accordance with reality, all relevant factors such as the social, political, cultural, and economic conditions must be taken into account. In addition, a strong child sensitivity approach and the use of multiplier measures are required. Beside our social safety net programmes, it is also necessary to formulate new social policies to improve these conditions.

Lastly, poverty and child labour are inextricably linked, and as long as we ignore or do not recognise child labour as a structural reality of the economy, it will be difficult to eliminate child labour from the supply chain.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

Newsroom: Fax- 58156306
reporting@thedailystar.net

Advertisement: 01711623910
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Subscription:
01711623906

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How to break the curse of losing heartbreaking matches

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MADIHA ATHAR KHAN

PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh lost to South Africa by four runs—runs that were denied to the team due to a faulty decision by the on-field umpire.

Bangladesh is a seasoned customer of heartbreaking finishes. As a Bangladeshi fan, all that could have gone in our favour naturally becomes glaringly obvious and sharpens the pain of losses in tight matches, such as the one against South Africa. Bangladesh lost the match by four runs—runs that were denied to the team due to a faulty decision by the on-field umpire. As the umpire raised his finger to Mahmudullah's dismay, the ball raced behind him to the boundary. He immediately reviewed the decision and successfully overturned it, but because of a rule of the game, the ball was deemed a dead ball and those four runs ultimately became the margin by which Bangladesh lost the game. That fact is salt to the wound for Bangladeshis as much as it is a consolation prize. Fans can look to moments like this to convince themselves that we nearly did it and lost it for something that was out of our control.

Sidharth Monga's insightful match analysis of the game, "The Bangladesh-SA thriller that you think you saw, but TV didn't fully show" on ESPNcricinfo sheds more light on the uncontrollable factors that did not go in Bangladesh's favour. He talked about the three full tosses that Maharaj bowled in the last over—deliveries that arguably should have helped Bangladesh score the required 10 runs. With Mahmudullah on strike and six to defend from two balls, Maharaj attempted to bowl a yorker. It was *wind* of all things that made the difference. It picked up just then behind Maharaj and turned the ball into a full toss instead of the attempted yorker. This became the batter's advantage and Mahmudullah was perfectly placed to finish the match with one winning shot. But as Monga says, "What made Maharaj miss his execution also helped him." The same wind resisted the trajectory of Mahmudullah's shot, holding it just long enough in the air to not clear the boundary. The knife in the wound twists.

The only solution for Bangladesh to escape what feels like the curse of losing heartbreaking and close matches is to be so good that these factors no longer make a difference. I cannot say with certainty, but I am sure that other teams like ours who are often nearly there but not quite enough find a plethora of examples where if only things were slightly different, they would emerge victorious. The goal has to be to become a team that displays indomitable spirit and is so capable that they are largely always in control of the game. I doubt that achieving this high standard of cricket exempts a team from facing the short end of the stick in times of uncertainty. It's just that the team's performance would then be so strong that small factors no longer have much sway in defining the outcome of the game.

When it comes to factors within the team's control, the batters' weakness against the short ball stands out. Both Shanto and Shakib got out to similar deliveries in the same fashion where they did not seem to have any idea of how to execute a shot against a short ball. The two players' years of experience vary greatly, and yet they seemed to have the same approach. This can be an example of the fact that when problems emerge in the team—which is only fair and expected—it is allowed to persist instead of being addressed with a strategy in place to overcome the weakness.

The Bangladeshi bowlers maintained excellent discipline throughout the first innings. They made the most of the early breakthroughs and did not falter in line and length even when the partnership grew after the fourth wicket. They pulled it back nicely towards the end of the innings with Mustafiz bowling a stunning last over that gave away only four runs. The bowlers seem to be in much more harmony with each other than the batters of the team. The bowlers' performance is that of a cohesive unit where if one has a bad over, they do not let the momentum get away from them. The captaincy was also commendable in terms of backing players who bowl expensive overs such as Rishad, who came back after bowling three overs for 28 runs to get the wicket of David Miller.

Bangladesh is experienced in playing and winning low-scoring T20 matches, but sadly the support of the batters is sorely missed. Surely, there cannot be an easier target to chase in a T20 match than 114. As always, Mahmudullah Riyad continues to be the most dependable asset of the team and has perhaps been its true leader without ever donning any feathers.

A serious book for serious times

A review of My Golden Bengal: Views and Voices from Civil Society by René Holenstein

Dr Geof Wood
is a development anthropologist and author of several books and numerous journal articles, with a regional focus on South Asia. He is also emeritus professor of international development at the University of Bath, UK.

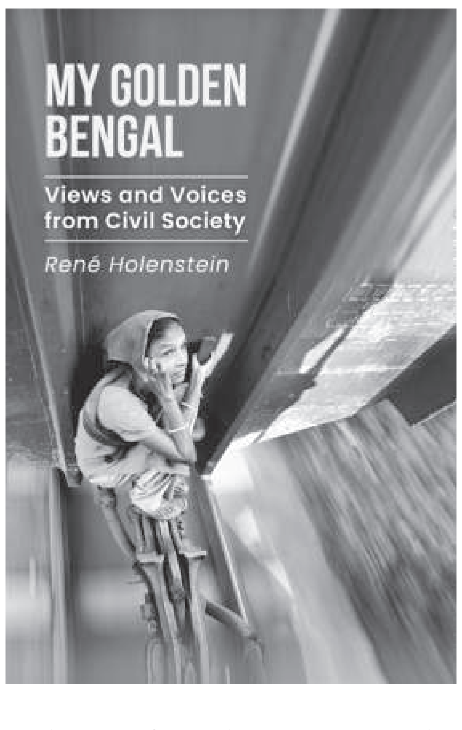
GEOF WOOD

A remarkable gathering of informants have been interviewed in recent years by René Holenstein, a recent ambassador for Switzerland, who returned to Bangladesh in May 2024 to launch this book in the company of most of them. It is a testimony to his period in office here that he explored the country with affection and detail, and listened well to people in the villages as well as leading figures representing concerned academics and lawyers, and activists from many parts of the civil society. As a collection of their testimonies, *My Golden Bengal: Views and Voices from Civil Society* (published by UPL) combines recollections from the liberation struggle which outline the hopes for a distinctive national mission reflecting Bangalee socio-cultural traditions in contrast to those of the dominant, oppressing partner in the flawed postcolonial experiment that was Pakistan. It is never a bad idea to be reminded of the trauma of that struggle, especially in its final episode of crackdown. It took the lives of Bangladeshis to atone for the catastrophic mistake of a rushed exit via Partition.

With this backdrop, ambivalence is soon displayed in this volume. A sense of disappointment that the hopes and dreams of a generation quickly descended into contestation as desperate people and groups fought for their family livelihoods by whatever means possible in the knowledge that the young state was unable to come to their rescue. Perhaps the legacy of chaos left by departing forces from Pakistan and then India could have been highlighted more as the context within which inexperienced leaders wrestled for control and stability. While struggles against a common enemy can unite, things can also rapidly fall apart. And it is often observed that campaigning and voice is not always the best qualification for governing.

The author has to manage this balance between recording the views of his interlocutors and providing his own interspersed analysis that respects those accounts rather than challenging or re-interpreting them. This is what makes the book unique in a sense, because it is not a single author's account in effect. The "data" is presented in its raw form and then has to be woven into a narrative. It is a navigation between a range of views and voices, to use the book's subtitle.

These views progress to the present, reflecting on the challenges now evident in society. Of course, there is a consensus that the violent coup in August 1975 was a betrayal of all that had been fought for, no matter that it occurred within a sense of letdown. And a further consensus of no sympathy for the period of military rule which followed up to the end of 1990, 15 years later. By this route, most of the interlocutors reach the similar point of a country faced with a prospect of unfinished dreams under the conditions of a tarnished democracy. A familiar set of criticisms emerge of hopes dashed. These amount to the imperative for a continuous need for struggle to realise ambitions, originally promised. The common theme emerges as vigilance across all sectors of Bangladeshi life, whether it is the persistence of child marriage, widespread rent-seeking and corruption enabling the megarich, the absence of openly competitive politics and voting, the pervasiveness of violence both as a means of that competition and as perpetrated upon women, freedom of speech, shrinking of space for civil society to exercise its accountability role, or free riders escaping civic duty to pay taxes—and the list goes on, as frequently covered by this newspaper.



But the need for vigilance is not the only theme. The question of glass half full or half empty emerges. Achievements are observed. Not least from outside the state, from among the NGOs and from among business. One of the interlocutors offers the sobering thought that it could have been much worse. This comment sets up the development/democracy discussion towards the end of the book, akin perhaps to the paradox debate. This is a sharp reminder that many societies globally have historically developed with deeply flawed governance systems—not least the UK during the 19th century. And of course, some still do, as in China with its autocratic development model. With his development background, it would have been interesting if the author could have coaxed a little more in this regard from his impressive list of interlocutors. It would have certainly connected Bangladesh to the literature on the developmental state. And perhaps a sharper conclusion could then have been offered referring to another literature about lost opportunities when governance in both senses of accountability and competence falls short of the needs of development, and the correlation between rising inequalities and dangers to the body politic, which renders "leave no one behind" as a hollow joke.

The author has to manage this balance between recording the views of his interlocutors and providing his own interspersed analysis that respects those accounts rather than challenging or re-interpreting them. This is what makes the book unique in a sense, because it is not a single author's account in effect.

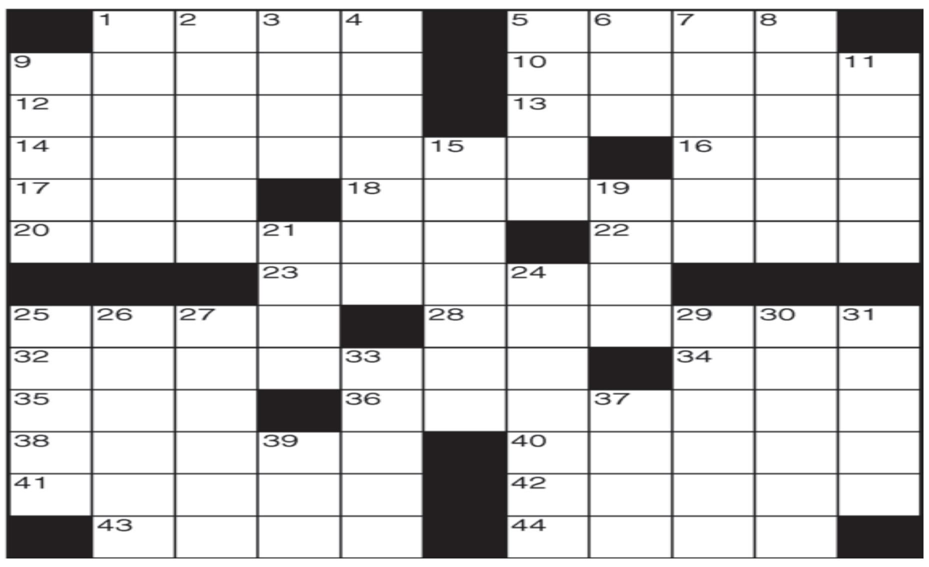
These missing parts leave one with a sense of widespread collusion in the "good enough governance" position, which delivers some development through cascading paths of patronage, rather than as a matter of citizen rights and entitlements, just keeping the society on the right side of fragile stability. But such collusion does not come from most interlocutors, but rather from a wider set of global observers. The participants in this book can be distinguished by the feeling that their collective job has not yet been done. And the author has allowed this sentiment to be expressed. But perhaps uncomfortably, this leaves us with the hanging question—should this responsibility be passed down the generations to youth, or should the seniors remain on the barricades having both less to lose and less to gain personally? A final altruistic gift, albeit risky, to the future of that youth.

This book should be read widely, and it would certainly enhance its value to society if it appeared in Bangla, not just German followed by English. A serious book for serious times, but also intensely readable.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Rugged rock
5 Captain of fiction
9 Espresso layer
10 Isaac's mother
12 Jacket part
13 Intent look
14 Greed
16 Butter unit
17 Month in Marseilles
18 Wooden grid
20 "Silkwood" star
22 Stately trees
23 French landscape painter
25 Choir voice
28 Words on a November sticker
32 Ornamental molding
34 Chopping tool
35 CBS series with spinoffs
36 Waiter's job
38 Foe
40 Rat's home
41 Biscotti flavor
42 Wipe off
43 Apertures
44 Earth tones

DOWN
1 Neckwear
2 Fix
3 From the U.S.
4 Telescope pioneer
5 Useful skill
6 Bowler, e.g.
7 Mideast area
8 Malia's dad
9 Smackers
11 Toast start
15 Whim
19 Visitor to Oz
21 Bus. sch. course
24 Like type that doesn't fit
25 Capital of Ghana
26 Behind
27 Quiz show fodder
29 Asian island
30 Too much
31 Plow pioneer
33 Resort spots
37 Designer Wang
39 Pharaoh's symbol



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

L	A	C	K	■	■	S	L	I	T	■
A	P	H	I	D	■	T	A	M	E	D
S	P	I	T	E	■	A	M	P	L	E
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R	E	D	C	A	P	S	■	R	O	T
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I	N	S	P	A	C	E	■	A	R	I
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LAW OPINION

Who has paralysed the postwar rule-based world order?

Israel and its allies justify the Gaza invasion as a form of aggressive self-defence to annihilate a target group wholly or partially in the same way the US-UK invented pre-emptive self-defence to justify the Iraq invasion. Neither form of self-defence exists in international law and the UN Charter, yet, they have exercised this self-made self-defence with impunity.

M RAFIQUL ISLAM

The heinous tragedy and torment of Gaza continues unabated. The outrage of international public opinion, overwhelming support of states in the UN General Assembly, unprecedented Security Council binding resolution, and the Secretary-General's repeated warning of an apocalyptic situation warranting immediate cease-fire and uninterrupted access of humanitarian assistance have so far gone unheeded in this world order. This failure is not to the wonderment of those who are familiar with the excessive exceptionalism of the leader of this deceptive rule-based order and rampant bias for allies.

There are pressing embryonic flaws in the genesis of the postwar world order, based on international law, absolutely dominated by Eurocentricism. Originating in the heartland of Europe, this order encapsulates Anglo-American imperial ambitions, values, ideals, and vocabularies as the foundation of its legal rationality. Colonial narratives propagated this order as neutral and civilised to be adhered as universal and valid for the rest of the world. It is this pervasive idea of westernisation of the order that has de-legitimised the values and expectations of non-western and non-ally states contrary to the principle of sovereign equality of states as the foundation of international legal order. The derisory treatment of non-western states making them peripheral reflects an inherent orientalist superiority complex to gerrymander the elusive virtues of the order. For its very survival and continuity in a multi-cultural plural world, the postwar mono-cultural 'order' has patronised the emergence of an ego-centric 'power-cult' and alliance for economic strangulation/sanction and military coercion on those deemed inimical to the hierarchical power. Since the 1990s, the US-led western allies have established military superiority through NATO in the absence of their cold war rival, the USSR and Warsaw Pact.

The history of the so-called rule-based world order is littered with instances of disorderly and unlawful powerplays condoned to camouflage the impunity and unaccountability of the powerful perpetrators. The atrocities committed in Gaza is yet the latest manifestation of this (dis)order. In May 2024, the US State Department has submitted a Report to the Congress on the use of US weapons by Israel in Gaza commissioned by President Biden. The Report reveals that Israel may have violated international law for being 'inconsistent' with the US and Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law protecting non-combatant civilians, women, and children. Unsurprisingly, the US has been sending new arms to Israel despite Rafah invasion. This is how successive US administrations have been pursuing their belligerent foreign policy and providing blanket armed protection to Israel. This US policy has mismanaged and stultified the Middle East peace process. This State Department Report 2024 is likely to be shelved with no action whatsoever as happened with similar past reports.

The British Parliament launched the Sir John Chilcot Commission to investigate the justification of the UK's participation in the Iraq war. The Chilcot Report of 6 July 2016 found that Prime Minister Blair's decision to go on war was based on flawed and fabricated intelligence and unfounded assumptions. Similarly, the House of Commons' International Commission of Inquiry on Libya Report of 16 September 2016 revealed that Prime Minister Cameron's decision to invade Libya through NATO was neither lawful, nor successful and that he lied/misled the House by asserting that the Libyan operation would be limited to only civilian protection, while the Libyan regime change was his hidden agenda. Nothing has happened to the war mongering western leaders who repeatedly infringed Article 2(4): the prohibition of the use of force in international relations, a governing principle of the UN Charter and peremptory (jus cogens) norwm with hierarchically superior status in international law. They remained unaccountable for their crimes of aggression that destroyed Iraq and Libya; rather they were rewarded. Tony Blair was appointed on 7 June 2007 as special representative of the Quartet of international powers to negotiate a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians and David Cameron is the incumbent British Foreign Secretary overtly determined to supply arms to Israel.

The present contemptuous state of the world order is largely attributable to the US-led unipolar world without the USSR since the 1990s. It led US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to arrogantly assert, 'we are the indispensable nation' in pursuit of 'asserted multilateralism', backed by unilateral military intervention when necessary to protect its geopolitical and geostrategic interests beyond the reach of international law and the UN – an exceptionalist state indeed. In interstate conflicts so far, the US is the only state that dropped atomic bombs in Japan, chemical weapon agent orange in Viet Nam, and cluster bombs in Afghanistan. Recently, US lawmakers initiated a bill, the Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act 2024, for sanction and visa restriction on key ICC prosecutorial officials involved in seeking arrest warrants against Israel leaders for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza. Such US threats and bullying tactics against international judiciaries are common in the face of every adverse judgement. The US undermined the International Court of Justice when lost in the Nicaragua case in 1987 and has hamstrung the WTO Appellate Body for decisions made against US for trade-rule violations.

The US declined to be party to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and campaigned to destabilise the ICC. Its American Service Members Protection Act 2002 prohibited US cooperation with the ICC and granted the President to 'use all means necessary and appropriate to bring about the release' of US nationals or allies if detained by the ICC. The US concluded bilateral treaties with Israel, among others, preventing the surrender to the ICC of any US national guilty of international crimes. In 2002, the US threatened to veto the renewal of all UN peace-keeping missions unless its troops committing crimes were granted immunity from ICC prosecution. The Security Council granted this immunity for 12-months and renewed once. The US demand for immunity ceased in 2004 after footages of US troops' degrading and dehumanising treatments of Iraqi prisoners in the Abu Ghraib jail went viral worldwide. In 2020, the US imposed sanctions on senior ICC officials for launching investigations into alleged war crimes committed by US and allies' troops in Afghanistan and denied visa to the ICC Chief Prosecutor to interview repatriated US marines served in Afghanistan to find out whether war crimes were committed. While the US praised the ICC for issuing arrest warrant against Putin, the US/UK are reportedly persuading the ICC not to issue arrest warrant against Netanyahu. Talking about allies, in 2023 the Australian Federal Court found a Victoria Cross recipient soldier committing war crimes in Afghanistan in 2009-10, 2012, who has appealed the decision. An Australian whistleblower has been jailed in May 2024 for revealing confidential information on alleged war crimes committed by Australian soldiers in Afghanistan.

The legal equality of all sovereign states was conceived as the enforcer of international obligations to respect each other. This ideological basis of the world order is being routinely eroded by a pervasive tendency to reduce international legal obligations subservient to 'power'. This power-driven defiance has become tormenting for states not enamoured with this hierarchical power. This is how the predatory power of the US-led coalition has disrupted, depleted, and paralysed the effectiveness of the world order for peaceful co-existence of states since the end of the cold war. Instead of being benevolent leaders, the post-cold war leaders displayed their cold war confrontationist agenda to retain hegemonic control over the world and opted to confront world affairs in their own way through sheer force and rendered their legal obligations to eclipse under the shadow of 'power'. The rule-based postwar world order has turned into a rule of the jungle-based order led by the US. This systemic dysfunctionality has caused an extraordinary confidence crisis in the world order, experiencing spiraling recourse to power as a means of resolving interstate disputes like the Ukraine war in defiance of their assumed duty to the peaceful settlement of disputes under international law and the UN Charter (Art 33). The growing strategic partnership between Russia/China and their allies shows the ominous sign of besetting the world order into cold war hostilities once again.

It is in this context of the world order that Israel's savage and deadly invasion of Gaza needs to be understood. Israel and its allies justify the Gaza invasion as a form of aggressive self-defence to annihilate a target group wholly or partially in the same way the US-UK invented pre-emptive self-defence to justify the Iraq invasion. Neither form of self-defence exists in international law and the UN Charter, yet, they have exercised this self-made self-defence with impunity. The UN inaction in implementing the Security Council mandatory ceasefire resolution despite its authority to resort to sanctions and armed action against the defying state mandated in Articles 41-42 of the UN Charter, procrastinating ICJ proceedings, ICC trepidation in issuing arrest warrant against Israeli war leaders, hypocritical western threat against Rafah attack amid relentless arms supply to Israel, and whispering opposition of the Arab states are indicative that 'might' determines 'right' and 'power' prevails over 'justice' – as the hallmark of the postwar world order. One promising outcome of the Gaza crisis is the transcending galvanisation of bottom-up international public outrage, waging a consciousness-raising campaign that is storming the corridor of power for seismic reform in the prevalent world order. To them, the US sermon of human rights, freedom, fairness, and democracy sounds increasingly hollow and self-defeating on the face of its persistent paradoxical and lawless actions in global problems. Any claim that this order is 'rule-based' is far-fetched and pretentious.

The writer is Emeritus Professor of Law, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

SHIPBREAKING YARDS need to be environment friendly

ATIQUR RAHAMAN

The shipbreaking industry implies an industry that processes (e.g., separates and stores) old and discarded steel, copper metal materials, serviceable parts and machineries, fittings, furniture, and other materials in a shipyard or any convenient place. Importing and dismantling ships can generate foreign exchange revenue for the home country and potentially boost economic growth. Bangladesh is making a significant contribution to the global shipbreaking market through resource recovery.

Article 18(A) of the Bangladesh Constitution states that the state shall protect the environment and safeguard the natural resources, among others. The purpose of this constitutional provision is to protect the environment in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has ratified the Hong Kong Convention (HKC) in 2023, and the convention provides guidelines for stricter environmental safety standards for shipbreaking industries.

Some domestic laws have been enacted for shipbreaking to ensure environmental protection. For instance, the Bangladesh Ship Recycling Act, 2018, the Shipbreaking and Recycling Rules, 2011, the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995, the Environment Conservation Rules, 1997, the Environment Court Act, 2010, the Accidents Act, 1855 and many other related laws. The main objective of these laws is to outline regulations for safe and environment friendly recycling of ships, address environmental concerns, and ensure worker safety.

Unfortunately, due to lack of enforcement of laws, shipbreaking industry engenders huge pollutants and thereby degrade the environment. Furthermore, according to the International Labor Organisation (ILO), the shipbreaking industry is one of the most dangerous in the world. Every year, many workers die by suffocation due to explosions, poisonous gases, and falling iron sheets while cutting ships in the traditional way in these yards. Ships imported for breaking contain black oil, asbestos, harmful paints, and various chemical, while shipbreaking produces unrecyclable iron powder. Many old toxic ships are also bought by the owners in Bangladesh; the owners of the shipbreaking industry buy those ships at a low cost and these ships are not safe for the environment. Indeed, the shipbreaking industry owners do not maintain any safety procedures. Thus, the shipwreck industry causes terrible damage to the environment as well as to human health.

The shipbreaking industry is playing a significant role in the economy, but that should not be the case at the cost of environmental degradation and worker insecurity. The industry cannot be considered as safe in any way in the present context. By implementing mandatory Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and other necessary measures, Bangladesh can ensure that the shipbreaking industry contributes to a sustainable future, protects the environment, protects workers' health, and generates economic benefits.

The writer is student of law, University of Asia Pacific.

Star
SPORT
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What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV AND STAR SPORTS 1
T20 World Cup
Australia vs Namibia
Live from 6:30 am
India vs USA
Live from 8:30 pm

Umpire's call sparks call for change

SPORTS REPORTER

Experts as well as fans have called for change in ICC's law relating to the ball being dead after the umpire signals out after such an incident proved crucial in Bangladesh's four-run loss to South Africa in a T20 World Cup fixture in New York yesterday.

On-field umpire Sam Nogajski was in the thick of things as it was hisdecision to signal Mahmudullah out in the 17th over which sparked the whole incident and seemingly cost Bangladesh the match.

Mahmudullah was given out lbw by Nogajski after the right-handed batter failed to make contact with an in-swinging length ball from Ottneil Baartman. The ball, which clearly looked to be going down the legside without disturbing the stumps, brushed off Mahmadullah's front pad and rolled down to the boundary.

The umpire raised his finger and upon a player review, Ball Tracking revealed that the delivery was indeed missing the stumps. Despite the successful review, Bangladesh were left ruing the four leg-byes which were not added to their tally owing to ICC's ruling on such situations.

As per the ICC law, once the umpire gives a decision, the ball is deemed dead and runs gathered during that phase will not be considered.

If the umpire had not given him out, Bangladesh would have had four leg-byes added to their total.

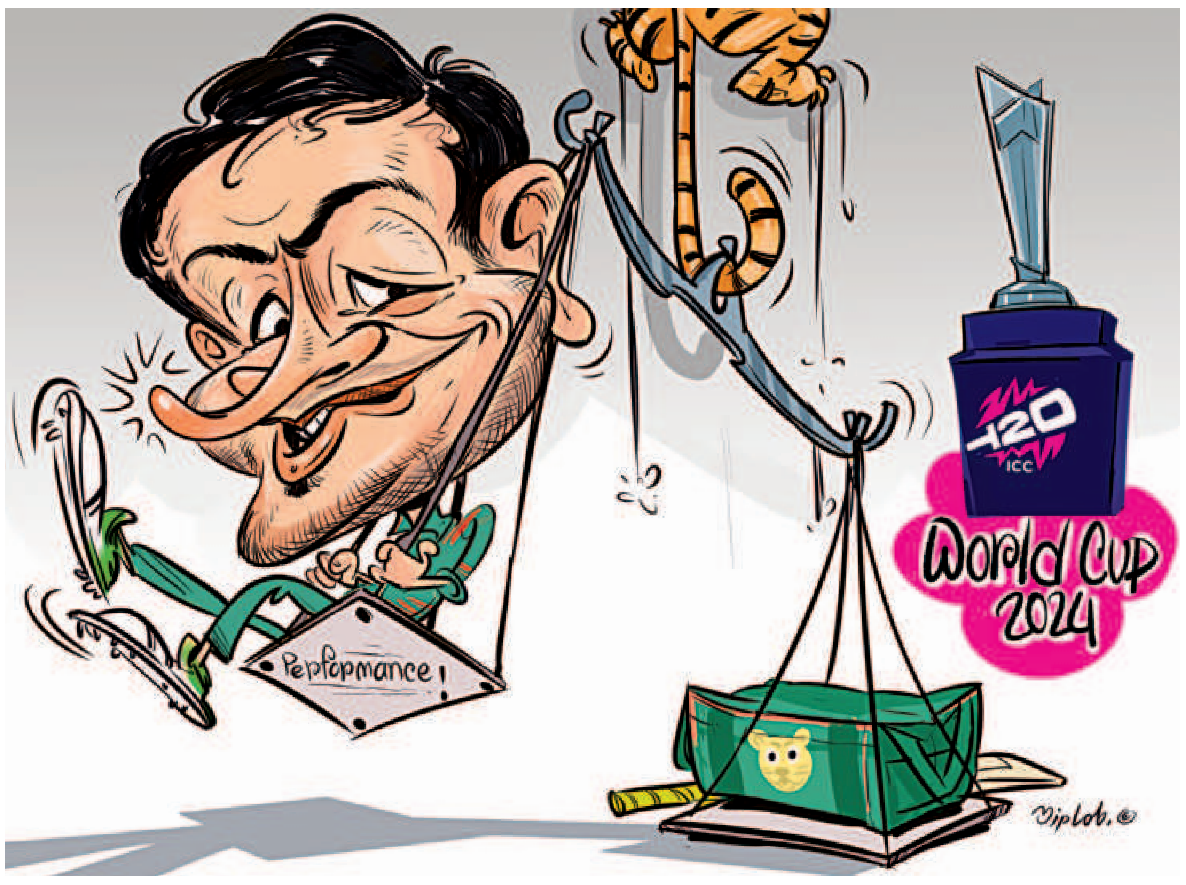
Former New Zealand pacer and renowned commentator Simon Doull criticised the umpire's lbw decision, brought forth the gravity of the implications the ruling has on games and called for a change.

"Just imagine this happens in the final and let's say India are on the wrong end of that in a final," Doull told Cricbuzz yesterday.

"There's got to be something changed in the way the system works because that was a howler, an absolute howler. It was a poor decision and it was never hitting the stumps and he [the umpire] had just thrown his finger up so quickly like a gunslinger.

"We've got to say that they've made some great decisions, there's been some very good umpiring throughout the tournament but that one wasn't and the result should've been four leg-byes.

"Let's say that happens in the final ball of the T20 World Cup and one team loses on a really poor decision. There's got to be some way of changing this because it is happening more often than not. Every time, I have this question brought up pre-tournament or before an ICC event, they're like we can't do anything about it and it's not going to be significant in the course of a game. Well, it is significant and it will be in the course of a game. It is now costing games and we can't have it."



TIGERS NEED SHAKIB
to make his experience count

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Marginal calls, full tosses not being put away or the general inconsistency of Bangladesh top-order were all cause for concern in Bangladesh's loss to South Africa in New York in a hard-fought contest on Monday. But the situation would not have gotten so desperate had Bangladesh's key player Shakib Al Hasan left a mark on the game coming in at number four in what was another crucial T20 World Cup game for the Tigers.

Shakib's stay at the crease lasted just four deliveries before he was holed out at mid-wicket, unable to connect a pull shot against Anrich Nortje. Shakib's soft dismissal saw South Africa back in the hunt.

Naturally, following the game there was scathing criticism regarding Shakib's performances.

Shakib's last fifty in the format came before the 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia, during the tri-nation series in New Zealand also involving Pakistan.

He has not enjoyed the best of circumstances leading up to this edition. Bar a match-winning bowling performance against Zimbabwe recently, his all-around performances against both Zimbabwe and then in the three-match T20I series against USA in Texas have been missing.

His troubles with the bat have been evident in the two World Cup matches so far. If it was expected that he would take control of the South Africa game, Shakib failed to live up to expectations. Now if Bangladesh are to advance to the next round and trouble opponents in the Super Eight, Shakib's contribution would be crucial.

"If he wants to play in front of Towhid Hridoy in the middle order, he has to play with a cooler head and take responsibility. We can see that these are not 200-run wickets, so it becomes easier for an experienced player like Shakib," his mentor Nazmul Abedeen Fahim told The Daily Star.

"If he can control the game, it will be better for everyone since the top-order is not doing well. Of course, you can't match expectations all the time, but you have to do it on and off," added the veteran coach and analyst.

Shakib's bowling has perhaps been a bigger concern. He was Bangladesh's most expensive bowler against Sri Lanka and bowled just one over against the Proteas, the first time in his career that it happened. It also upsets Bangladesh's bowling plan, especially with spin likely to be decisive in the West Indies.

"He has a very important role because there are only two specialist spinners in the side. He has to bowl in Powerplay and if he can't fulfil that, Bangladesh's bowling strategy suffers. At times it's important for spinners to bowl in Powerplay and then also key in middle overs. If he can't bowl, we have to go to Mahmudullah but you can't always expect him to perform even as he [Mahmudullah] did excellently against South Africa," Fahim said about Shakib's bowling.

Shakib now has a chance to make it count on surfaces offered in West Indies and gain momentum against lower-ranked opponents in Netherlands and Nepal.

Fahim expects Shakib -- the leading wicket-taker in the tournament's history but is yet to get a wicket in this edition -- to get more turn.

"Given the immediate oppositions [Netherlands], it should make him comfortable. I am hoping he would do better there since you can't just perform badly all of a sudden. There should not be this drop," he added.

Even as Bangladesh could cover for Shakib with the ball, the top-order troubles mean Shakib -- possessing a wealth of experience in the competition as the only two players alongside India's Rohit Sharma to have played in all editions -- will have to make his experience count and shelter the rest.

> **If Shakib can control the game, it will be better for everyone since the top-order is not doing well. Of course, you can't match expectations all the time, but you have to do it on and off.**
>
> **Nazmul Abedeen Fahim**
> Esteemed coach

SHORT CORNER

Lewy to miss Poland's Euro 2024 opener

Poland captain Robert Lewandowski will miss their Euro 2024 opener this weekend with a thigh injury, the Polish football federation's doctor said on Tuesday. Lewandowski, 35, suffered the injury in Monday's win in a friendly against Turkey and will be absent to face the Netherlands on June 16.

Afridi vows to reveal who 'spoiled' Pakistan team

Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi said that he will reveal how the team was 'spoiled' by their own people but only after the ongoing T20 World Cup comes to an end. Afridi said this in an interview with a local TV channel in Pakistan where he was a guest alongside current Pakistan pacer Mohammad Wasim Jr.

Tickets for CR7's training session on offer for up to 800 euros

Tickets to watch Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo train with the national team in an open session on Friday at their Euro 2024 tournament base in Westphalia are on sale for as much as 800 euros ($858.32). Ronaldo, the leading scorer in men's international football with 128 goals in 204 official matches, will be playing in his sixth Euros, having reached the final on his tournament debut in 2004 and winning the competition in 2016.

Read full stories on The Daily Star's website

China survive WC qualifying scare

AFP, *Hong Kong*

China squeezed into the third and final round of Asian qualifying for the 2026 World Cup despite suffering a 1-0 defeat at South Korea on Tuesday, with Indonesia also progressing.

Paris Saint-Germain's Lee Kang-in scored just after the hour in Seoul for South Korea, who were already into the next qualifying phase as group winners.

The damaging loss left China's World Cup hopes hanging by a thread, but Thailand failed to take advantage as their dreams of progressing fell agonisingly short.

They needed to beat basement side Singapore by three goals in Bangkok to leapfrog China into second place in Group C of the second qualifying phase, but the Thais could only win 3-1.

In contrast to the crushing disappointment in Bangkok, Indonesia celebrated reaching the third qualifying round for the first time with a 2-0 home victory over the Philippines.

Indonesia joined Iraq in advancing out of Group F, with Thom Haye and Rizky Ridho the goal-scoring heroes on the night in Jakarta.

Elsewhere, coach Hajime Moriyasu warned Japan that the final qualifying round will be "a completely different level" after thrashing Syria 5-0 to go through with a 100 percent record.

Syria were left to sweat on a place in the next phase.

North Korea need just a point at Group B bottom side Myanmar later Tuesday to leapfrog Syria and progress.

In a dead rubber in Group I, Australia thrashed Palestine 5-0 in Perth with Portsmouth's Kusini Yengi scoring twice, one from the spot. Both sides were already into the next phase.

Like Japan, Australia had maximum points in the second phase and did not concede a goal in six games.

Can USA slay another giant?

STAR SPORTS DESK

The Group A fixture of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup between Asian powerhouse India and co-hosts USA on Wednesday at the Nassau County Cricket Stadium in New York is set to be the first-ever international match between the two teams.

Aside from it being a landmark game, the outcome of the match bears significance given the context of the group as the winner get to seal their entry into the Super Eight.

While this match was deemed a total mismatch ahead of the marquee event, with former champions taking on an associate nation, USA have shown that they are no pushovers.

The tournament opener saw the co-hosts earn bragging rights over neighbours Canada, but very few expected them to produce one of the biggest upsets in history in their next outing against Pakistan -- stunning the 2009 winners following a Super Over contest to garner attention in a country where the attention to cricket is yet to gain traction, leading to players like Saurabh Nethralvakar and Aaron Jones becoming overnight household names.

USA skipper Monank Patel said "beating Pakistan was a big achievement" but it was apparent that the so-called minnows had their feet on the ground.

"Before the tournament I said that we want to focus on one game at a time, and our focus will be on playing against India now," Monank said after his side's monumental win over Pakistan, whose campaign took a nosedive after India defeated them in a thriller at the same venue.

Although the possibilities of bad weather intervening today remain slim, if it happens, it will mean elimination for Pakistan and Ireland as well.

India, on the other hand, even though the men in blue can't complain about how the results have gone in their favour so far, they are yet to fire as a collective unit.

While ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah has played to his reputation, backed by fellow quick Arshdeep Singh, all-rounder Hardik Pandya finding some sort of form following a forgetful Indian Premier League campaign has been the surprising positive aspect.

On the batting front, keeper-batter Rishabh Pant has flourished but the likes of star batter Virat Kohli -- tournament's all-time leading run-scorer -- T20 specialist Suryakumar Yadav and Shivam Dube, who made the cut in to the side on the back of IPL exploits, will be desperate to stamp their authority.

However, finding batting form for the big shots will be a challenge due to the playing conditions in store, with Nassau County producing several low-scoring affairs, increasing the likelihood of yet another upset.

PHOTO: AFP

Kroos hoping for 'cheesy' career end with Euro win

AFP, *Herzogenaurach*

Germany veteran Toni Kroos is hoping to sign off from his club and national career with a dream victory on home soil in Euro 2024 -- and admitted on Tuesday the prospect was almost "a bit too cheesy".

Kroos, who won the 2014 World Cup with Germany and most recently lifted the Champions League for a sixth time after Real Madrid's 2-0 win over Borussia Dortmund in June, is set to retire after the European Championship.

Kroos stepped down from international duty after Germany's last-16 Euros exit to England in 2021 but answered a call from manager Julian Nagelsmann to return in February this year.

Speaking on Tuesday at Germany's Euros training base in the Bavarian village of Herzogenaurach, a "hungry" Kroos said he would not have come back if he did not believe in a sentimental ending.

"That ending would be a bit too cheesy, with the Champions League and the European Championship, but I'll take it. I want to win the tournament this summer," Kroos said.

Germany face Scotland in Munich on Friday in the tournament's curtainraiser.

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49 migrants die as boat sinks off Yemen: IOM

AFP, *Dubai*

A boat carrying more than 200 migrants sank off Yemen, leaving at least 49 dead, mostly women and children, in the latest disaster on the perilous migration route from Africa, a UN agency said yesterday.

"At least 49 migrants have died and 140 others remain missing after a boat" carrying 260 people capsized off the southern province of Shabwah on Monday, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said.

It said 31 women and six children were among those confirmed dead, adding that 115 Somali nationals and 145 Ethiopians were initially on board the vessel before it sank.

"Search and rescue operations are ongoing despite significant challenges due to a shortage of operational patrol boats," the IOM said.

The boat departed from Bossaso in Somalia at around 3:00 am (0000 GMT) on Sunday amid a "recent rise in migrants from the Horn of Africa travelling to Yemen," the UN agency said.

Each year many tens of thousands of migrants from the Horn of Africa set off across the Red Sea in a bid to reach the oil-rich Gulf, escaping conflict, natural disasters or poor economic prospects.

In 2023 alone, the IOM observed more than 97,200 migrant arrivals in Yemen, it said.

In April, two boats sank off the coast of Djibouti just two weeks apart, leaving at least 62 dead, according to the UN agency.

The IOM said yesterday it had recorded 1,860 migrant

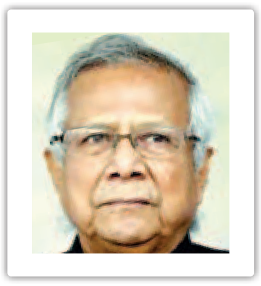
SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

A bull being brought down from a truck at Sagarika Cattle Market, one of the biggest markets in Chattogram city. As Eid-ul-Azha draws nearer, sales of cattle in the city are slowly gathering momentum.

PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**

No competitive politics left in Bangladesh

Yunus tells Reuters



REUTERS, *Dhaka*

Bangladesh has turned into a "one-party" state as the ruling party stamps out political competition, Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus, a pioneer of the global microcredit movement, said in an interview.

An election in January won Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina a fourth straight term, but it was boycotted by the main opposition party, whose top leaders were either jailed or in exile ahead of the polls.

Prof Yunus, who helped to lift millions from poverty

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

It's service charge, not extortion

Home minister says about transport leaders collecting money on highways

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said they prevent extortion on highways and that what transport leaders collect from vehicles was "service charge".

"Leaders of the transport sector give us a list of how much service charge will be collected at which places. If not followed, they asked [police] to take action. We prioritise that list," the minister said yesterday.

He, however, said, "We think the service charge should be taken from a specific place. Police face an awkward situation as the service charge was not collected from a specific point and many think it is extortion."

The home boss made the comments in response to a reporter's query after he joined a discussion marking the 19th founding anniversary of Highway Police in Bangladesh Police Auditorium at Rajarbagh Police Lines.

According to transport leaders, the "service charge" is taken as operational costs of different transport associations. In Dhaka, the charge is Tk 80 and Tk 70 outside Dhaka.

Osman Ali, general secretary of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation, who spoke at the discussion as a special guest, criticised the extortion on roads and operation of three-wheelers, including auto-rickshaws, on highways.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Hamas accepts UN-backed Gaza truce plan

US cites 'hopeful sign'; 40 more Palestinians killed as Israel steps up strikes across enclave

REUTERS, *Cairo*

Hamas accepts a UN resolution backing a plan to end the Israeli offensive in Gaza and is ready to negotiate details, a senior official of the Palestinian group said yesterday in what the US Secretary of State called "a hopeful sign".

But Qatari and Egyptian mediators have not received formal replies from Hamas or Israel to the UN-backed truce proposal, an official close to the talks told Reuters, and both sides suggested yesterday the plan fit their clashing goals, raising doubt whether any genuine headway towards a deal had been made.

Discussions also touching on post-offensive plans for Gaza will continue over the next couple of days, Blinken said in Tel Aviv after talks with Israeli leaders.

Blinken met Israeli officials yesterday in a push to end the eight-month-old offensive that has devastated Gaza, a day after President Joe Biden's proposal for a truce was approved by the UN Security Council.

- Mediators yet to get formal response from Hamas, Israel on truce proposal
- Discussions on post-offensive plans for Gaza to continue: Blinken
- Gaza death toll now 37,164

Ahead of Blinken's trip, Israel and Hamas both repeated hardline positions that have scuttled previous rounds of truce mediation, while Israel has pressed on with assaults in central and southern Gaza.

Biden's proposal envisages a ceasefire and phased release of hostages in exchange for Palestinians jailed in Israel, ultimately leading to a permanent end to the offensive.

Yesterday, senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri, who is based outside Gaza, said it accepted the ceasefire resolution and was ready to negotiate over the specifics.

This required a formula stipulating the total withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and a swap of hostages held in Gaza for Palestinians jailed in Israel, he told Reuters.

Blinken said the Hamas statement was "a hopeful sign" but definitive word was still needed from the Hamas leadership inside Israeli-besieged Gaza. "That's what counts, and that's what we don't have yet."

After Blinken left for Jordan, a senior Israeli government official said the published proposal would enable Israel to achieve its war goals. Blinken, speaking later in the day at a conference in Jordan on the humanitarian response for Gaza, announced $404 million in aid for Palestinians and called on other donors to also step up.

Meanwhile, the offensive raged on in Gaza yesterday as Israeli forces stepped up strikes on its southern city of Rafah a day after four soldiers were killed in an ambush claimed by Hamas.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

CONSTABLE KILLING

Police knew about shooter cop's mental illness

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police were aware of the mental illness of the constable who shot dead a colleague and injured another man, Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun told reporters yesterday.

Since the incident happened near several foreign diplomatic missions in the capital's Baridhara on Saturday, police officials maintained that they were not aware of constable Kawsar Ali's mental health issues.

While IGP Mamun was talking to reporters at Rajarbagh Police Lines, a journalist mentioned that Kawsar was earlier treated at a hospital for mental health issues.

The IGP replied, "We deployed him again after a doctor said he was fully fit for the job. We will be more cautious [in the future] about any deployment."

According to Kawsar's family members, he had mental illness and received treatment for it

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Police detain Jhenaidah AL general secy

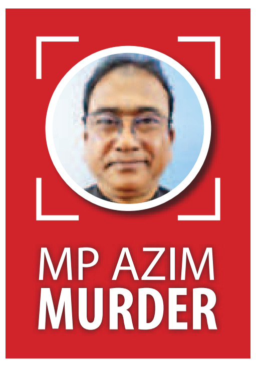
MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Multiple leaders of Jhenaidah Awami League were aware of MP Anwarul Azim Anar's murder before the government's announcement.

The leaders even exchanged images of the murder with the planner and the hitman.

Investigators claimed to have the information by interrogating and analysing the mobile phone record of Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, relief and social welfare affairs secretary of Jhenaidah AL, now on a seven-day remand with the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Meanwhile, a DB team picked up Saidul Karim Mintu, general secretary of the district AL, from the capital's Dhanmondi for interrogation in connection with the killing of the Jhenidah-4 lawmaker.



A DB source confirmed it, but no official confirmation was available.

Mintu, who was a former mayor of Jhenaidah Sadar municipality, had a conflict with Azim over influence in the party politics, said local sources.

Azim wanted to be the secretary of the district AL while Mintu tried to secure the AL ticket for Jhenidah-4 (Kaliganj) in the last national election, they added.

Mintu's elder sister Dipti Rahman told The Daily Star last night that they heard about the detention of her brother.

"We are trying to find out what happened. My brother is not involved in any murder, but it is now being framed for political reasons."

Investigators said Babu was very close to Mintu.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

BABAR
56
PAKISTAN

Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan gestures to the dressing room during his unbeaten 53 in their Twenty20 World Cup Group A match against Canada at Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York yesterday. Pakistan restricted Canada to 106 before chasing down the target with seven wickets and 15 balls to spare to register their first win of the campaign.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Not all is lost for Tigers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh team reached Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on Tuesday for their final two group matches of the ongoing T20 World Cup as they will face the Netherlands on June 13 before taking on Nepal on June 16 at Kingstown.

Bangladesh suffered an agonosing four-run defeat against South Africa in their second Group D game of the ongoing T20 World Cup at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York on Monday but the Tigers still possess a very good chance of making it beyond the group stages of mega T20 event.

Having played in all of the previous eight editions of the T20 World Cup, Bangladesh had very little to show for as their biggest achievement in the mega

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

PENDEKAR ENERGY (L) LTD ("PEL")

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST ("RFEOI")

NEPC Consortium Power Ltd ("NEPC") is a private company incorporated in Bangladesh, which owns a Barge Mounted 110 MW Diesel Engines Power Plant at Haripur, Narayangonj, Bangladesh. NEPC is a wholly owned subsidiary of **PEL**, joint venture between **Edra Power Holdings Sdn Bhd ("EPH"), Malaysia and Aljomaih Energy and Water ("AEW"), Saudi Arabia,** leading international independent power producers which own and operate a diversified portfolio of power generation assets in Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.

PEL wishes to invite prospective applicants to express their interest in participating the tender exercise as stated below:

TENDER NO.	TENDER DESCRIPTION
HO-NEPC-2024-004	Tender Name: Tender for the Sale of a Barge Mounted 110 MW Diesel Engines Power Plant in Bangladesh.

Prospective applicants who are interested to participate in this RFEOI are required to state their interest through a company letter head stating their interest and providing the complete information as stated below via email to **nepc.sales@edra-bd.energy** by **30th June 2024**.

Information to accompany the RFEOI:

1. **Name of applicant (company name)**
2. **Country of incorporation**
3. **Authorized contact person with contact details**
4. **Company Profile (if any)**

The expression of interest along with the information provided therein, will be reviewed & evaluated to determine the Responsive Applicants. PEL will only issue invitation via email to the Responsive Applicants to participate in the Tender. The complete information on the Tender and related documents shall be attached with the invitation email.

Any inquires related to the above RFEOI shall be directed to:
nepc.sales@edra-bd.energy

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Dhaka footpaths, a money-spinner for extortionists

Ruling party leaders, cops, hawkers' associations get cuts

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **HELEMUL ALAM**

On the footpath next to the General Post Office (GPO) in the capital, Sohel Howlader sells children's clothes from a small table.

He sits on a stool beside the table, roughly 5 feet long and 3 feet wide, and runs the business by paying Tk 150 to the ruling party and hawkers' association leaders every day. He also has to pay another Tk 150 a day to the security guards and for electricity.

When sales peak in the month of Ramadan and in the days before Puja, the "rent" jumps to Tk 250.

"All of us who have set up shops on the footpath pay these men," said Sohel.

There are around 100 such shops on the footpath adjacent to the post office, and as these correspondents asked around whether it would be possible to "rent" space, a leader of the vendor community named Monir Hossain said, "Bookings are already closed for this year. For next year, you will have to make a one-time payment of Tk 1.5 lakh, and then pay Tk 150 each day."

- Around 5 lakh hawkers in Dhaka city
- Daily footpath 'rent' Tk 100-Tk 300 a day
- Tk 30,000 a day extorted from GPO area alone
- City corporation's rehab programme fails

A space big enough for a stool and a table can be bought permanently for Tk 8-10 lakh, depending on how close it is to the GPO gate.

Monir, who according to locals is a ruling party supporter, assures that shopkeepers make a profit of at least Tk 300 a day, and the space is worth the investment.

Footpaths and roadsides in the city's busiest places like Gulistan, Farmgate, and Motijheel, are illegally occupied, and a lot of money changes hands every day to keep the system in place, according to sources in the hawkers' community.

This worsens congestion in the areas and makes pedestrians suffer.

Contacted, Enamul Haque, councillor of Ward-13, said political leaders, hawkers' associations, and the law enforcers receive a cut.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Commuters waiting at the edge of a platform of the Kamalapur Railway Station for the Jayantika Express, which operates on the Dhaka-Sylhet-Dhaka route, yesterday afternoon. The train, which was supposed to arrive at 11:15pm, was at least an hour late, causing sufferings to passengers who had reached the station much earlier in the morning. PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Traffic jam mars Eid journey north

10 trains run behind schedule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People have started leaving the capital for the Eid-ul-Azha holidays and many suffered yesterday due to traffic snarl-ups on Dhaka-Rangpur highway and train delays.

There was a gridlock on Dhaka-Rangpur highway between Bangabandhu Bridge east toll plaza and Rasulpur in Tangail for about 10 hours. Traffic flow normalised around noon yesterday.

At least 10 trains departed Kamalapur Railway Station late. The delays were between half an hour and four and a half hours.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

BENAZIR'S ASSETS

Confiscate 8 flats, 77 bighas of land

Court orders authorities

STAR REPORT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed and his family members' 77 bighas of land, eight flats, and shares in two firms.

The properties include 75.8 bighas in Bandarban on which a farm was built; 1.2 bighas in Rupganj of Narayanganj; three kathas in Dhaka's Gulshan; two flats in Badda; and six flats in Adabor.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

HC postpones NRBC Bank's AGM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court postponed NRBC Bank's annual general meeting slated for today, following a writ petition alleging irregularities at the bank.

The HC also instructed the Bangladesh Securities Exchange Commission (BSEC) to show cause as to why it should not be directed to send a number of its senior officials as

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

It's humiliating to stand in an iron-cage dock

Yunus says after court hearing

COURT CORRESPONDENT

It is humiliating for an innocent citizen to stand in an iron-cage dock during a court hearing, said Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday.

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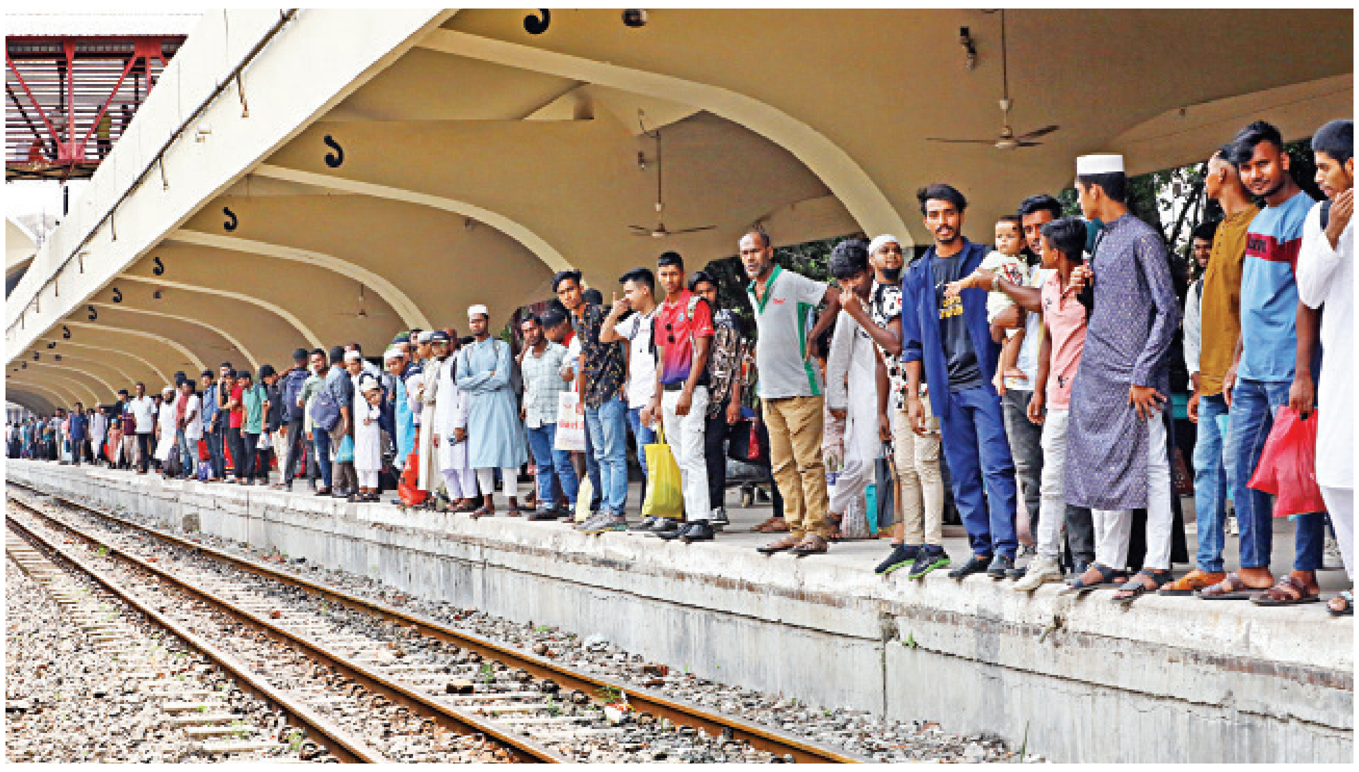

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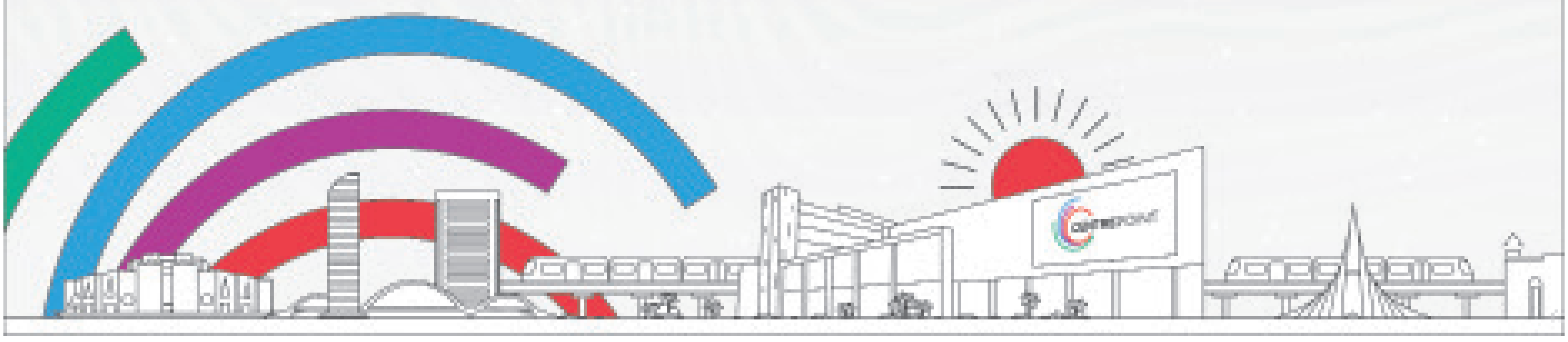


HC grants Poton bail in morning, SC stays in afternoon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday morning granted bail to former lawmaker Kamrul Ashraf Khan Poton and four others in a Tk 582 crore corruption case.

However, the Supreme Court chamber judge stayed the bail order in the afternoon.

Justice M Enayetur Rahim, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC, stayed the order till July 22. The apex court chamber judge passed the order following a petition filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission challenging the HC order.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that the HC bench of Justice ASM Abdul Mobin and Justice Md Mahmud Hassan Talukder granted ad-interim bail to Poton, also owner of Poton

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

363 foreigners currently in Bangladesh jails: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan told parliament yesterday that no one is being kept in the country's prisons "unlawfully".

He said this in response to a question from independent MP Mohammad Huchamuddin Chowdhury from Sylhet-5.

In response to another question from Awami League MP Farida Yasmin, he said 363 foreign nationals from 16 countries are detained in the country's jails. He said 212 Indian citizens were detained in the jails of Bangladesh. Among them, 11 were prisoners, 53 were inmates and 148 were released.

There are also 114 Myanmar nationals detained in Bangladesh jails. Besides, seven from Pakistan, six each from Nigeria and Malaysia, four each from China and Belarus, two each from Cameroon and Peru and one each from the US, Botswana, Georgia, Tanzania, Malaya and Angola are in country's prisons.

The minister also said 994 displaced Myanmar citizens have been arrested in murder and arms cases from August 25, 2017 to May 31, 2024.

Two road accidents in an hour leave three dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three persons were killed in two road accidents in the capital's Gabtoli area within an hour yesterday morning.

A motorcyclist and his co-rider were killed as a truck hit their bike from behind in front of a restaurant in the area around 5:30am, said Mofizur Rahman, assistant commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Shafiqul Islam, 44, the driver, died on the spot while Abul Hasan, 38, succumbed to his injuries at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

The driver fled with the truck after the accident.

In another accident, a helper of a bus driver was killed as a CNG-run auto-rickshaw hit him while he was crossing a road in front of a market adjacent to the Gabtoli bus terminal around 6:30am.

Babul Ali, 50, died at National Institute of Neurosciences Hospital.

The auto-rickshaw driver, Haider, was arrested in this regard.

These illegally set up power connections on footpaths not only cause losses but also consumes a chunk of the available power in the capital. Despite load shedding being a constant menace in the city, such activities continue unabated. The photo was taken in the Purana Paltan area recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

CATTLE MARKETS

High supply, higher price

Traders fear loss due to low customer presence

HELEMUL ALAM *and* **SHAHEEN MOLLAH**

Despite a large number of sacrificial animals being on sale at all 16 cattle markets in Dhaka, the prices are still quite high.

Meanwhile, the number of customers is very low even four days before Eid-ul-Azha.

Cattle traders, who faced huge losses last year due to a significant drop in prices two days ahead of Eid, are passing days anxiously fearing losses due to the low customer presence.

"I'll have to sell my land to pay off debts if I face losses again this year," said Md Badhon, who has faced losses of Tk 5 lakh in the last three years.

He said they have brought 10 bulls to Diabari cattle market, priced around Tk 1 lakh each.

"Demand for small-sized bulls is good, but supply is very low, for which I am expecting some profits this year," he added.

Jamal Hossain, who brought four bulls to the Diabari cattle market from Kushtia, echoed him.

Meanwhile, in the Kachukhet cattle market, Abul Kashem brought 40 bulls.

"I had to take a Tk 8 lakh loan to bring the cattle to the capital. I haven't had much sales yet," he said.

Many farmers did not raise bulls this year due to last year's loss, he added.

These correspondents also saw a similar situation at Gabtoli cattle market.

The number of big-sized bulls at the market was lower due to losses made by traders last year.

"I have brought 10 big-sized bulls, priced between Tk 5 lakh and 7.5 lakh, including five that went unsold last year," said Nurul Islam, a trader from Sirajganj, adding that last year he faced a Tk 5 lakh loss.

Musa Ibrahim, owner of Everest Dairy and Agro Farm at Dakkhin Keraniganj, said it is really tough to profit in this business due to high prices of cattle feed.

"I have to spend around Tk 1.5 lakh per year for a big-sized bull," said Musa, who raised 50 bulls, priced between Tk 90,000 and Tk 5 lakh, and sold 25 of those already.

Meanwhile, turning towards the north, a similar picture was seen.

There are more sellers than buyers in 78 cattle markets in five districts of Rangpur region -- Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Rangpur, and Nilphamari -- as well.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Yunus being tried like any other person

Says law minister; SCBA president claims the Nobel laureate facing harassment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus is being tried the same way as any citizen of the country who breaches the law.

"But what he [Yunus] is saying is untrue and insulting to the people of Bangladesh," he said while talking to journalists after a meeting with a European Union delegation at the conference room of the law ministry.

Various countries consider tax evasion cases as important and that's why Dr Yunus has been sued, he said.

"The Anti-Corruption Commission has filed a case against Prof Yunus. I told them [EU delegation] about that case, which is pending before a court..."

"I informed them that there was another tax evasion case against him. He [Yunus] paid tax after losing another tax evasion case," he said.

The minister also said discussions on the Labour Law, Artificial Intelligence Law, Data Protection Law and Cyber Security Law

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

2 mayors pledge prompt removal of sacrificial waste

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two Dhaka mayors yesterday pledged to dispose of sacrificial animal waste promptly on Eid day.

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam made the promise at the induction ceremony of 32 new dump trucks and eight compactor trucks for waste management in the capital's Gabtoli.

"Last year, we disposed of all sacrificial animal waste within eight hours. This year, we will do the same work within six hours," he said.

Mentioning that all preparations have been made, the mayor said more than 10,000 workers will work to remove the waste during Eid.

He also requested people to keep sacrificial waste in a specific place.

Meanwhile, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh has assured to clear sacrificial waste within 24 hours.

He made the announcement during a media interaction following the inspection of the National Eidgah ground yesterday.

"We will remove all sacrificial waste within 24 hours, like last year. We will also start the removal of the makeshift cattle markets on the night before Eid," said Taposh.

Action if extra fare charged during Eid

Warns DMP, provides guidelines for vehicles transporting cattle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday warned that action will be taken against any transport service if they collect extra fare from passengers during Eid journey.

Munibur Rahman, additional commissioner (traffic), issued the warning during a press briefing at DMP Media Centre.

DIRECTIVES

- Buses must pick up or drop off passengers at terminals
- Passengers should remain in terminal before boarding
- Buses leaving Dhaka must not carry extra passengers
- No unfit or unlicensed buses permitted to operate

He also provided guidelines for vehicles transporting cattle ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

Munibur said long-haul buses must only pick up or drop off passengers at designated bus terminals in Dhaka. Passengers should remain inside the terminal before boarding the buses.

Also, long-distance buses leaving Dhaka must not carry extra passengers or goods, and cannot carry passengers on the roof.

No unfit or unlicensed buses are permitted to operate, he said.

The traffic pressure on roads increases

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Budget too Dhaka-centric

Speakers tell BIP discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year prioritises Dhaka at the expense of other districts, experts said at a programme yesterday.

"If we concentrate on development projects and budget on Dhaka and neglect the rest of the districts, it will not benefit the people," said Amanur Rahman, director of CARE Bangladesh. He also said the proposed budget does not prioritise green and balanced urbanisation.

He was speaking at a press conference titled "Proposed Budget for FY 2024-25: Review of BIP", organised by Bangladesh Institute of Planners at the capital's BIP conference hall.

Amanur said the government should increase budget allocations for districts with low per capita income.

"If we allocate more funds to these districts, people will not feel the need to move to Dhaka. Development in coastal and other remote areas will reduce Dhaka-centric migration," he said.

He also highlighted the importance of investing in government hospitals, educational institutions, and other critical infrastructure at the district level.

BIP President Adil Mohammed Khan, said "We need a specialised budget that reflects allocations for each district."

He said the government has taken a positive initiative to introduce the district budget, but the failure to apply it is disappointing.

"Implementing a district budget could expose

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

From left, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sarah Cooke, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury and Education Minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury at an event celebrating the birthday of King Charles III at a city hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

85,113 to perform hajj this year

All pre-hajj flights end

RASHIDUL HASAN

Finally ending all uncertainty, almost all intended pilgrims have gone to Saudi Arabia to perform hajj this year.

Through the operation of the last hajj flights of Flynas from Dhaka airport around 6:00pm yesterday, the outgoing hajj flight operation of this year came to an end.

The month-long flight operation began on May 9.

This year, a total of 85,180 Bangladeshis were registered to perform hajj. Of them, 85,113 have gone to Saudi Arabia through 217 flights of Biman, Saudia and Flynas, said Abdul Maleq, assistant hajj officer at the Hajj Office.

Of the total pilgrims, 4,482 people went to Saudi Arabia under the government hajj management.

However, 51 intended pilgrims failed to go to Saudi Arabia for various reasons -- including sickness and personal reasons, said Bazlul Haque Biswas, an official of Ashkona Hajj Camp.

Biman carried 40,903 pilgrims in 105 flights, Saudia carried 30,021, and Flynas carried 14,189 pilgrims, according to Dhaka's Ashkona Hajj Office.

This was the first time that immigration formalities for all hajj pilgrims at the Saudi airport were completed in advance at the Dhaka airport.

"This was the smoothest ever hajj management in the recent history of Bangladesh. All credit goes to the sincere joint efforts of the religious affairs ministry, Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh and other related organisations," HAAB President M Shahadat Hossain Taslim told The Daily Star.

Hajj management was not easy, as there were lots of challenges and uncertainty, he added.

After beginning the hajj operation, the religious affairs ministry expressed concerns at different times that several thousand pilgrims might not be able to go to Saudi Arabia due to mismanagement and lack of sincerity among private hajj agencies.

"Due to the strong and repeated vigilance of the ministry, all that uncertainty was resolved," said Matiul Islam, additional secretary of the religious affairs ministry.

Hajj will be observed on June 15 this year.

Dev projects not at cost of environment

Urge speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon yesterday urged the authorities to plan and implement development projects while keeping existing trees and greenery intact as much as possible.

It also demanded immediate action to recover and protect waterbodies and the creation of a "blue network" connecting waterbodies with rivers.

Bapa organised a discussion on the importance of the environment in sustainable urbanisation and unveiled a proposal booklet at Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Bapa Vice President and architect Iqbal Habib presented the main article while scholars and activists discussed how to ensure sustainable urbanisation, focusing on waterbodies, greenery and open spaces.

Discussants proposed a tree census and a database of roadside trees to control tree felling in the name of development. They proposed a policy to ensure tree plantation.

"Due to encroachment and pollution, Dhaka's waterbodies and greenery have decreased alarmingly. Before taking any development project, a proper Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Mitigation Plan must be done and stakeholders should be informed about these," said Iqbal Habib.

Conduct drives against loan defaulters

JP lawmakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reserved seat MP Salma Islam yesterday in parliament demanded that the government initiate a drive against loan defaulters and money launderers.

While participating in the general discussion on the proposed budget, Saima said, "A section of money launderers and bank looters have brought the country to the brink of destruction."

Salma, also Jatiyo Party co-chairperson, said although the small fish are sometimes punished but the big ones remain safe. "They rescheduled loan payments in different phases, showing influence. As a result, their names do not appear as loan defaulters," she said.

Another JP MP, Golam Kibria, said action should be taken against those responsible for the financial crisis, money laundering and corruption.

Time to intensify movement for democracy: Fakhrul

UNB, *Dhaka*

Stating that all opposition parties are now united against the current government, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the ongoing movement for the restoration of democracy will be intensified soon.

Speaking at a discussion, he also said the Awami League government is now the main enemy of the opposition parties as it has destroyed all institutions of the country.

He said their party is talking to all the leftist and right wing parties to make their ongoing movement a success.

"I am very happy to say that in this movement, no political party was in favour of this government, no one supported them... This is a great success of the movement. No one went to the so-called polls [on January 7], except the Jatiyo Party," he said.

Masuma Khan Majlis no more

CITY DESK

Masuma Khan Majlis, wife of late Zakeria Khan Majlis, and mother of late Mahnaz Khan Majlis and Demir Khan Majlis, passed away yesterday.

She was the youngest daughter of Abu Yousuf Lutful Kabir and Sofia Khatun of Mia Bari, Ghorasal, and the youngest sister of late Khairul Kabir, Ahmadul Kabir, Nurul Kabir, Munira Nuruddin and Anwarul Kabir (Shamim Kabir).

She left behind her son, daughter-in-law Tasneem Zakaria Teena, son-in-law Shahnawaz Adil, grandchildren Maisha, Simia and Dayem to mourn her death. Her namaz-e-janaza will be held today after the Zohr prayers at Azad Mosque, Gulshan. Later, she will be taken to her ancestral home in Ghorasal for burial.

Action if extra

FROM PAGE 3

significantly one to two days before Eid when most service workers leave Dhaka, he said.

He also said vehicles transporting cattle must go to city corporation-approved markets and load or unload the animals within the market premises.

Cattle-carrying vehicles must display a sticker banner indicating the designated market, he added.

High supply, higher

FROM PAGE 3

Meherul Islam, a lessee member of Barabari cattle market in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, told The Daily Star that cattle farmers have been waiting for hours to sell at their expected rates.

Only 20-25 percent of the supplied cattle have been sold, he said, adding that around 6,000 cattle are supplied every day.

Sohrab Hossain, 60, a cattle farmer from Char Jorgachh area in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila, said he brought two cows, but could only sell one.

"I sold a cow for Tk 65,000 as I needed the money for my family, but a month ago the price of this cow was Tk 70,000," he said.

In Pabna, prices of sacrificial animals are still very high at cattle markets, including Sharatnagar Haat, Ekdanta Haat, and Chatmohar Rail Bazar Haat, even though there is no scarcity of cattle.

Mojibar, a buyer at Sharatnagar Haat, said, "I have a budget of Tk 90,000 to Tk 1 lakh. Unfortunately, I am unable to get the expected animal according to my budget. Traders are asking for Tk 1.10 lakh to Tk 1.20 lakh for a small cow, which is too high for my budget."

(Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat and Pabna contributed to the report)

Yunus being tried

FROM PAGE 3

took place at the meeting with the delegation.

"They wanted to know when the Labour Law would be passed. I told them that we want an end to the complaint filed against us with the International Labour Court. We have done enough work on the law. We are also working on amending it. We asked them to support us at their governing body meeting next November," he said.

The law minister also said many questions have come from their countries about Yunus' trial process.

"I told them that he [Yunus] violated the rights of the workers. There was a case against him to this effect and he has been sentenced. Besides, 108 workers sued him personally. Some of them withdrew their cases after he assured them of compensation," he said.

Meanwhile, Supreme Court Bar Association President AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon told reporters at a briefing on the SC premises yesterday that Yunus is being harassed with cases one after another, and this harassment should stop immediately.

"Many say that Prof Yunus has won the Nobel Prize... as if it were his offence to win it. He did not award it to himself. The committee concerned gave him the prize," he added.

"Dr Yunus was put in an iron cage in a Dhaka court, which was very insulting to him. Where does this end?" he said.

"We don't know how to honour a respected person. There is no democracy, human rights, or rule of law in the country. People cannot exercise their right to vote. The country is not being governed in accordance with the constitution," the SCBA president said.

New walkway to open

FROM PAGE 5

"It takes me a considerable time to cross the river by ferry as the bridge remains closed. Once vehicular movement on the bridge resumes, it will mitigate our suffering," said Nayeem Uddin, who used to commute from Boalkhali upazila to the port city using the bridge.

BR officials said they are trying to reopen the bridge for vehicular movement within June.

"The road work of the bridge is expected to be completed within this month," Zishan Dutta said.

Constructed in 1931, the metre-gauge single-line rail bridge was reconfigured in 1962 so that vehicles could use it too.

BR has long been working to replace Kalurghat Bridge, and already got a proposal to construct a rail and road bridge approved.

Budget too

FROM PAGE 3

corruption, which might be the reason as to why it is not being followed," he said.

Adil recommended creating a district-wise masterplan to improve the lives of people.

BIP Vice President Syed Shahriar Amin said, "We need detailed plans and clear budget allocations for each sector. The budget should serve everyone."

BIP Joint Secretary Tamzidul Islam said the government needs to prioritise planning to ensure effective use of the budget.

HC grants

FROM PAGE 3

Traders, and four others for six months in the case around 11:00am.

The bench also issued a rule asking the state and ACC to explain why they should not be granted regular bail in the case.

The HC bench issued the bail order and rule following a petition filed by the five accused seeking bail.

The case was filed against them on November 26 last year on charges of misappropriating 72,000 tonnes of government-imported urea fertiliser, valued at Tk 582 crore, during transportation, the ACC lawyer said.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 13

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

The First Private University with Permanent Government Charter

Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology

141-142 Love Road, Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208
Phone : PABX 8870422 (Extn: 103 & 107); Website: www.aust.edu

FACULTY SEARCH

Applications are invited for the teaching posts in the following Departments/School:

1. Civil Engineering, 2. Computer Science and Engineering, 3. Electrical and Electronic Engineering, 4. Mechanical and Production Engineering (IPE & ME Discipline), 5. Arts and Sciences, and 6. School of Business.

Details can be obtained from the website (www.aust.edu). Candidates are requested to fill up the online form, download the online generated CV and send it to regr@aust.edu with cc to vc@aust.edu. Send the hard copy of the online generated CV to the Registrar along with a full resume, copies of published articles/papers, two recent passport-size colored photographs and attested copies of all certificates, mark sheets/transcripts, testimonials, etc. on or before **04 July 2024**.

Only shortlisted candidates will be called for an interview. Internal candidates may also apply for the next higher post.

INNOVATION :: CREATION :: LEADERSHIP

Partners in Population and Development (PPD)
An Inter-Governmental Organization Promoting South-South Cooperation

Three Year's External Audit

PPD is an international Intergovernmental Alliance of 27 developing countries headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It is inviting for submission of Request for Expression of Interest (EoI) from an Internationally Accredited Chartered Accounting Firm located outside Bangladesh to conduct Three Years' External Audit (2021-2023) of PPD. Previous experience in conducting audit of similar nature in Inter-governmental organization/UN is preferable.

The interested firm is requested to submit Expression of Interest (EoI) with financial proposals to PPD at the following address **on or before 20 June, 2024** with sealed envelope.

Partners in Population and Development (PPD)
Plot- 17 B & C, Block- F, Agargaon Administrative Zone,Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka- 1207
E-mail: **partners@ppdsec.org** CC to **population1@mefwd.gov.bd**
For detailed Terms of Reference (ToR), please visit our website: **http://www.partners-popdev.org**

Centre for Advanced Research in Sciences (CARS)
University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000

Date: ২৮-০২-১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ
11-06-2024 খ্রিষ্টাব্দ

Invitation for Tender (National)

SL. No.	Name of supply	Last date of sale of tender documents	Last date of submission of tender documents	Date & time of opening of tender documents	Place where detailed information will be found
01	Tender Ref. No. CARS/ST/P-367/OTM/2024 Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of online and offline UPS Battery, CCTV Camera Set, Tools and AC Accessories, Conference System Delegate unit, Ceiling Fan for different laboratory at CARS	10-07-2024 Up to office hour	11-07-2024 Up to 10.30am	11-07-2024 11.00am	www.cars.du.ac.bd or Notice Board at the CARS University of Dhaka

Director
Centre for Advanced Research in Sciences (CARS)
University of Dhaka

GD-995

বঙ্গমাতা শেখ ফজিলাতুন্নেছা মুজিব বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
মেলান্দহ, জামালপুর-২০১২
ই-মেইল : registrar@bsfmstu.ac.bd, ওয়েবসাইট: www.bsfmstu.ac.bd

Ref: 37.01.0044.521.64.002.23 Date: 10.06.2024

e- Tender Notice

e-Tenders are hereby invited in the National e-gp portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the works stated as below:

Tender ID	Package No	Name of Work	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing & Opening Date & Time
997646	37.01.0044.521.64.002.23	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Computer and Related Service for Database Lab, Microprocessor & Microcontroller Lab at the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, BSFMSTU, Jamalpur	30-Jun-2024 16:00	01-Jul-2024 14:00

This is an online tender notice, where only e-Tender will be accepted through the National e-GP portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal is required. Tender security will be deposited online at any branch of registered banks. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

10-06-2024
Md. Humaun Kabir
Chairman, Dept. of CSE
BSFMSTU, Jamalpur.
Phone: 02223-377524
e-mail: cse@bsfmstu.ac.bd

GD- 987

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

Applications in prescribed form obtainable from the Registrar, University of Dhaka, are invited from the nationals of Bangladesh for filling up the following posts of Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka.
Pay Scale of Tk. 22,000- 53,600/-(National Pay Scale 2015).
Qualifications:

1. Two Permanent Lecturer Posts (Educational Administration Department): Candidates must have Bachelor of Education (Honors) and Master of Education degrees in Educational Administration from a recognized university.
2. One Permanent Lecturer Post (Language Education Department): Candidates must have Bachelor (Honors) and Master degrees in Bangla or Bachelor of Education (Honors) and Master of Education degrees in Language Education from a recognized University.
3. One Permanent Lecturer Post (Special Education Department, Intellectual Disability): Candidates must have Bachelor of Education (Honors) and Master of Education degrees in Special Education from a recognized University.
4. One Permanent Lecturer Post (Curriculum and Instructional Technology Department): Candidates must have Bachelor of Education (Honors) and Master of Education degrees in Curriculum and Instructional Technology Education from a recognized University.

The candidates of all subjects must have first divisions or GPA minimum 4.25 out of 5.00 in SSC and HSC examinations. They must have first class or CGPA minimum 3.50 out of 4.00 in Bachelors (Hons.) and Masters Degrees from recognized university. One of the approved condition of S.S.C/H.S.C Examination may be relaxed to those who obtained first position/achieved highest CGPA in both Bachelors (Hons.) and Masters degree. Candidates having a Ph.D in the relevant field and research publication(s) in a quality journal may get preference. Candidates already in service will have to apply through proper channel. Relevant notes and conditions apply. (For details, see the Dhaka University Website)
Eight copies of application in the prescribed form along with attested copies of mark sheets, certificates, experience certificates, and a Pay Order of Tk.750/- payable to the Registrar should reach the Director, Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka on or before 14.07.2024.

GD- 994

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

Applications in prescribed form obtainable from the Registrar, University of Dhaka, are invited from the nationals of Bangladesh for filling up the following posts of Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka.
Assistant Professor: Pay Scale of Tk. 35,500-67,010/- (National Pay Scale 2015).
Educational Qualifications:
02 (Two) vacant permanent Assistant Professor Post: Candidates must have Bachelor of Education (Honours) and Master of Education degrees in Educational Administration/BA (Honours) and MA degrees in Bangla. Candidates must have at least 03 (three) years of teaching experience at a university or, at least 02 years as post doctoral research or at least 06 (six) years research experience as a research officer or an equivalent position in a reputed research organization. Candidates with a Ph.D. should have at least 01 (one) year of teaching experience at a university. Applicants must have at least 03 (three) research publications in the indexed/quality journal with DOI (Digital Object Identifier). Article published in predatory journals will not be accepted. Relevant notes and conditions apply. (For details, see the Dhaka University Website)
Candidates must have a first class/a minimum CGPA 3.50 out of 4.00 in both Bachelors (Hons.) and Masters Degrees with a first division/a minimum GPA 4.25 out of 5.00 both in SSC and HSC examinations. Requirements for either the SSC or HSC examinations may be relaxed for the candidates who have obtained the first position/the highest CGPA in both Bachelor (Hons.) and Master degrees.
Eight copies of application in the prescribed form along with attested copies of mark sheets/grade sheets, certificates, experience certificates, and a Pay Order of Tk.750/- payable to the Registrar should reach the Director, Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka on or before 14.07.2024. Candidates already in service must apply through proper channel.

GD- 993

Where did the vessel go?

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Munshiganj*

A recent photo shows the oil tanker at the shipyard. The vessel, however, has been "missing" since May 18.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

An old oil tanker has been missing from a shipyard in Gazaria of Munshiganj for 24 days.

The vessel, T Teknaf, went "missing" on May 18 after it was brought to the shipyard of Three-Angle Marine Limited for repairs around a year back.

The shipyard authority and the vessel's owner filed counter complaints with Gazaria Police Station in this connection on May 29 and May 30 respectively, accusing each other.

"The owner has not been paying the bill of Tk 30 lakh issued for the vessel's repairs for around a year. We have no reason to take the ship away. On May 18 night, the vessel's owner took it away, and later filed a complaint to defame us. So, we have filed a Tk 100 crore defamation case against the vessel's owner," claimed Mozammel Haque, general manager (operations) of Three-Angle Marine Limited.

Contacted, the vessel's owner Mottaqim Salam, also deputy managing director of Bengal Electric Ltd, said, "The shipyard authority billed us Tk 11.36 lakh for the repair. When we went to pay the bill, we found that the ship was not in the shipyard. So, we lodged a complaint with the police. We have information with video footage that the shipyard authority dismantled the vessel between May 1 and May 18 and sold the parts across the country."

"Both parties filed separate complaints in this connection. We are continuing our investigation," said Md Rajib Khan, officer-in-charge of Gazaria Police Station.

KALURGHAT BRIDGE

New walkway to open before Eid

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*

The newly constructed walkway of Kalurghat Bridge in Chattogram is set to open to the public before Eid-ul-Azha.

The repair work of the bridge is also nearing completion.

"The construction work is 98 percent completed. We now have to finish the railing work," said Zishan Dutta, bridge engineer of Bangladesh Railway (East Zone).

The renovation work of the bridge began in August last year at a cost of Tk 55 crore. While it was supposed to be completed within three months, the work got delayed, causing sufferings to commuters.

Around 10 lakh people from Boalkhali, Patiya and Rangunia have no alternative to cross Karnaphuli river without using the bridge.

The Roads and Highways Department launched a ferry service next to the bridge while the bridge remained closed to the public to ease commuters' sufferings to some extent.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Oman lifts visa restrictions for Bangladeshis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After eight months, the Oman government has lifted temporary visa restrictions on several categories for Bangladeshi nationals.

The exempted visa categories include all official visas, family visas, visitor visas for Bangladeshi nationals living in GCC countries, and visas for engineers, doctors, nurses, teachers, accountants, investors, and high-income tourists, said a note issued by the Omani Embassy in Dhaka yesterday.

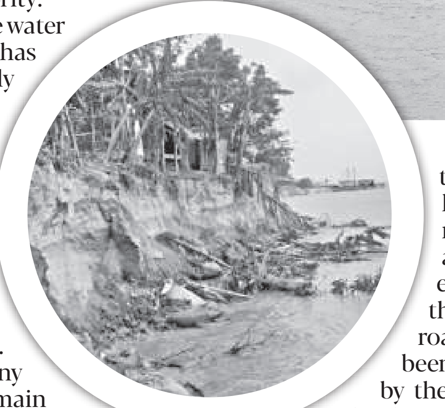
The note also stated that from now on, the local embassy will receive and process all applications and related documents in these categories in coordination with the Royal Omani Police authority.

The embassy note further assured that both authorities concerned in Oman and Bangladesh are working towards lifting the ban on work visas, which is in progress.

Mentionable, in October 2023, the Omani Royal Police imposed a temporary ban on all categories of visas, except for official purposes, for Bangladeshi nationals in a bid to review their overall migration policy.

Erosion fear grips 1,000 families

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Faridpur*



Nearly a thousand families on the bank of the Padma river in Daulatdia union under Rajbari's Goalanda upazila are passing days in fear of erosion.

The 2.5-kilometre stretch of the river bank between Daulatdia Ferry Ghat's Terminal 6 and 7 is particularly affected, according to the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority.

Locals said the water level of the river has risen significantly since Cyclone Remal.

BIWTA has been dumping sand-filled geo-bags on the river bank to prevent erosion. However, many areas still remain vulnerable, including Sattar Member Para, Bahir Char, Majid Sheikh Para, and Bepari Para, among others.

Nearly 1,000 families dwell in these areas.

BIWTA sources said it is not possible to conduct erosion prevention drives in full swing due to limited allocation to this end.

Kashem Khan, a member of Daulatdia Union Parishad, said, "All the families are spending sleepless nights in fear of losing their lands and homesteads to river erosion, as it is likely to exacerbate in the monsoon. A road has already been devoured by the river. BIWTA has been dumping geo-bags, but it is inadequate to prevent erosion."

Siddique Pattadar, 30, a resident of Sattar Member Para, said, "The river's erosion worsened recently after the cyclone. Now the river is just across the yard from my house. If the situation worsens further, it will entirely engulf my homestead."

Several other locals, including Chobeda Begum, 45, Hazrat Ali Mondal, 70, and Hashem Mondal, 45, echoed him and urged local authorities to take prompt steps to this end.

Jyoti Bikas Chandra, UNO of Goalanda upazila, said he has informed higher authorities in this regard.

Md Salahuddin, manager of Daulatdia office of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation, said they have requested BIWTA to construct another alternative ghat to minimise erosion between terminals 6 and 7.

Risab Ahamad, assistant engineer of BIWTA in Aricha, said, "We have dumped at least 8,000 geo-bags in the river bank areas since May 8. However, due to limited allocation, we are unable to do more at this point. If we get an allocation, more geo-bags will be placed at the erosion sites."

POST-POLLS VIOLENCE

EC directs Sylhet DIG to take action

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

The Election Commission has directed the deputy inspector general (DIG) of police in Sylhet range to take legal action against those involved in the recent post-polls violence that left seven people injured in Madhyanagar upazila, Sunamganj.

The commission came up with the directive in a letter signed by its Deputy Secretary Md Atirar Rahman on June 10.

The Daily Star got a copy of the letter yesterday.

"You [DIG] are requested to inform the Election Commission about the legal measures taken against those involved in the incident [attack]," said the letter.

Election to Madhyanagar Upazila Parishad was held on June 5.

Two days later, at least seven people, including a defeated chairman candidate Saidur Rahman, were injured in an attack allegedly by the supporters of his rival candidate Abdur Razzak Bhuiyan, who was elected as upazila chairman.

The clash ensued near Saidur's residence at Datiapara village.

Later, Saidur's son filed a complaint with the EC, alleging that local police were working in favour of Razzak, also elder brother of another DIG.

However, local police officials denied the allegation.

Contacted earlier, Razzak claimed that his followers first came under attack by Saidur's men.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Jail Superintendent
Naogaon District Jail
www.prison.naogaon.gov.bd

Memo No. 58.04.6400.129.04.044.24-2630 Date: 12.06.2024

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal:

SL. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of goods	Publishing date & time	Closing date & time
1	998514	Procurement of Dietary Articles Under Package-2 for the period July/2024 to December/2024	12-June-2024 11:00:00	26-June-2024 12:30:00
2	998515	Procurement of Dietary Articles Under Package-11 for the period July/2024 to December/2024	12-June-2024 11:00:00	26-June-2024 12:45:00

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

12.06.2024
Md. Nazrul Islam
BJ-02679200185
Jail Super
Naogaon District Jail
☎ 02587747313
E-mail: naogaondistrictjail@gmail.com

GD-990

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Chief Controller of Stores
Bangladesh Railway
Pahartali, Chattogram-4202
+88(031)-659604, ccsphr@railway.gov.bd

বিনা টিকেটে রেল ভ্রমণ না করে উন্নয়নে সহায়তা করুন

Notice No.: 54.01.1543.335.08.019.24 Date: 11/Jun/2024

Invitation for Tender

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Railways
2	Agency	Bangladesh Railway
3	Procuring entity name	Chief Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway, Pahartali, Chattogram
4	Procuring entity code	Not used at present
5	Procuring entity district	Chattogram.
6	Invitation for	Tender (Goods) (Single Lot)
7	Invitation Ref No.	54.01.1543.335.08.019.24
8	Date	11/Jun/2024
KEY INFORMATION		
9	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (ICT)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
10	Budget and source of funds	GOB: 4127101
11	Development partner (if applicable)	Not applicable
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
12	Project/programme code (if applicable)	Not applicable
13	Project/programme name (if applicable)	Not applicable
14	Tender Package No.	54.01.1543.335.00.019.24
15	Tender package name	Procurement of 1200 Nos. Solid Wheel for MD-52 M Bogies for Indonesia Coaches (MG), Drawing No. 01.1-L 10000, Part No. L10010000.
16	Invitation for Tender Ref No.	54.01.1543.335.08.019.24
17	Tender publication date	Tuesday, June 11, 2024
18	Tender last selling date	Sunday, August 4, 2024
19	Tender closing date and time	Monday, August 05, 2024 & 12:00pm
20	Tender opening date and time	Monday, August 05, 2024 & 2:00pm
21	Name & address of the office(s)	Address(s)
	-Selling tender document (principal)	Office of the Chief Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway, Pahartali, Chattogram-4202
	Selling tender document (others)	1. Controller of Stores (East), Central Railway Building, Chattogram 2. Controller of Stores (West), Rail Bhaban, Rajshahi and 3. Senior Assistant Controller of Stores, Kamlapur, Dhaka
	Receiving tender document (principal)	Office of the Chief Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway Pahartali, Chattogram-4202
	-Receiving tender document (others)	1. Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Chattogram, Court Road, Chattogram-4000 2. Office of the Police Commissioner, 360 CDA Avenue, Chattogram
	Opening tender document	Office of the Chief Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway, Pahartali, Chattogram-4202
22	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	Name/Address Pre-tender meetings shall not be held Date Time
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
23	Eligibility of tenderer	(1) Tenderers or goods and related services from the following countries are not eligible. Those countries who have no commercial/bilateral relation with Bangladesh Government. (2) As potential tenderers, except those who have been recorded for Poor Performance and Debarred from participating in Public Procurement under the Procuring Entity, are eligible
24	Brief description of goods or works	Procurement of 1200 Nos. Solid Wheel for MD-52 M Bogies for Indonesia Coaches (MG) Drawing No. 01 14. 10000, Part No. 110010000
25	Brief description of related services	Transportation, Handling, Insurance, and all other related Services
26	Tender document price	BDT 3,000.00 only to be paid to Code No. 1422328 through A-challan to the FA&CAO (East), Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram (Code: 1510323132285)
27	Location and estimated date of completion of works	Pahartali, 180 days from the date of opening L/C
28	Type of payment for tender price	Cash
29	Type of payment for security amount	Bank Guarantee/Pay Order

LOT INFORMATION

	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount in USD	Completion time in weeks/months
30	1	Procurement of 1200 Nos. Solid Wheel for MD-52 M Bogies for Indonesia Coaches (MG). Drawing No. 01 1-L 10000, Part No. 110010000	Pahartali, Chattogram	USD 14,000.00	26 weeks

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

31	Name of official inviting tender	Farid Ahmed
32	Designation of official inviting tender	Chief Controller of Stores
33	Address of official inviting tender	Office of the Chief Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway, Pahartali, Chattogram-4202
34	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: +88 (031)659604, Email ccsphr@railway.gov.bd
35	Note	a) Tender documents may be obtained from the office of the undersigned as well as from Controller of Stores (East), Central Railway Building, Chattogram, Controller of Stores (West), Rail Bhaban, Rajshahi from 9.00am to 4:30pm (Sunday to Thursday), and from Senior Assistant Controller of Stores, Kamlapur, Dhaka from 9:00am to 4:30pm (Saturday to Wednesday) & from 9.00am to 11.00am (Thursday). b) Tender Security must be submitted in favour of the Financial Adviser & Chief Accounts Officer (East), Bangladesh Railway, Chattogram in the shape of Pay Order/Bank Draft/Bank Guarantee issued by any scheduled bank in Bangladesh in case of Foreign Tenderer's Security may be submitted from Foreign Bank but that must be endorsed by a Schedule Bank in Bangladesh c) Tenderer/Representative (if any) may present at the time of opening the Tender. d) If the tenderer fails to understand any condition of the tender document clearly, they may contract with undersigned during office hours. e) If the office remains closed or any other unavoidable circumstances arise on the last date of selling of the tender documents or on the last date of submission/Opening of the tender, the following working day shall be deemed as the last date of selling & next working day shall be the last date of submission/Opening of the tender. f) Tenders may be submitted by hand, by post or by courier, before last time/date of the submission. Otherwise, tender shall be directly rejected. i) Tender opening, evaluation, awarding and debriefing shall be according to the provisions of the PPR, 2008. j) The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.

১১.০৬.২০২৪
Farid Ahmed
Chief Controller of Stores
Bangladesh Railway
Pahartali, Chattogram

এপ্র (২৪) (১৫১)

GD-989

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

A delicious assortment of OTT projects this Eid

> **In the Shihab Shaheen directorial, Sabila Nur and Apurba—a popular TV pair—will be seen together on OTT for the first time. Alongside the dynamic duo, Imtiaz Barshon will also take on an important role.**

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

While there were few noteworthy offerings last Eid-ul-Fitr for OTT, this upcoming Eid-ul-Azha, platforms have arranged for a lineup of web-series and films that are sure to entertain.

This Eid marks the OTT debut of two popular faces, Tahsan and Tanjin Tisha, who are aiming to win over audiences. With a mix of action, crime, thrillers, and rib-tickling comedies, get ready to binge-watch this Eid's content while enjoying scrumptious meals.

Golam Mamum (Hoichoi)

After the success of its predecessor ***Buker Moddhye Agun,*** Hoichoi introduces its spin-off series, ***Golam Mamun.*** Streaming on Hoichoi from June 13, the series centers around fierce ACP Golam Mamun (played by Ziaul Faruq Apurba), as he navigates a gripping murder-mystery that he is entangled in himself.

In the Shihab Shaheen directorial, Sabila Nur and Apurba—a popular TV pair—will be seen together on OTT for the first time. Alongside the dynamic duo, Imtiaz Barshon will also take on an important role.

A bongo Original Film
FeMale 4
KAJAL AREFIN OME
WORLD WIDE RELEASE
EID UL ADHA 2024

Golam Mamun, a noted police officer, races against time to clear his name amid a series of brutal murders. The plot plunges into chaos when, in search of an elusive address at midnight, Golam Mamun is ambushed by a mysterious assailant in an eerie apartment. Upon waking, he realises his name is linked to a murder. Did he really commit the crime, or is he being framed? Find out today.

Baaji (Chorki)

Chorki's much-awaited web-series, ***Baaji,*** features the on-screen reunion of Tahsan and Mithila after a long time. This series also marks Tahsan's debut in the world of OTT, where he plays the role of a cricketer, while Mithila portrays a journalist.

"Earlier, cricketers used to bet their lives on cricket, and now betting rules their lives," the trailer cleverly infers. The web-series delves into the lives of cricketers as betting begins to crumble their world. Tahsan plays Abir, a noted cricket player for the Golden Dreams team. Despite his brilliant skills, he continues to underperform in matches.

His name becomes embroiled in three spot-fixing scandals as he consistently fails to deliver, prompting Mithila's character, a journalist, to investigate the allegations against him and try to unmask his true nature. A murder occurs in their hotel. Is Abir behind it all, or will he rectify his mistakes and prove his love for the sport?

Baaji will be available for streaming on Chorki on June 16. Directed by Arifur Rahman, the suspense drama also features Mim Mantasha, Manoj Pramanik, Nazia Haque Orsha, Shahadat Hossain, Partho Sheikh, Tasnuva Tisha, and Abrar Athar, among others.

Poison (Deepto Play)

The gorgeous Tanjin Tisha makes her OTT debut in Sanjoy Somadder's crime thriller web-film ***Poison***. Released on June 10, the film revolves around the life of Rupa Mirza (played by Tanjin Tisha).

Poison delves into Rupa's life as she achieves stardom and earns awards for her performance, only for her celebration to turn sinister. As the night progresses, secrets and past grievances emerge among the guests, revealing hidden faces and true intentions. The storyline takes a dark turn, exploring themes of greed, old wounds, and rising corpses, making for a gripping narrative

POISON
hoichoi
ZIAUL FARUQ APURBA
বাজি
ARIFUR RAHMAN
আসছে এই ঈদে
CHORKI

The film features a talented ensemble cast including Abu Hurayra Tanvir, Tiger Robi, Rawnak Ripon, Abdullah Al Sentu, and AK Azad Shetu, among others.

Female 4 (Bongo)

Kajal Arefin Ome's ***Female 4,*** which revolves around the residents of Dhaka's Battery Goli, will premiere on the OTT platform Bongo on Eid day, June 17.

Earlier instalments of the tele-fiction series used to premiere on television. However, the makers decided to elevate the popular comedy project into a web-film for this upcoming release.

The web-film stars Ziaul Hoque Polash, Marzuk Russell, Saraf Ahmed Zibon, Pavel, Shimul Sharma, Shiblu, and Iresh Zaker, among others. The world of Battery Goli descends into chaos as a mysterious lady appears, inciting madness and sparking fights between two rival gangs.

Diljit Dosanjh to appear on Jimmy Fallon's show

Diljit Dosanjh is having a stellar year, earning accolades for his roles in Imtiaz Ali's Netflix film ***Amar Singh Chamkila*** and Rajesh A Krishnan's heist movie ***Crew***.

The star recently collaborated with Sia and shared the stage with Ed Sheeran. His performance at Coachella turned heads, proving he's unstoppable.

The multi-faceted actor-singer is now set to make his first appearance on ***The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon***.

Diljit shared the news on social media, expressing excitement about his upcoming appearance on the American show, stating, "Panjabi is here as this week's guest on Jimmy Fallon's show," with his track ***GOAT*** playing in the background.

He hinted at showcasing traditional bhangra on the international show.

iScreen to feature 'Aam Kathaler Chhuti' before Eid

আম কাঁঠালের ছুটি
SUMMER HOLIDAY

One of our leading OTT platforms iScreen has surprises for Eid, including streaming last year's award-winning film ***Aam Kathaler Chhuti***.

The film directed by Mohammad Nuruzzaman, portrays a tumultuous childhood and has been well-received by cinephiles since its release.

In celebration of Eid-ul-Azha, ***Aam Kathaler Chhuti*** will be released as premium content on iScreen on June 15 at 3pm.

Based on Sharif Uddin Sabuj's short story ***Moinna Bhai Bolla Rashi*** and adapted into a screenplay by the director, the film features performances by Jubair, Lyon, Arif, Halima Tanjil, and Fatema.

NEWS

Batters yet to pull their weight

FROM PAGE 12

20-ball 40 against the Lankans and followed it up with a vigilant 34-ball 37. He is the only batter to have an average strike-rate greater than 100 so far for the Tigers and has batted at more than a run-a-ball in both matches.

The top-order continues to be one of the major headaches for the Tigers, more so because it includes skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto, who hasn't been able to snap out of his miserable run, averaging 14.2 in his last 10 innings at a strike-rate of 86.1.

With the pitches in Dallas and New York being significant limiting factors in batting, the move away from the USA could not have come at a better time for Bangladesh batters who will hope that the surfaces in the West Indies will allow them to bat with more freedom.

The Tigers will also take confidence from the fact that they have gone through the most difficult phase in the group with minimal damage as they have a win and a loss against relatively superior sides (Sri Lanka and South Africa) and have Netherlands and Nepal, both of whom are lower down in the rankings, up next.

A win against the Netherlands will put Bangladesh in a favourable position as far as qualification to the Super 8s is concerned as it will allow the Tigers to have progression to the next round in their own hands. With Sri Lanka and Nepal on one point each, Bangladesh, who have two, have the Netherlands as key competition for qualification.

Losses estimated at over Tk 7,000cr

FROM PAGE 12

recovery and aid distribution."

"This time, the embankment and fisheries have experienced major damages," he told reporters at a dialogue on government preparedness for natural disasters.

The fisheries sector experienced significant losses as the cyclone affected 38,083.89 hectares of farms, including of fish, shrimp, and hatcheries.

Over 1,191.03 kilometers of paved, brick, and dirt roads were damaged.

The housing infrastructure was heavily impacted, with 45,521 homes destroyed and another 226,583 partially damaged.

Agriculture was also hit hard, with crops on 35,602.44 hectares completely destroyed, resulting in a loss of Tk 410.71 crore. Additionally, crops and seedlings on 59,795.09 hectares were partially damaged, causing a further loss of Tk 301.77 crore.

At least 98 bridges and culverts were destroyed, incurring a loss of Tk 125 crore, while 3,123 bridges and culverts were damaged partially causing losses of over Tk 659.54 crore.

Eighteen primary schools were destroyed, amounting to a loss of Tk 5.35 crore. Additionally, 929 primary schools were affected, resulting in damages worth Tk 12.91 crore.

One hundred secondary schools were destroyed, causing a loss of Tk 2.47 crore, and 578 were partially damaged, causing a loss of Tk 11.42 crore.

Embankments were also severely impacted. About 232.01 kilometers were destroyed, costing Tk 83.54 crore, while 413.80 kilometers were damaged partially, leading to a loss of Tk 103.06 crore.

Embankments: Tk **186**cr
Forestry, afforestation, nursery: Tk **65**cr
Education sector: Tk **39**cr
Religious establishment: Tk **14**cr
Tube well: Tk **10**cr
Agri, non-agri industries: Tk **646,8,000**

Source: Draft estimation by Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief

AL leader knew about his murder

FROM PAGE 12

a meeting beside the Bhanga expressway.

Local sources said Mintu had a rivalry with Jhenaidah-4 (Kaliganj) lawmaker Azim.

Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (DB) of the DMP, yesterday confirmed these developments.

The investigation officer is interrogating Mintu on issues like why Babu's mobile phone was with him and why he did not share murder information with the law enforcers or the victim's family, said the DB chief.

Harun said, "The IO will let Mintu go if he can answer properly, or else lawful action will be taken."

In response to a query of political leaders' involvement in the killing, the DB chief said district AL Relief and Social Welfare Secretary Babu is on remand and General Secretary Mintu was detained for interrogation.

"There is also evidence about some others' involvement. No one, including those who gave instructions and those who planned the murder of Azim, will be spared," he said.

He further said, "I also want to say that no innocent person will be harassed at anyone's instigation."

In another development, Azim's daughter Mumtarin Ferdous Doreen yesterday met Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan at the Secretariat and demanded justice for her father's killing.

After the meeting, Doreen told reporters that she heard that attempts were being made to get those arrested in connection with the murder freed.

She said she requested the minister not to stop the probe under any pressure.

Dorren said she heard that arrestee Babu had a meeting beside the Bhanga expressway regarding financial transactions. "I want to know the name of the people who gave the money. Why did they do it?"

Asaduzzaman said her father was killed and it was only natural that she would seek justice.

Asked whether there is any pressure, the minister said, "Who will put pressure on us? There is no pressure. The probe is underway properly."

DB chief Harun said, "The higher authorities don't exert any pressure on us. Because they [authorities] know that all DB teams investigate cases properly and identify the real culprits even if they are at home or abroad. There is no question of harassing any innocent person."

Meanwhile, human chains were formed at different points of Jhenaidah, demanding punishment of MP Azim's killers. There was a demonstration in Jhenaidah too against the detention of Mintu.

[Our Jhenaidah correspondent contributed to this report.]

Mujib's time in Kolkata was vital

FROM PAGE 12

When police charged at protesting students, Mujib would step in without batting an eyelid and put himself up as a shield between the batons charged mercilessly and the hapless protesters.

He was the first among the student leaders who rushed to do famine relief work and try dousing the communal conflagration.

On each occasion, when the going got tough, or even life-threatening, Mujib got going, without fail.

No biography of Mujib is complete without shedding light on his Kolkata stay.

It is this part of his life that India's acclaimed filmmaker Goutam Ghose has focused on in his 63-minute documentary "Mujib in Calcutta". It tells the story of the college years of the man who rose to become Bangabandhu and then the father of the nation after Bangladesh was liberated through a nine-month war.

"This period was very important for Mujib's political upbringing," stated Goutam during a tete-a-tete with The Daily Star during his recent visit to Dhaka.

So popular was Mujib with the students at the then Islamia College of Kolkata, later renamed Maulana Azad College, that none went against him when he was simultaneously involved with student politics as well as the Muslim League, said the director who has delved into the details of his life in Kolkata.

The documentary will also include Mujib's first-ever Kolkata visit in 1934 for medical treatment and his historic speech at a public meeting at the Brigade Parade Ground in the city on February 6, 1972, soon after his return from prison in Pakistan, Goutam said.

The documentary got the go-ahead after Mujib's eldest daughter and Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina watched it on April 26.

It was originally titled "Kolkatay Bangabandhu", but Hasina suggested changing the title and recommended "Mujib in Calcutta", citing her logic that during his life there, he was not known as Bangabandhu yet, Goutam said.

His documentary vividly recreated the memories of Mujib's Kolkata life as his camera captured the Islamia College campus, Mujib's politics as the general secretary of the college's student union, his room no-24 of Baker Hostel, Alimuddin Street, Park Circus and the Muslim League office where Mujib had spent his time.

The Indian director, critically acclaimed for films like "Padma Nadir Majhi", "Antarjali Jatra", "Moner Manush", "Sankhachil", "Ma Bhumi", "Paar" and "Kaalbela", said Mujib's years in Kolkata was an important period for the sub-continent as well.

"During that period, Mujib was involved in relief work during the famine of 1943. He was witness to Hindu-Muslim riots and the great Calcutta killings. He saw the flight of Subhas Bose from India and used to listen to Bose's speeches from Singapore on the radio," the director continued.

Goutam had to face hurdles in making the documentary due to a lack of authentic and recorded information. He relied heavily on Mujib's "Unfinished Autobiography", Sheikh Hasina's book "Sheikh Mujib Amaar Pita", interviews with Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana and with Mujib's friend, 101-year-old Nihar Chakraborty, to make the documentary.

"In our country, the main problem is the [lack of] archival material for making such a documentary. We have no picture or video of that time when Bangabandhu was in Kolkata. Moreover, it's a political documentation about Bangabandhu when he started his political life.

"Had Sheikh Hasina not preserved Bangabandhu's autobiography, a vital chapter of history would have been lost and people would have never known the history of that period," said the filmmaker, adding that Hasina must be credited for "unveiling an important slice of history".

"But when I started research on the topic, I was fortunate to have found Nihar Chakraborty, who was Bangabandhu's contemporary. He is the only living person who witnessed Bangabandhu's Kolkata life and was involved with the student movements with him."

Goutam said that according to Nihar, Sheikh Mujib was an amiable person who used to go all out to help his friends and never considered religion, caste and creed when choosing them.

The director said the documentary on Mujib was important for him for two reasons. "First, I was young during the Bangladesh Liberation War, and then I was present at the Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata in 1972, hearing his historic speech, and secondly my ancestors were from Faridpur [Bangabandhu's home district]."

He added, "I've been making the documentary as my responsibility to history. I wanted to apprise the young generation of the political upbringings of Bangabandhu."

The duration of the documentary was at first only half an hour, but it became longer with the addition of interviews of Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana.

Jointly funded by the Bangladesh government and an Indian NGO named "Friends of Bangladesh", the documentary has no character. The director himself describes the history of that time, where footage of some historical places of Kolkata related to Bangabandhu and footage of the Liberation War are shown.

Goutam said he was in Dhaka to screen the documentary to Hasina and get her green signal.

"I felt the documentary should not be brought to public domain without her prior approval. The PM saw and loved it. She thanked me, and I told her it was my responsibility."

Replying to a question about when the documentary might be released, he said it depends on the Bangladesh government.

St Martin's to start

FROM PAGE 12

be used for emergency passenger transportation with necessary security arrangements provided by the Coast Guard, said Yamin.

The island, home to about 10,000 people, is accessible only by vessels. The locals depend on trawlers for supplies.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said, "The Arakan Army is fighting against the Myanmar government. The war has been going on for quite some time ... One or two bullets hit trawlers or our patrol boats. We still don't know who fired those shots.

"We contacted them [Myanmar authorities], but they could not confirm anything," he said.

Mujibor Rahman, chairman of St Martin's Union Parishad, said stocks of food are running out.

Prices of essentials have gone up and they will run out of rice within two to three days, he told The Daily Star.

He said he requested the deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar to send food and other essentials to the island by sea trucks using alternative routes.

Merchant ship hit in Red Sea off Yemen

Says security firm

AFP, *Dubai*

A merchant ship issued a distress call after being struck in the Red Sea off Yemen, a security firm said yesterday, in what appeared to be the latest attack by Iran-backed Houthi rebels.

The ship was hit about 68 nautical miles southwest of the rebel-held port city of Hodeida, maritime security firm Ambrey said.

The company "assessed the vessel aligned with the Houthi target profile at the time of the incident", it said.

Houthis, who are at war with a Saudi-led coalition after ousting the government from Sanaa in 2014, have launched drone and missile attacks on shipping since November.

They say they are harassing the vital trade route as an act of solidarity with Palestinians during the Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip.

Smoke billows from the site of an Israeli airstrike on Zibqin in southern Lebanon yesterday, amid ongoing cross-border tensions. Hezbollah fired big barrages of rockets at Israel yesterday and vowed to ramp up its attacks in retaliation for the Israeli strike which killed a senior Hezbollah field commander.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Form electoral pact against far right

France's Macron asks rival parties ahead of snap polls

REUTERS, *Paris*

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday urged rival parties on both sides of the political centre to join him in forging a democratic alliance against Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN) in upcoming snap legislative elections.

In what amounted to a campaign speech just days after his shock call for an election, Macron acknowledged making mistakes, saying the French had expressed their indignation but felt they were not being heard.

The election would provide clarity, Macron said.

He called on "many of our compatriots and political leaders who do not recognize themselves in the extremist fever" to "build a new project ... a coalition to govern, a coalition to act in the service of the French and for the republic".

He pledged to take a firmer hand in questions of immigration, security and justice, arguing that a far left prone to anti-Semitism would be too "lax," while the extreme right would bulldoze France's constitutional rule of law.

In a dig at the leader of the conservative Republicans party, Macron decried political horsetrading over the last few days, saying "the mask has come off" some parties seeking to forge "unnatural alliances."

Child victims of war spiked in 2023

UN report warns amid Gaza, Sudan crises

AFP, *United Nations*

Violence against children in armed conflicts reached "extreme levels" in 2023, particularly in Gaza and Sudan, according to a forthcoming UN report obtained by AFP on Tuesday.

The United Nations' annual "Children in Armed conflict" report placed the Sudanese army as well as the rival Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on the blacklist for "the killing and maiming of children, and for attacks on schools and hospitals."

Also added to the blacklist were Hamas and the armed wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad for the October 7 incident, as well as the Israeli army for its offensive in Gaza.

The report placed Sudanese army, its rival RSF, Hamas and the Israeli army on the blacklist.

"In 2023, violence against children in armed conflict reached extreme levels, with a shocking 21 percent increase in grave violations," said the report by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, which is due to be published today.

The UN verified 30,705 violations committed against children last year, including 5,301 killings, 6,348 injuries, 8,655 instances of children recruited and used in conflicts, 5,205 denials of humanitarian access and 4,356 kidnappings.

"We've never verified so many violations against children as last year," said a senior UN official speaking on condition of anonymity.

In 2023, "children bore the brunt of multiplying and escalating crises that were marked by a complete disregard for child rights, notably the inherent right to life," the report said.

The conflict in the Middle East has led to a 155 percent increase in grave violations against children, the report said.

The UN verified that 43 Israeli children were killed in Israel and the West Bank during the October 7 attack, and a total of 47 Israeli children were abducted by Hamas and other Palestinian groups.

The report also confirmed the deaths of 2,141 Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip in 2023, with 2,051 killed between October 7 and December 31.

Over 23,000 reports of grave violations against children -- 3,900 Israeli children and 19,887 Palestinian children -- by all parties to the conflict had yet to be verified.

"It will take a long, long time to verify," said the UN official.

Israel reacted angrily when the news of its inclusion on the blacklist was leaked last week, with the country's UN ambassador Gilad Erdan saying he was "shocked and disgusted by this shameful decision."

As for Sudan, it has seen "a staggering 480 percent increase in grave violations against children" against children from 2022 to 2023, the report said.

The RSF paramilitary force was listed for recruiting children and for "rape and other forms of sexual violence against children," as well as attacks on schools and hospitals.

"I am appalled by the dramatic increase in grave violations," Guterres wrote in the report, also noting a rise in ethnically motivated attacks and mass displacement of children in Sudan.

Covering some 20 conflict zones worldwide, the report includes the killing, injuring, recruitment, kidnapping and sexual violence against children.

It verified 30,705 "grave violations" committed last year, including during the offensive in Gaza.

The Russian army and "affiliated armed groups," remained on the blacklist for killing 80 children in Ukraine in 2023 and injuring 339.

INDIA'S JAMMU & KASHMIR

Police blame Pakistan for strife that killed 12

Dozens injured over the last three days

REUTER, *Srinagar*

Police in India's territory of Jammu and Kashmir yesterday blamed arch rival Pakistan for a spurt in militant attacks that killed 12 people and injured dozens over the last three days, just weeks after a large turnout for general elections.

Pakistan claims the Himalayan region, which has been roiled by militant violence since the start of an anti-Indian insurgency in 1989 that killed tens of thousands, although violence has waned in recent years.

"Our hostile neighbour wants to damage our peaceful environment," Anand Jain, police chief of Jammu, told reporters in a reference to Pakistan, which India has accused of stoking violence in the region for decades.

A spokesperson for Pakistan's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment from Reuters. It has denied such claims in the past, saying it has given only political and diplomatic support to the insurgency.

Gun battles in the area on Tuesday killed two militants and a paramilitary soldier while injuring a civilian and six security personnel, authorities said.

The incidents came two days after nine Hindu pilgrims were killed and 41 injured when militants attacked a bus taking them to a Hindu shrine on Sunday, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi was sworn in for a third term.

The latest violence has prompted criticism of Modi by opposition parties demanding action against the perpetrators.

"Unless we talk to our neighbours we will not be able to solve the problem," Farooq Abdullah, a former chief minister of the region, told news agency ANI.

The sudden rise in violence comes after the region's director general of police, R R Swain, said the number of local militants was dropping, although 70 to 80 foreign militants continue to be active.

"We are moving from resident terrorism to foreign terrorism," Swain said last week.

Ties between the neighbours have been frozen since India ended the special status of Jammu and Kashmir state in 2019, splitting it into two federally administered territories.

On Monday, the leaders of the nuclear-armed rivals engaged in diplomacy on X as Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his elder brother and former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif posted congratulations to Modi for his third term.

Mahathir denies corruption

AGENCIES

Malaysia's former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad has denied engaging in corruption, saying he earned his money from his salary during his decades-long political career and most of it is "now gone".

In an interview with Al Jazeera, Mahathir, who is under investigation by the country's anticorruption agency, hit out at current Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim over remarks that implied that he had used his time in office to enrich himself and his family.

Mahathir also accused Anwar of targeting his two eldest sons, Mirzan Mahathir and Mokhzani Mahathir.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in January ordered Mirzan Mahathir to declare all his assets in and outside the country as part of an investigation following revelations contained in the so-called Panama Papers, reports AFP.

BANGLADESH HOUSE BUILDING FINANCE CORPORATION
Common Service Department
Head Office, 22 Purana Paltan, Dhaka-1000

Reference: HB/HO/CS/Recruitment of Security Guards- 1004

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following work:

e-Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of the work	Last Date and Time for Tender/Proposal Security Submission	Tender/Proposal Closing/Opening Date and Time
998099	HB/HO/CS/Recruitment of Security Guards-1004	Security Guards Services for Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation (BHBFC).	04-July-2024 Time : 13:30	04-July-2024 Time : 14:30

This is an online tender where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited through online in any e-GP registered Banks' Branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sd-
Deputy General Manager
Common Service Department
E-mail: dgm.cs@bhbfc.gov.bd
Tel: +8802-223381754

GD-996

Cumilla City Corporation
Cumilla
cocc.portal.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.17.19.50.024.00.32.2023.1832
Date: 12/06/2024

Tender Notice No. 13/2023-2024

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the

Sl. No.	Tender ID Number	Method of tender	Tender documents last selling date	Tender closing date & time
1.	977191 977192 977193 977194 977195 977196 977197 977198 977199 977200 977201 977202 977203 977204 977205 977208 977209 977210 977211 977212 977213 977215 977216 977217 977218 977219 977220 977221 977222	OTM	01-July-2024 17:00	02-July-2024 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited on line through any registered banks branches up to 17.00pm on 01.07.2024.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and also from E-mail: se@cocc.gov.bd Or Call to +88028165714.
Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

Signed
G. P. Chowdhury
Chief Engineer
Cumilla City Corporation

GD- 998

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

When the powerful prey on the vulnerable

Alleged abuse of power by Benazir must be investigated

In what can only be described as a gross abuse of power, ex-IGP Benazir Ahmed allegedly used his position to intimidate and coerce members of a Hindu community out of their land—their primary source of income—for a fraction of its worth in his hometown in Gopalganj. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), which is currently investigating Benazir, has so far found Benazir and his family to have bought at least 613.41 bighas of land in different districts, including 605.77 bighas in Gopalganj and Madaripur that once belonged to minority communities.

A recent report by this daily has revealed disturbing details of how the former police chief engaged Taimur Islam, an inspector of a police station, to acquire the farmland to build his resorts. The Daily Star spoke to at least 40 people in Machkandi, Bairagitol and Patikelbari villages of Gopalganj Sadar and Borokhola village in Rajoir, who insisted that they would have never sold their land at reduced prices had it not been for direct and indirect threats from Benazir's people. Those who refused to sell initially were targeted by using other tactics, from blocking access to their land to filling them up with sand, ultimately forcing them to part with their property. According to locals, Benazir also engaged several police and Rab officials to supervise the construction work of one of his resorts until he went into retirement in 2022.

The ACC has confirmed that he procured and built most of his assets while he headed Rab and police. It is terrifying that a man constitutionally mandated to protect citizens would use his power so blatantly against vulnerable populations for his own gains, leaving them helpless to seek recourse from the law. After all, he was the law. That he used members of the law enforcement agencies to do his dirty work for years on end points to a bigger crisis within state institutions—one where checks and balances as well as systems of accountability have long ceased to exist.

It goes without saying that this case demands a thorough and transparent investigation. Those responsible, from Benazir to those who facilitated his actions, must be held accountable and the victims compensated financially for the loss suffered. And while it is commendable that the ex-IGP is finally being investigated for his crimes and corruption, we cannot help but wonder how it is possible that he carried out these unlawful activities under the nose of the administration with such impunity.

How many more officials, tasked with protecting the public, are doing the same right now? How many more such helpless communities have been terrorised into selling off their land? The government has the responsibility to prevent any kind of abuse of power by those it has employed and empowered. It also has a duty to protect the rights of vulnerable communities, which includes safeguarding their land.

DU admission woes must end

Why must freshers suffer so much to pay fees?

It's a wonder why university freshers would need to stand under the blistering sun for three days just to enrol into the very institution they have been accepted to. This is exactly what happened during the just-concluded admission process at Dhaka University (DU). Students said they had to struggle with a slew of tedious and repetitive steps just to pay their fees, going from one building to another and waiting in queues for hours on end. Surely, one of the country's top educational institutions could've thought of a better, easier alternative?

Amid the lack of coordination among DU's offices, some 6,000 admission-seekers only had three days, beginning on Monday, to complete the whole process. Unsurprisingly, these many people standing in lines, desperate to finish all procedures, will lead to delays, sufferings, and utter chaos.

This process, in this day and age, seems truly ancient. Reportedly, students had to pay the admission fees online, but then take the receipt to their respective department, which handed them a pay slip to deposit a development fee at the nearby Sonali Bank branch. Accomplishing this after trudging in line for hours did not bring relief, as they had to bring back the pay slip and get their documents signed from the department head, who by then likely left the premises. This whole process had to be repeated for paying the dorm fees.

When the country is striving for digitalisation, is this how a university, recently ranked as the best in Bangladesh, should be operating? Apparently, the admission committee had requested department heads to ensure that students could pay all fees online, but the latter ignored the call. Some heads weren't even aware of the request, such is the level of dysfunction and mismanagement. According to a professor, from the 90s till now, the admission process has remained the same, pointing to the DU's lack of progress, while the vice-chancellor himself has admitted to the dismal coordination.

We urge the DU authorities to address the ordeal students have to go through annually just to get admitted. This issue can easily be solved through the use of digital platforms and proper coordination among university bodies, and we hope to see just that next year.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Historic meeting between North & South Korean leaders

On this day in 2000, South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung met North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in a summit that marked the first meeting between heads of the two countries, helping earn Kim Dae-Jung the Nobel Peace Prize.

We need humility, not hubris, to turn the economy around

THE OVERTON WINDOW

Eresh Omar Jamal
is deputy head of editorial and opinion at The Daily Star.
His X handle is: @EreshOmarJamal

ERESH OMAR JAMAL

While a privileged minority, sitting in their high castles, continue to enjoy a larger and larger share of the fruits of "development," it is becoming obvious that the vast majority are increasingly struggling. Worryingly, economic growth is slowing down. On April 2, the World Bank revealed that it projects Bangladesh's real GDP growth to remain relatively subdued at 5.6 percent in the current fiscal year and 5.7 in the following year, lower than the average annual growth rate of 6.6 percent over the decade preceding the Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, the IMF, for a second time, revised down Bangladesh's growth forecast for the current fiscal year to 5.7 percent in its World Economic Outlook report released on April 16.

On May 20, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) released its periodic data projecting that the economy grew by 5.82 percent in the outgoing financial year, which is far less than the initial projection of 7.5 percent made in the budget speech for FY24 and the revised projection of 6.54 percent made in a meeting of the coordination council in December—but is much closer to the World Bank and IMF's projections.

This raises a very critical question: why were the government's projections so far off and why couldn't it come up with more accurate estimates like the World Bank and IMF? Given that government officials often outright refuse to accept reputed organisation's data—without presenting their own evidence to counter it—it is perhaps time for the authorities to get down from their high horses, particularly in light of their own poor record of coming up with correct estimates.

Be that as it may, some economists have even questioned the BBS projection of GDP growth based on the fact that there is "no positive indicator" to explain it currently. For example, even though BBS data shows the agriculture sector this year recorded a growth similar to last year, the industry sector, which accounted for more than one-third of the country's GDP, grew at 6.6 percent in FY24 compared to 8.37 percent in FY23. And a large part of that had to do with the import of industrial raw materials and machinery being affected by the dollar crisis, and energy price hikes having substantially increased industrial production costs for businesses.

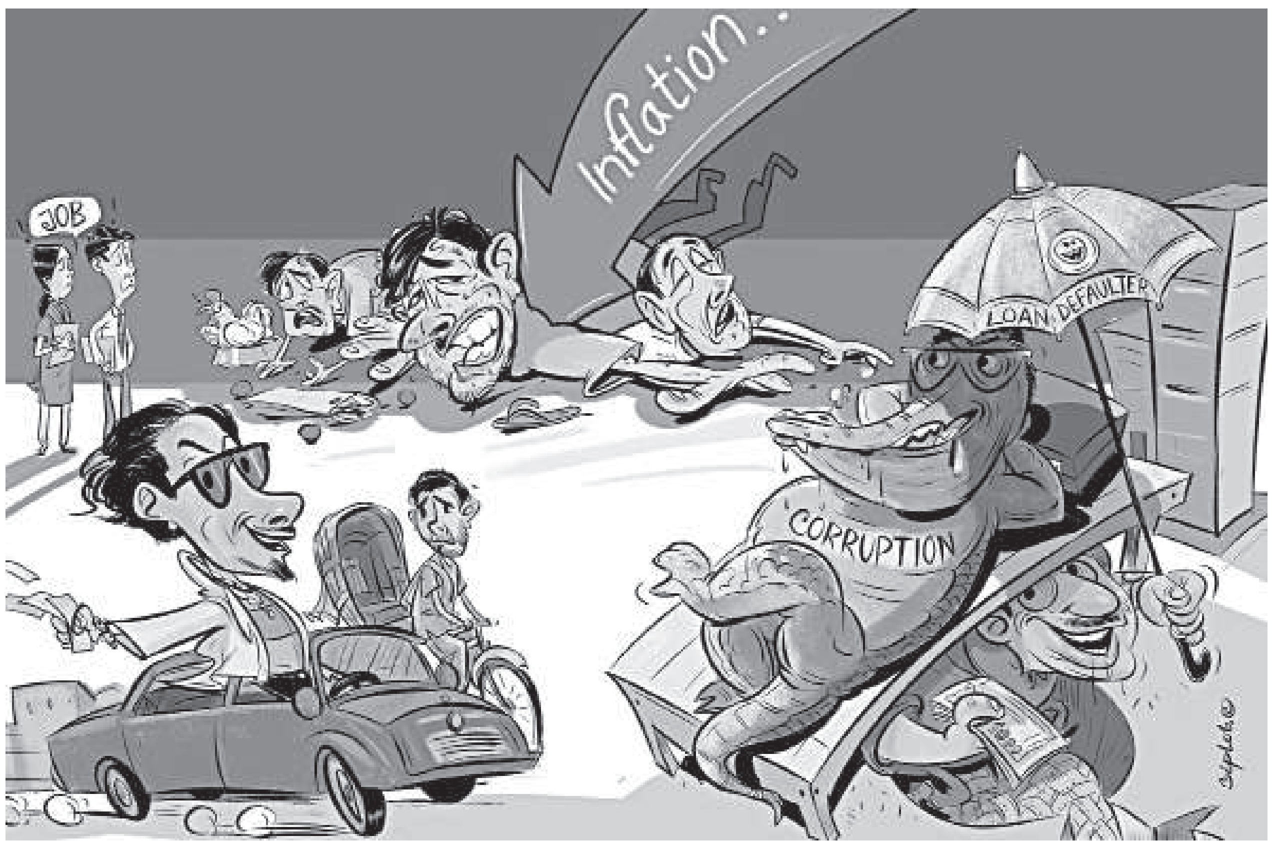


PHOTO : **BIPLOB CHAKRABORTY**

Unfortunately, there wasn't much the government could do in that regard, as it had to take certain policy measures to try to rein in inflation which, on the flipside, was bound to negatively affect growth. However, as a Centre for Policy Dialogue survey in partnership with the World Economic Forum (WEF) found, 67.6 percent of respondents complained about high levels of corruption as another major problematic factor for doing business. So, the government should have tried to reduce corruption, which could automatically improve our business environment and perhaps encourage more businesses to set up.

Meanwhile, persistent inflation has been weighing on private consumption growth, and combined with rising interest rates and financial sector vulnerabilities, the World Bank expects investor sentiment in Bangladesh to dampen. Consequently, it believes that an efficient resolution framework for non-performing loans (NPLs) is urgently needed. However, since most of our banking sector issues are somehow tied up with political considerations, the government till now has shown no sign of mustering up the political will or courage to actually address them.

Private investment growth slowing has become a regional problem, according to another World Bank report. And so is the fact that South Asia as a whole is not creating enough jobs to keep up with its rapidly increasing working-age population. For Bangladesh, this has become a particularly acute problem and, as a result, the country is failing to make the most of its demographic dividend.

Even among those who have jobs, the majority are seeing their wage growth being significantly lower than the inflation rate for more than two years. According to BBS figures, wage growth remained below the inflation rate for the 26th consecutive month in March.

The combination of these factors has prompted some to ask whether Bangladesh is entering a period of stagflation—a phenomenon that combines slow growth, high unemployment and inflation. But that does seem a bit premature, as the economy is still growing, albeit at a slower rate, and unemployment is still not exceedingly high—even though the official unemployment figures are clearly too good to be true.

However, the cost-of-living crisis is a serious problem which is drastically reducing the standard of living for most people. The erosion of purchasing power has already led to around five lakh people falling into extreme poverty between FY2022-23 and FY2023-24, according to the World Bank. Unless things turn around quickly—which does not look very likely—poverty will continue to rise and people's disposable income will continue to fall.

Amidst all these, BBS data shows per capita income increasing slightly from last year to $2,784 in the current fiscal year. Does that mean Bangladeshis are now economically better off? Absolutely not. Per capita income is obviously getting skewed by the ultra-rich, many of whom, according to media reports are now running for or occupying government offices at different levels.

With their wealth surging, most policymakers and politicians have become oblivious to the current economic sufferings of the mass people. As a result, policies have been insufficient at addressing the crisis. In fact, many government policies nowadays are no longer formulated with the aim of easing the ongoing crisis, but to continue filling the pockets of vested interests, at the expense of the majority and the country's economy as a whole.

In other words, the rich and the powerful are in the process of slowly killing the golden goose that they have been benefitting from. This can cause social unrest while the share of the benefits that the oligarchs fight over could decrease, leading to more infighting. Since both these factors could destabilise the economy further, one could only hope that common sense (in the oligarch's self-interest even) prevails before we get to that dangerous tipping point—but how wise is it to expect humility, from where there has only been hubris?

Don't children have the right to privacy?

Laila Khondkar
is an international development worker.

LAILA KHONDKAR

At the registration desk of a private hospital in Dhaka, an employee loudly asked for personal information, including phone number, address, etc., of everyone who came to take service there. At that moment, it occurred to me that many people do not understand the importance of privacy protection in our society. This becomes more evident when we observe attitudes of adults towards children.

Children have the right to privacy. According to the article 16 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, "No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation." Unfortunately, awareness about this is very low in Bangladesh.

Nowadays, people of all ages use the internet for education, work, communication, and entertainment. Social media has also become a part of many people's lives. This has positive aspects, but child protection and privacy are at risk.

Children can be harmed in many ways in the online world. One of these is the production, distribution, and use of images and videos of child sexual abuse. Online "grooming" is another serious issue, where abusers harm children after gaining their trust. Apart from this, children get information on various negative topics including militancy, drugs, and suicide through the internet.

Besides, many parents post on social media about their children's likes and dislikes, achievements and problems in academic and other domains, almost regularly. Disclosure of children's personal information including location, name, date of birth, and school name puts them at risk. Anyone with malicious intentions can misuse this information to cause different types of harm.

And who keeps track of how the children feel about parents sharing their everyday lives with the rest of the world without their consent? Children are not property of the parents that they can treat them in whatever way they want to. Children are individuals with rights and their own sense of dignity.

It is the responsibility of parents to guide children to stay safe online. They should also ensure that none of their behaviour puts the child at risk. Dr Victoria Nash, Director of the Oxford Internet Institute, provided some advice for parents to keep children safe online:

Children should enable privacy settings on social media. They need to know where their information is going and how it is being used. Even if a picture or video is deleted from the internet, it can still be viewed, or someone may have already taken a screenshot. Children need to be reminded of this. Parents have to know what apps, games, and social media platforms their children are using.

Besides, parents have to consider whether their posts will cause their children to feel ashamed, embarrassed, anxious, or upset in the future. Can it harm their children? It is important to take care that no one can know about the daily routine from the posts. Geotagging (through which the physical location of a person can be derived from the internet) needs to be stopped. Privacy settings will be such that posts can only be seen by trusted friends and family members. They should be told not to share the posts.

Online activities mirror real life in most cases. If parents spend time with their children, listen to them actively, and know about their lives including their interests and friends, they will be able to provide appropriate guidance and support to children for staying safe in the real and online world.

Helping children develop social and emotional skills, making them confident, asking them to use devices in open areas of the house, setting time limits for device usage can be done by any parent. It does not require much technical knowledge.

It is the responsibility of the state to formulate and implement the necessary laws and policies for child protection online. In Bangladesh there is a need to harmonise laws relevant to protecting children online, which includes Children Act 2013 (amended 2018), Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (amended 2013); Digital Security Act 2018, and Pornography Control Act 2012.

Internet service providers, mobile phone companies, and all those involved in information and communication technology must consider the best interests of children with utmost importance while developing products and providing services. States should hold them accountable for their actions and non-actions.

It is our responsibility to ensure that using the internet is a positive experience for children, that it contributes to their development and empowerment, and that children are not put at risk because of parents and other adults' actions.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781
EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net
Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222
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Advertisement: 01711623910
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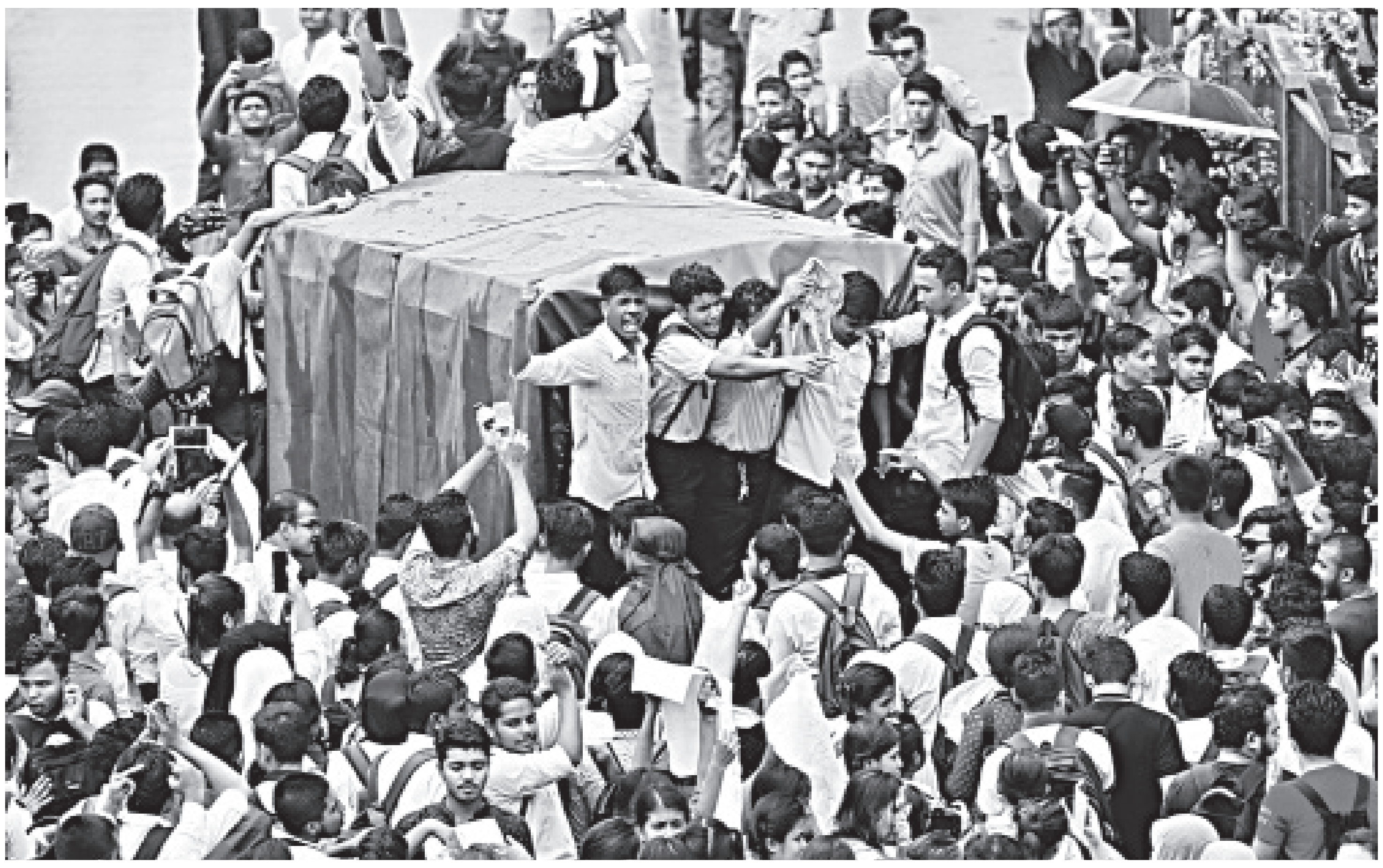
Student protests can challenge the status quo



FILE PHOTO: **SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED**

MOHAMMAD TAREQ HASAN

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What comprises our rights as humans? The Universal Declaration of Human Rights aim for "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." So, we have the right to anything and everything, given that we do not create threats toward others' freedom and peace.

The fundamental issue is about achieving equal rights for all fellow humans. Hence, the collective shaping of the structures that govern our lives, i.e. politics or society, is even more crucial. However, today, we have less and less control over politics globally; we vote and choose the people that govern us, but more often than not, the political parties that hold state power overlook popular demands and become threats to the collective humanity as evinced by wars and the destruction of the environment for profit-making ventures.

The student protests, in a way, have demonstrated that anarchism may promote equality and justice. While it is accused of violence and chaos, David Graeber claimed that anarchism is philosophically grounded in the belief that humans are capable of reason and can flourish without being subjected to coercive force.

Then, how could we overcome the socio-political structures that dominate us and reclaim our right to politics?

The student encampment movements in the US recently reflected how we could regain control of what is ours. We all know by now that students on campuses across the US have built encampments, occupied buildings, and led protests urging educational institutions to divest their endowments from companies profiting from the Israeli war against the Palestinian people. However, through police brutality, arrests, and negotiations, many of the encampments are cleared from campuses. Nonetheless, some universities have committed to reviewing their investments. There are some encampments still holding their places. However, we are not sure how long they will survive. The student protests may shrink without ensuring any drastic changes in the US policies regarding their support towards Israel. Still, how students protested reflects possibilities for egalitarianism and a shared vision for reclaiming our right to politics and ensuring peace and liberty for all.

I witnessed student protests at the University of Oregon. On May 10, the 12th day of their encampment, the student protest took a significant turn. They momentarily took control of the main administrative building and chanted slogans for divestment. One basis of their demands is reflected by the slogan, "Whose university? Our university" or "We are the University [of Oregon]." Later, when they came out, some students delivered speeches from the entrance staircase to a mass crowd in front of the building. They argued that their tuition fees should not fund the war and killings of innocent people. Thus, they demanded the university to divest and sought public support. They did not claim to take over the university or the state but wanted to cease the ongoing war. During this time, employees of the administrative building locked the building from the inside so the students could not reenter. Later, the students marched across the campus and returned to the encampment sites. That day, students momentarily took back spaces controlled by the "authorities".

We recently experienced similar anti-establishment protests in Bangladesh. We can recall large student protests for ensuring road safety and enacting new traffic laws, restructuring the quotas in government jobs, and eliminating imposed VAT on tuition fees, etc. All these protests reflect similar aspirations for equality and justice and, more importantly, the power of unity. Students without centralised leadership took control of spaces, even if momentarily, shaking the centres of power to their core—even though they did not aim to overthrow the regime.

This form of prefigurative protest is pivotal in reclaiming our right to politics. David Graeber, in the book *The Democracy Project*, reflected how a popular movement's hostility to the political establishment is reflected through its refusal to take any political positions at all. Unlike other political movements, recent student movements in the US or Bangladesh do not seek state power. Still, by not aiming for power, these movements envision a society without an authoritarian structure.

An atmosphere of equality and fairness, the ability to organise and mobilise through digital media, the peaceful takeover of infrastructures such as roads and administrative offices, and a gradual movement expansion are all key features of student protests. In the US, there was another crucial factor: the protesters were from different races and cultures, but they were united in their shared vision for an equitable future. Student protests exhibited a new form of organising discontent by endorsing a prefigurative strategy—without having a political structure. The movements themselves are critical achievements. In Alain Badiou's words, the student movements can womb an "[idea] capable of challenging the corrupt, lifeless version of 'democracy', which has become the banner of the legionaries of Capital." The frequency of student protests worldwide indicates the possibility of forming a more egalitarian society.

The student protests, in a way, have demonstrated that anarchism may promote equality and justice. While it is accused of violence and chaos, David Graeber claimed that anarchism is philosophically grounded in the belief that humans are capable of reason and can flourish without being subjected to coercive force. In contrast, traditional governing structures often perpetuate unequal power structures. For this reason, following the student protests, we must embrace our capacity for reason and come together to reclaim our rights to politics and create a more just world. This will not be easy, as our experiences of the student protests tell us.

The questions that might remain in our hearts are: What future lies ahead of such prefigurative protests? What can we possibly do once such protests succumb to the existing political forces? Frankly, there is no blueprint. Instead, it should be an experimental process. For now, the momentary experience of real freedom is what the protest participants will have once all the encampments are cleared across the US. Many of us will have a first-person account of such political moments and stories to tell, possibly leading to a revolutionary or creative epoch.

We need to act on AI now, not have an act for it

SHAHED ALAM

Shahed Alam
is a barrister and telecom expert.

When Bangladesh embarked on its journey towards Digital Bangladesh in 2009, many were sceptical about it. But as time progressed, we all saw how the vision started to become a reality.

This vision, at its core, aspires to create a nation that is adept at solving problems at all spheres of life through innovative application of digital technologies. The government has made it abundantly clear that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is going to play a pivotal role in implementing the Smart Bangladesh vision. Following this vision, the government has recently unveiled a draft National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy 2024 for public consultation.

There is a good reason why the government has decided to use AI as the fulcrum to realise the goal of Smart Bangladesh. Unlike other digital technologies, the potential of application of AI is literally all around us. Starting from our personal lives, to modernising public service delivery, the scope for AI is limitless.

Be it public transport or AI-driven personal vehicles, personal healthcare solutions or the public healthcare system, from individual human resource productivity or national competitiveness in productivity levels, every imaginable aspect of our individual, societal, as well as national issues can have a transformative impact if we can smartly apply AI to solve our problems.

But the question is this: how do we facilitate AI to deliver the dividends for us? If we look around, we can see that every country in the world is trying to strike a balance between innovation and regulatory oversight. There is palpable consensus on adopting more of a business-friendly approach to AI regulation, by avoiding excessive restrictions.

The government has been trying to create a pathway for AI in Bangladesh by preparing the National Strategy for AI in 2020, followed by the recent release of the draft AI Policy in 2024. Having read the draft policy on AI, I felt that it provides an excellent template to foment the use of AI in every sector. The institutional framework outlined in the policy to pursue AI projects is well thought through. On top of that, the sectoral plans for application of AI provides an excellent starting point.

But what puzzles me is the stated desire of the government to introduce an Act for AI. When we are supposed to allow as much room as possible for our AI practitioners to fully demonstrate their talent, we are planning to limit what they can and can't do along with defined punitive measures through the AI Act. I am certain that this is not how you invite people into the fold of new technology.

As of now, the European Union (EU) is the only entity to have enacted an AI Act. At the heart of the Act, it is mandatory to ensure that AI platforms are monitored or overseen by human beings, not another AI platform. It's worth noting that many AI experts have termed this as a knee-jerk reaction as they consider a law on AI to be too premature at this stage.

The US does not have a federal law covering AI, nor is there any universal definition for AI. It is currently governed by a mix of decentralised existing federal and state legislations, industry itself and the courts. Through an executive order last year, every US government agency was tasked to set up working groups to evaluate AI, develop regulations and establish public-private engagement.

In United Kingdom (UK), the government has unveiled its response to AI Regulation White Paper consultation in February 2024. They don't have any plans to codify that into law for now. It advocates a context-sensitive, balanced approach, using existing sector-specific laws for AI guidance.

In India, the upcoming Digital India Act is set to focus on the regulation of high-risk AI applications. No plan to enact separate legislation is afoot. Singapore also doesn't have any AI legislation; they have a sector specific approach to overall governance and regulation. Japan also has a relatively hands-off approach and has been encouraging AI development and application across various sectors.

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has issued a guide to AI governance and ethics in February 2024. The national-level recommendations include nurturing AI talent, upskilling workforces and investing in AI research and development. Australia also doesn't have any AI legislation; the government there is approaching it with a voluntary ethics framework.

It's worth noting that the core purpose of having a law is to create a framework for dos and don'ts in a particular area with the option to resort to the legal system to settle disputes or punish offenders of the law. The question here is, how do we know what is doable and what is not, when we don't have any prior experience with AI in Bangladesh.

Even if we consider enacting a law, we need to ascertain areas where government regulation is needed, in light of the global best practices. AI law or policy considerations should include the use and processing of personal data, privacy, infringement, surveillance, algorithm bias in customer interactions, data sovereignty, monitoring AI based platforms, cybersecurity, and social norms and values etc. Most importantly, we need to focus on the fundamental ethical aspects of AI, which are more universally agreed upon compared to specific AI regulations.

We must realise innovation involves a very messy and unstructured process. The key to innovation is to have a creative mindset that can go beyond conventional thinking to come up with the simplest of solutions to complex problems. Putting barriers on this through an AI Act is the last thing we need at this moment.

If we want to meet the export earnings target of $5 billion from the ICT sector, we need to facilitate our developers to catch up with the rapid pace of AI development globally, instead of scaring them off with an act that comes with punitive measures. More AI regulation risks stifling new start-ups who lack the resources of the globally dominant platforms. We need to focus on creating a large pool of highly skilled human resources in AI. The draft AI policy provides a baseline to embark on this AI journey.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়
গণপূর্ত বিভাগ, পাবনা ।
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তারিখঃ ২৮ জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ / ১১ জুন ২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

পুনঃ নিলাম দরপত্র আহবান বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০২/২০২৩-২০২৪ খ্রিঃ ।

পাবনা গণপূর্ত বিভাগের অধীনস্থ পাবনা মেডিকেল কলেজ ও ৫০০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট হাসপাতাল এলাকায় অবস্থিত পুরাতন জরাজীর্ণ ব্যবহারের অযোগ্য পরিত্যক্ত ০১(এক)টি ভবন যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে সেই অবস্থায় নিলামে বিক্রয় এর জন্য আগ্রহী ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান, স্বাভাবিক ব্যবসায়ী ও ব্যক্তিদের নিকট হইতে সিলমোহরকৃত খামে পুনঃ নিলাম দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে ।

১ ।	কাজের নাম	ঃ	গ্রুপ নং ০৪(চার) ঃ পাবনা মেডিকেল কলেজ ও ৫০০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট হাসপাতাল এলাকায় অবস্থিত পুরাতন ০২ তলা জরাজীর্ণ ভবন নং-৫(৪র্থ শ্রেণি স্টাফ কোয়ার্টার-৬) ।
২ ।	নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তির সূত্র	ঃ	১ । স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়, স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগ, ঢাকার স্মারক নং- ৪৫.০০.০০০০.১৫৭.৯৫.০২২.২৩-৮৬ তারিখ-১০ মার্চ ২০২৪ খ্রিঃ । ২ । তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, গণপূর্ত সার্কেল, পাবনার স্মারক নং- ২৫.৩৬.৭৬০০.৩০০.১৬.০৪০.২২-৪২১ তারিখ- ০৭/০৫/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ ।
৩ ।	জামানতের টাকা	ঃ	উদ্ধৃত দরের মোট মূল্যের উপর ২০% (শতকরা বিশ ভাগ) টাকা নিম্ন স্বাক্ষরকারীর অনুকূলে যে কোন তফসীলি ব্যাংক হতে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার নিলাম দরপত্রের সাথে অবশ্যই দাখিল করতে হবে ।
৪ ।	নিলাম দরপত্র তফসীলের মূল্য	ঃ	নিলাম দরপত্র তফসিল মূল্য টাকা ঃ ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) মাত্র (অফেরতযোগ্য) মানি রিসিট /চালান এর মাধ্যমে জমা করতে হবে । উক্ত মানি রিসিট / চালান এর মূল কপি দরপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে । অন্যথায় দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য করা হবে ।
৫ ।	মালামাল অপসারণের সময়সীমা	ঃ	কার্যাদেশ প্রদানের তারিখ হতে ৩০ (ত্রিশ) দিন ।
৬ ।	নিলাম দরপত্র তফসীল বিক্রয়কারী দপ্তরের নাম	ঃ	নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর অফিসসহ নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, গণপূর্ত বিভাগ-১,২ রাজশাহী /পাবনা/নাটোর/ সিরাজগঞ্জ ।
৭ ।	নিলাম দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	ঃ	১ । নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, গণপূর্ত বিভাগ, পাবনা । ২ । জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, পাবনা । ৩ । পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, পাবনা ।
৮ ।	নিলাম দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	ঃ	০২/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে) ।
৯ ।	নিলাম দরপত্র গ্রহণ/দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	০৩/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত ।
১০ ।	নিলাম দরপত্র খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, পাবনা গণপূর্ত বিভাগ, পাবনা । তারিখ ঃ ০৩/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ সময় বেলা ৩.০০ ঘটিকায় সীলগালাকৃত অবস্থায় প্রাপ্ত নিলাম দরপত্র সমূহ নিলাম দরপত্র ওপেনিং কমিটির সদস্য ও আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান/ব্যবসায়ীগণের মনোনীত প্রতিনিধিদের সম্মুখে/উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হবে ।
১১ ।	বর্ণিত নিলামের জন্য প্রস্তাবিত স্থাপনা সমূহ ০১/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে উপ-বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলী, পাবনা গণপূর্ত উপ-বিভাগ-২, পাবনা এর সহিত যোগাযোগ করে সরেজমিনে দেখা যাবে ।		
১২ ।	নিলাম দরপত্রের সংগে নিলাম দরপত্র তফসিল ক্রয়ের মূল রশিদ অবশ্যই সংযোজন করতে হবে ।		
১৩ ।	আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান/ব্যবসায়ীগণ/গণপূর্ত অধিদপ্তরের ঠিকাদার/ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান তাদের হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, মূল্য সংযোজন কর, নিবন্ধিকরণ টি,আই,এন, NID, হালনাগাদ আয়কর সনদ এর সত্যায়িত কপি ও ব্যাংক সলভেন্সির সনদপত্র অবশ্যই নিলাম দরপত্রের সাথে সংযোজন করতে হবে । বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলীর জন্য নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তরে যোগাযোগ করা যেতে পারে ।		
১৪ ।	জামানতের টাকা যে কোন তফসিলভুক্ত ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার আকারে নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, পাবনা গণপূর্ত বিভাগ, পাবনা এর অনুকূলে দরপত্রের সংগে অবশ্যই দাখিল করতে হবে, অন্যথায় দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে ।		
১৫ ।	কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন প্রকার কারণ প্রদর্শন না করেই যে কোন নিলাম দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা সকল নিলাম দরপত্র বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন ।		

অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী নোটিশ বোর্ড/অফিসে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে দেখতে পাওয়া যাবে ।

11/06/2024
মোঃ রাসেল কবির
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (চঃদাঃ)
গণপূর্ত বিভাগ, পাবনা ।

GD-691

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

Celebrating the best of BENGALI SHORT FICTION

Review of 'The Penguin Book of Bengali Short Stories' (Penguin UK, 2024), edited by Arunava Sinha

The Penguin Book of Bengali Short Stories
Edited by Arunava Sinha

ILLUSTRATION: **MAISHA SYEDA**

SHAHRIAR SHAAMS

Bengali literature has had a rich history of prose, beginning more or less in the early 19th century under the colonial Raj. Calcutta's presence as the British Empire's capital in the colony shaped much of these works and Arunava Sinha is right to claim that "Bengali fiction has always been written in a time of turmoil." The cultural upheavals of 19th century Bengal, the political crises of the early 20th century, the famines, the partitions (of both 1905 and 1947), the violent language protests, the Bangladesh war of independence—all of this had coloured and moulded the trajectories of Bengali literature.

In a new anthology helmed by Arunava Sinha, *The Penguin Book of Bengali Short Stories*, the veteran translator and editor of Bengali fiction takes on the task of curating a set of stories, a showcase of Bengali short-fiction through the ages. Though he claims in his introduction that these are "the personal choice of someone who found these stories worthy of full-bodied reading..." the reader would find a representative bunch that highlights much of Bengali history with minimal bloat.

It is not Arunava Sinha's first attempt, having edited *The Greatest Bengali Stories Ever Told* (Aleph Book Company, 2016) before. The present collection does seem to overcome the few faults its predecessor had, such as the exclusion of writers from Bangladesh. The present anthology is far more encompassing, putting on display the Bengali ghost story, the detective fiction (featuring, of course, Byomkesh), the stories of Bengali war-times, of hunger and the cruelty of caste. We have tales of modern love and anguish in the city, and of the illustrious village-life in the delta.

Fittingly, the anthology starts with Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore's story, "Dead or Alive" is an eclectic look at the oeuvre of the poet, a ghost story that seeks to answer questions of familial bonds. Kadambini, who returns from the dead, finds that her presence has changed how her loved ones view her. "Humans fear ghosts, ghosts fear humans too," Rabindranath says, "they occupy opposite banks of the river of death."

The beautifully constructed "Dead or Alive" is concise in action and deeply moving. Arunava Sinha decides to follow it up with a heart-wrenching story of low-caste life in Sarat Chandra Chattopaddhyay's "Paradise of the Wretched". In Sarat's story, the reader finds an untrammelled prose that vividly captures the dreams and despair of those cursed to be born off low-caste.

Standouts in the anthology includes Bibhutibushan's black-comedic "Drobomoyee's Sojourn in Kashi," where an elderly woman is sent to live with a religious nut, and Buddhadeva Bose's "A Life," where a schoolteacher's life, as he plans to write a dictionary, is shown with the breadth and richness of a novel. But perhaps the best of the collection can be found in Jibanananda Das's "Women" and Ashapurna Devi's "Deceiver and Deception". In the former, the writer documents a day in the life of a bored couple Hemen and Chapola: "...his face was a replica of his paunch. Chapola's face was no different from Hemen's—dreams or imaginativeness never seemed to have encroached on their visages." Their visit to friends, a couple with their own problems, soon descend into a violent conversation of jealousy, self-worth, and marriage. Das's story should be a required reading for any serious writer, wishing to portray the complex, dreary lives of young cityfolk.

The other, in Devi's story, the author takes the reader on a whirlwind of trickery. While nothing seems to happen on a surface level, the intrinsic desires of the characters, the form of a husband who comes home to find his wife might be dead, bring about the dark truths that are usually best left unsaid.

The inclusion of writers from the "other" Bengal, that is here in Bangladesh, has surely made this anthology more worthwhile and lasting, yet the selection is noticeably patchy, as only six writers have made it (most of these translations, as noted in the credits, have been taken from a single book: *The Book of Dhaka*, an anthology of stories set in Dhaka by Bangladeshi authors). It is still commendable that Sinha includes writers such as Akhtaruzzaman Elias, whose story "The Raincoat" is a fantastic play of anxiety, as a man wears a raincoat belonging to his brother-in-law (who had joined the freedom fighters), goes out into the pouring rain of war-time Dhaka and tries to make it back alive. But Sinha also decides to include, in the same vein, stories such as "The Weapon", a saccharine tale of poverty and crime.

Perhaps, the biggest omission is Kazi Nazrul Islam, without whom any talk of Bengali literature is incomplete and one-sided. Nazrul had been a poet and revolutionary, but his works of prose too had passion and intellectual rigour. The addition of so many novelists whose best works weren't short-stories show that Arunava Sinha selected these writers on the basis of their strength and place in Bengali Literature, therefore it is quite puzzling why he chose to leave out Nazrul.

Still, Arunava Sinha's anthology is a vastly enjoyable read and displays the richness and genius of the Bengali short story.

Shahriar Shaams *has written for* Dhaka Tribune, The Business Standard, *and* The Daily Star. *He can be emailed at shahriarshaams@gmail.com. Find him on X: @shahriarshaams.*

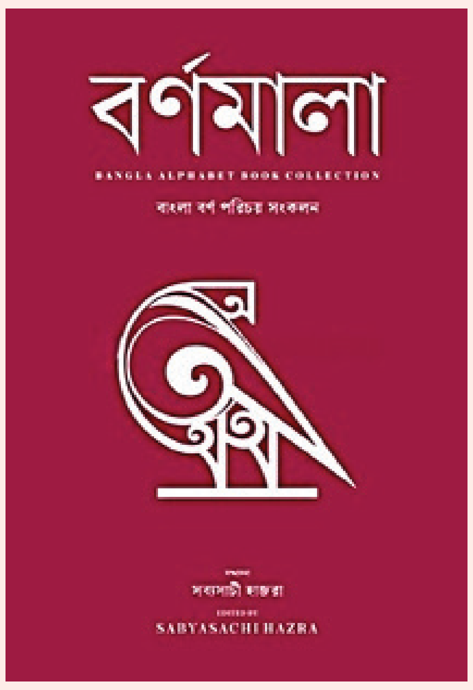
What we're reading this week

MAISHA SYEDA,
Sub editor, Star Books and Literature
Adjunct Lecturer,
North South University

Bornomala: Bangla Alphabet Book Collection

Sabyasachi Hazra (ed.)
Kobi Prokashoni, 2014

I came across this book when I went to an exhibition titled "Primer to Press" by Sabyasachi Hazra. The book was launched there, the collection edited by Hazra himself. It assembles eight selected primers of Bangla language dating from 1849 to 1948. The book is a rich collection of specimens, and, as a whole, a well -researched testament to the evolution of Bangla letters over the years. It boasts an impressive analysis of the practice of printing and publishing used in Bangla primers and is great to have in collection for those interested in the linguistic history of Bangla lettering.



BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

Rising from the ashes

Review of 'Knife: Meditations After an Attempted Murder' (Penguin Random House, 2024) by Salman Rushdie

ZERTAB QUADERI

The literary world was shaken on August 12, 2022, when the news of Salman Rushdie being stabbed on stage in upstate New York started to pour in. Ironically, he was all set to talk about his involvement in a project to create a refuge in the USA for those writers who are not safe in their country. I have a few fans of Rushdie in the family so it was natural for me to exchange text messages with them as I kept one eye (ironically, again) on the TV, trying to gulp down the latest on this incident. As images of a helicopter and a stretcher being carried inside kept playing, I was anxious (like multitudes of others, I'm sure) about whether he would make it or not. Keeping his religious sentiments or lack thereof aside, Rushdie is one of the greatest authors of our times with an unparalleled sense of humour, keen observation, boundless imagination, and a sharp voice for satire. He's a wordsmith par excellence with the gift of crafting the funniest words and puns in English and Urdu. Therefore, it came as a slight relief when, on the next day of the attack, the news came that he was alive—although he was likely to lose an eye and the use of his left arm.

After being stabbed 15 times in different parts of his body, it was a miracle that he lived to tell the tale in his latest book, *Knife: Meditations After an Attempted Murder*. At its core, the book is a cathartic process that helps the author take stock of what ensued, recognise it, come to terms with it (somewhat), and use it to put the past behind and begin a new chapter. It is a testament to Rushdie's resilience, determination, and steel-strong willpower to use his talent and intellect to claw his way back into regular life. An emotional and personal account, *Knife* is a recounting of the 77-year-old author's account of what went on just before, during, and after the horrific incident.

The book is also a standing ovation to the people, especially his wife, immediate family members, doctors and other members of the medical profession, and friends from the writers' community and otherwise, who sat, stood, and slept by him and literally held him through this difficult stage to nurture him back to life. Rushdie shares chunks of his personal life, dedicating one full chapter to his wife, Rachel Eliza Griffiths, an American poet, author, photographer, and visual artist. He describes lovingly and in his usual humorous way where and how they met and how their relationship blossomed. *Knife* is coming to terms with a new reality for both Eliza and Rushdie. An emotional rollercoaster, it traces the upheavals in their lives and how they overcome the trauma and anger to live a life of peace and love.

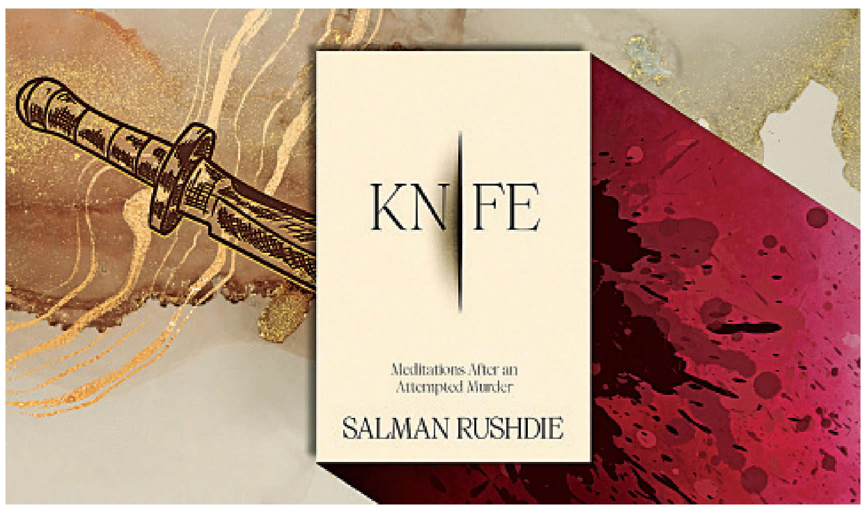

KNIFE
Meditations After an Attempted Murder
SALMAN RUSHDIE

ILLUSTRATION: **AMREETA LETHE**

Besides his marital bliss, Rushdie shows glimpses into his past turbulent relationship with his father, touches upon the famous fatwa, and shares his close relationship with his sister, nieces, and sons. For someone who has mostly read his works of fiction, it's hard to imagine what the author is like in real life. *Knife* gives a good portrayal of him—he's just like any other human being who's concerned about his Ralph Lauren suit at the time of the attack. Never before have I seen the man behind the works of award-winning fiction like I've done here.

Detailed depictions of Rushdie's physical and psychological suffering during his hospitalisation and rehabilitation, the loss of his freedom of movement, and his dependence on others are heart-wrenching, but the pain for the reader is a bit dulled through the dry humour—which is his forte; he does make us smile even through the worst pain imaginable. However, when it comes to the loss of his eye, it's an agony he can't get over and in his words, it's "an absence with an immensely powerful presence". The silver lining in all this is the miraculous recovery of his left hand through rigorous and painful hand therapy, proving that where there's a will, there's a way.

Rushdie is unapologetically himself in *Knife*. He reaffirms his belief in not believing in any religion and voices his strong opinion on a politicised and weaponised religion that causes more harm than good. By the end of the book, we see him as a strong man who revisits the place of the attack in a new Ralph Lauren suit, is not afraid to speak out, is determined to stay true to his way of storytelling with grit and gumption, and is very much basking in the love of his wife and family. He promises that the knife attack will not change his writing style or make it appear weak or smell of defeat. Through this book, Rushdie rises from the ashes like a phoenix from a life-threatening 27 seconds, once again free to do what he does best while his attacker languishes in prison.

Steering away from the memoir a little, we recently got a further glimpse into Rushdie's mode of thinking especially in light of the ongoing carnage in Palestine. As has been widely reported in various news sources including *The Guardian*, Rushdie has added his two cents on the genocide in Palestine and the student protests across in Western university campuses. He justifies the "emotional reaction" to the situation but questions the viability of a Palestinian state "right now" under the Hamas leadership, which, in his opinion, would lead to a "Taliban-like state" under the tutelage of Iran. Being the subject of an extremist's brutal attack himself, we may try to understand his apprehension and aversion toward another potential terrorist/religious fundamentalist nation. However, his opinion that the terrorist organisation Hamas should be mentioned in the university campus protests because "that's where this started" comes across as a bit off-key. October 7, 2023 was not when it started. And there's plenty of debate on who created the Taliban in the first place but that's a story for another day.

In *The Guardian* piece, Rushdie mostly walks the middle path when he opines that student demonstrations are okay as long as other students are not made to feel unsafe. He is sympathetic to the Palestinians and their cause but feels that not enough voices are being raised against Hamas. In my opinion, this is not the time to issue "safe" statements. The horrific and exponentially increasing statistics in Palestine cannot be compared to anything that we have witnessed since the persecution of the Jews almost a century back. We expect a stronger opinion from writers, artists, musicians, film makers, actors, poets, or someone who practises any form of art and has the weapon (not necessarily a knife) to make their voices count. Keeping the art separate from the artist is our job.

Zertab Quaderi *is an SEO English content writer and social media marketing consultant by day and a reader of fiction and nonfiction books by night. In between, she travels and dabbles in watercolour painting.*

Star
SPORT
DHAKA THURSDAY JUNE 13, 2024, JAISHTHA 30, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV AND STAR SPORTS 1,2,3
T20 World Cup
West Indies vs New Zealand
Live from 6:30 pm
Bangladesh vs Netherlands
Live from 8:30 pm
England vs Oman
Live from 1:00 am (Friday)

A do-or-die contest for Kiwis

AGENCIES

Following a stunning 84-run defeat against Afghanistan in their tournament opener, New Zealand now face a challenging task as the Kiwis need to win their remaining Group C matches in order to progress to the Super Eight.

That challenge for the Kiwis, who now stutter at the bottom of the five-team table, starts against co-hosts the West Indies at the Brian Lara Stadium in Trinidad today.

"This is essentially like a knockout game. We have got to give it everything we can," New Zealand coach Gary Stead said.

"We have to win three games. We have to win them well," Stead said, adding that he may tinker with his line-up, but will resist making vast changes.

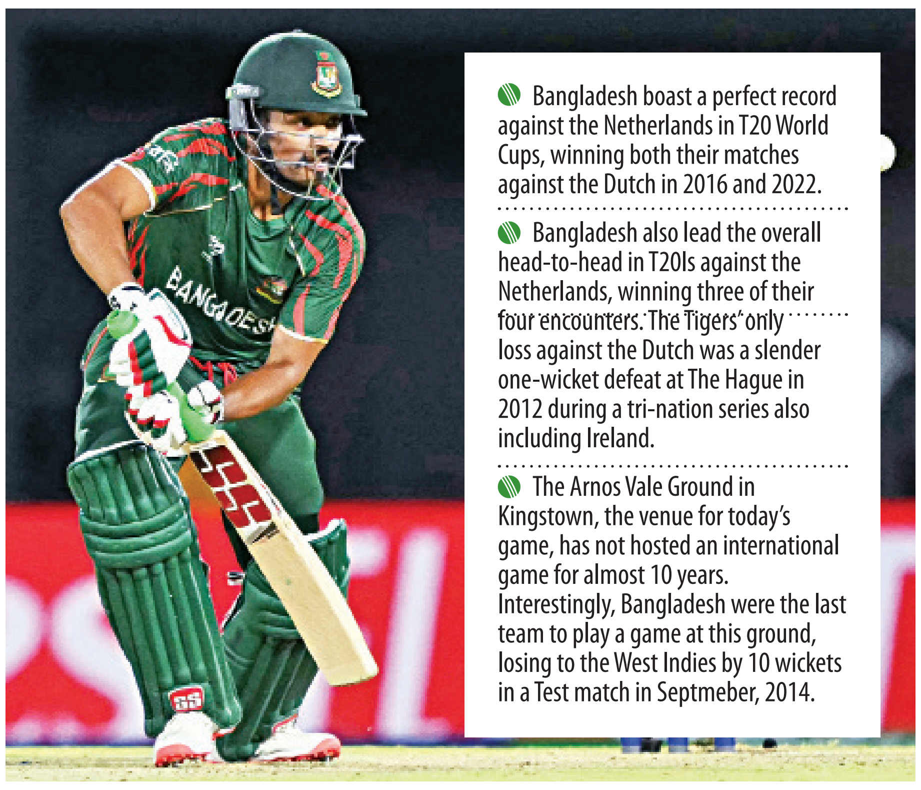
Meanwhile, with two wins in as many games, the Windies find themselves in a comfortable second position in the group, following Afghanistan. But the co-hosts will certainly be wary of a slip, especially having survived a scare of their own in their opening game when they laboured to a five-wicket win over Papua New Guinea.

Zampa first to 100

Australia leggie Adam Zampa led the rout of Namibia in their nine-wicket victory in a Group B game of the T20 World Cup in in Antigua on Tuesday. Zampa returned figures of 4-12 as he became the first Australian man to reach 100 T20I wickets. The win also saw Australia secure a Super Eight spot.

Frequent opening slot rejig yet to bear fruit

SPORTS REPORTER



- Bangladesh boast a perfect record against the Netherlands in T20 World Cups, winning both their matches against the Dutch in 2016 and 2022.
- Bangladesh also lead the overall head-to-head in T20Is against the Netherlands, winning three of their four encounters. The Tigers' only loss against the Dutch was a slender one-wicket defeat at The Hague in 2012 during a tri-nation series also including Ireland.
- The Arnos Vale Ground in Kingstown, the venue for today's game, has not hosted an international game for almost 10 years. Interestingly, Bangladesh were the last team to play a game at this ground, losing to the West Indies by 10 wickets in a Test match in Septmeber, 2014.

Bangladesh take on the Netherlands in a vital T20 World Cup game at the Arnos Vale Stadium in St. Vincent on Thursday where adaptation would be key for the distraught top-order batters. For Bangladesh, however, it would come in various forms, with team combinations also forcing them to adapt to different batting lineups.

Form troubles at the top guide the Bangladesh team management towards such changes. Earlier in March this year, head coach Chandika Hathurusingha was asked about whether they were finding stability at the top and about the then opening pair of Soumya Sarkar and Liton Das in the Sri Lanka T20Is.

"It's not about this pair but correcting what we have done wrong in the past. Because if something was working, I don't think they would have made so many changes," was Hathurusingha's reply to The Daily Star's query during a press conference.

In a nutshell, many batters have been tried in combinations, but consistency has been lacking. In Monday's South Africa fixture, team combination or opener Soumya's form concerns kept him out of the side while the Tigers unfurled another opening pair as skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto came out to open.

For Shanto, it was an opportunity to find some meaningful time and form at the crease, which he could not capitalise in a chase that was not steep.

The thing to watch for, in terms of playing eleven-wise, is what Bangladesh feel is the best combination against the Dutch. Jaker Ali Anik played the last game but did not keep wickets. Given the form of the rest of the batting unit, bar Towhid Hridoy and Mahmudullah Riyad, most of the others have experienced a difficult time of late.

The team management would have to focus on playing to their strengths, but where does that strength lie in the batting unit? The last T20I played at the Arnos Vale Stadium was in 2013 and there is no certainty that Bangladesh and Netherlands will play on a better batting surface in West Indies compared to what it was in USA.

Bangladesh have used three different opening pairs within the last six matches, and seven pairs within a year. It is surprising that they had a century opening stand in their last game of the three-match T20I series against USA and are having to change plans so soon. It also gives an idea of the inconsistency at the top, but it may also be a matter of putting trust in players.

Bangladesh batters have always dealt with slower or lower wickets. A better wicket may even see Soumya come in after being overlooked in the last game. If Shanto is to open, it leaves room for middle order to be bolstered. It may not have worked with Jaker against South Africa, but it will once again be up for discussion after that tight match ended in a disappointing loss.

Form inconsistency starts from the very top. It could also be from the top that the tone is set for better batting effort. Netherlands bowling has been up to mark in this mega event and Shanto and Tanzid Hasan Tamim would have to find an answer.

SHORT CORNER

Alcaraz, Nadal named in Spanish Olympic tennis team

French Open champions Carlos Alcaraz and Rafael Nadal have been named in the Spain team for the 2024 Olympic Games, the Spanish tennis federation (RFET) announced Wednesday. World number two Alcaraz last weekend won his first Roland Garros title on the clay in Paris, where the Olympic tournament will take place from July 27 to August 4.

India coach rues 'injustice'

India coach Igor Stimac condemned what he called an "irregular" goal in a 2-1 defeat at Qatar that ended his team's World Cup 2026 qualifying hopes, saying: "It shouldn't happen." The loss in Doha on Tuesday dashed India's dreams of reaching the third round of Asian qualifying for the World Cup for the first time.

Ten Hag to remain as Man Utd boss

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag will remain in the job for next season and has entered into talks with the Old Trafford club over a contract extension despite the team's lowest ever Premier League finish of eighth, British media reported. Ten Hag's contract runs until the end of next season, with the club having the option of extending it a further 12 months.

Shakib drops to fifth as Nabi rises to top

Veteran Afghanistan all-rounder Mohammad Nabi is the big winner in the latest ICC Rankings update, with the 39-year-old rising to the No.1 spot on the list for all-rounders following his recent two-wicket haul against New Zealand in Guyana. Previous No.1-ranked player Shakib Al Hasan dropped four rungs to fifth as a result of the major shake-up at the top.

Read full stories on The Daily Star website

Mohammedan Sporting Club players take a selfie after clinching a record third Dhaka Premier Division Women's Cricket League with a 46-run win against Rupali Bank Krira Parishad at the BKSP-3 ground on Wednesday. Disha Deepak Kasat scalped a fifer as Mohammedan, unbeaten in the league with nine straight wins, bundled out Rupali Bank for 203 for 10 in 45.5 overs while defending a 250-run target.

PHOTO: BCB

Junior hockey teams eye Asia Cup berths

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's and women's U-21 hockey teams left for Singapore last night to take part in the Junior AHF Cups starting from June 14 with an aim to secure berths in next month's Junior Asia Cups in their respective events.

Bangladesh, reigning champions in men's Junior AHF Cup, have been placed in Pool A along with Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Singapore while Pool B features Oman, Chinese Taipei, China, Hong Kong, Iran and Kazakhstan, with four semifinalists advancing to the next edition of Junior Asia Cup.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh women's U-21 team, who are going to participate in this tournament for the second time, will have to battle against Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and Sri Lanka as top four finishers will qualify for Women's Junior Asia Cup.

Both teams have taken more than one month's preparation for the tournaments but could not play any warm-up matches.

"Our target is to defend the title as we have prepared well for more than one month. It could have been better with a couple of practice matches but we are optimistic as the players came into the camp just after the Dhaka Premier League," said men's team's assistant coach Hedayetul Islam Razib on the eve of the teams' departure.

Women's team manager Tariquzzaman Nannu informed that they would try to arrange a couple of practice matches in Singapore.

"Bangladesh beat Sri Lanka and played well against Hong Kong in 2019 while the girls also performed well against Chinese Taipei and Indonesia in another five-a-side tournament. So we are hoping to finish among the top four," Nannu told The Daily Star.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

TOFFEE EXCLUSIVE
OUT OF THIS WORLD
ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP
WEST INDIES & USA 2024
WATCH LIVE ONLY ON TOFFEE
Scan Now to Download
Download now
Google Play
App Store
Watch on any device

Stream ICC T20 World Cup Exclusively on Toffee

Toffee, the country's leading digital entertainment platform, is bringing the carnival of cricket to the Bangladeshi cricket freaks once again as the T20 World Cup is already on its way. With 20 participating nations for the first time in history, the world is experiencing cricket invading an unconquered land, the USA being a co-host with an old fox of this format, West Indies. Banglalink has exclusive digital broadcasting rights to this event, so Toffee is the only digital platform in Bangladesh that will be streaming the ICC T20 World Cup matches, offering access to this major sporting event for the people of Bangladesh.

Toffee is accessible from any mobile network, not just Banglalink users. This inclusivity ensures that all cricket fans in Bangladesh will enjoy the T20 World Cup and the future major ICC events broadcast on Toffee.

Toffee will also exclusively stream major cricket events in 2024 and 2025, including the ICC Men's and Women's T20 World Cups and the ICC Men's Champions Trophy. Fans can look forward to 71 men's and 95 women's matches from 20 nations to watch live on Toffee.

Sports and entertainment consumption habits have changed drastically among the people of this country over the last few years. Mobility is on the rise, so people need entertainment that is personalized and on the go. With the help of Ookla® certified fastest 4G internet of Banglalink, the digital operator's homegrown digital entertainment platform, Toffee is leading this development.

Toffee has already established itself as the premier destination for high-quality live streaming of major sporting events in the country. It has attracted over 50 million viewers across Bangladesh who have enjoyed live streaming of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, Asia Cup Cricket 2023 and ICC Men's ODI World Cup 2023. During the FIFA World Cup in 2022, more than 30 million people enjoyed the matches on Toffee. Specifically, the final between Argentina and France had 15 million viewers, capturing one third of the Bangladeshi audience.

In the last year of 2023 alone, during Asia Cup Cricket 2023 and ICC Men's ODI World Cup 2023, Toffee generated one billion minutes of premium cricket views, which reflects cricket lovers' faith in this OTT platform. Matches of this T20 World Cup 2024 are when people are way to work in the morning or back from work in the evening. So, all the matches can be enjoyed uninterrupted on Toffee while commuting.

When asked about his experience, a young viewer named Sajid, who enjoys watching cricket on Toffee, shared, "From my university days to my current corporate life, I am always on the move. As life gets busier, finding time to sit and watch content becomes increasingly difficult. But as a cricket fanatic, I can't imagine missing any matches. Thanks to Toffee, I can catch my favorite live cricket matches on the go, all on one platform, without any hassle and while multitasking."

Toffee has been popular among senior and marginalized citizens for its user friendly interface and versatile content library suitable for people from all socio-economic backgrounds.

With the DO 1440 initiative, Banglalink is the innovative force behind Toffee's success as Banglalink's commitment to providing premium digital experiences every 1440 minutes of a day.

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BSRM building a safer nation
WITH BSRM FASTBUILD
YOUR HOME WILL BE BUILT ON TIME
WITH THE BEST QUALITY RODS
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App Store

CYCLONE REMAL

Losses estimated at over Tk 7,000cr

Around 4 lakh people affected in 20 dists, shows ministry data

BAHARAM KHAN

FINANCIAL DAMAGES

- Fisheries: Tk **2,241**cr
- Housing: Tk **2,051**cr
- Roads: Tk **1,012**cr
- Bridges, culverts: Tk **748**cr
- Agriculture: Tk **712**cr

Cyclone Remal has had a devastating impact on 20 districts, affecting 3,83,815 people and causing damages worth over Tk 7,000 crore, according to documents of the disaster management and relief ministry.

The cyclone claimed 18 lives and injured 2,503 people, and heavily impacted fisheries, roads, and housing.

The damage to the fisheries sector amounts to Tk 2,241.65 crore; while that to roads amounts to Tk 1,012.04 crore; and housing infrastructure to Tk 2,051.84 crore.

Md Mohibur Rahman, state minister for disaster management and relief, at an event in the secretariat yesterday, said, "The government has so far estimated the losses caused by Cyclone Remal at Tk 7,000 crore. The overall damage report will be handed over to the prime minister tomorrow [today] to facilitate the next steps in

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Arshdeep Singh celebrates with Suryakumar Yadav one of his four wickets, which helped India restrict USA to 110 for 8 in their T20 World Cup match in New York yesterday. Yadav later scored 50 not out as India won by seven wickets to seal a Super 8 berth. PHOTO: AFP

Batters yet to pull their weight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Batting will be at the forefront of Bangladesh's agenda after consecutive underwhelming efforts going into their T20 World Cup Group D fixture against the Netherlands at the Arnos Vale Stadium in Kingstown today.

Bangladesh almost made a meal of their 124-run chase against Sri Lanka in their two-wicket win in Dallas and were on the wrong end of the results, falling short by four runs, when they had to chase 113 against South Africa in their second match in New York.

While the bowlers delivered excellent efforts in both matches, the batters, with the exception of in-form Towhid Hridoy, have largely misfired and failed to pull their weight.

Hridoy, Bangladesh's top run-getter with 77, played a match-winning

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Mujib's time in Kolkata was vital for his political upbringing

Goutam Ghose tells Star about his documentary

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The 1940s was a tumultuous period in Kolkata politically and economically. The man-made famine of 1943, the Hindu-Muslim riots and the great Calcutta killings ravaged the socio-economic fabric of the society in east and west Bengal -- the effects of which are still felt.

Then there was Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's great escape from India and the partition of the subcontinent.

All these events left a lasting imprint on the young mind of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his formative years as a student and a political activist.

Mujib spent only five years in Kolkata from 1942 to 1947. But his experiences as a student activist in that short time contributed to shaping his political thoughts and vision of an inclusive economic and secular political culture.

The one lasting thread running through his stay in Kolkata was his raw courage in the face of adverse situations.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

St Martin's to start getting supplies from today

Island almost out of essentials

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, *Cox's Bazar*

Two trawlers from Teknaf will sail for the St Martin's today with essentials to ease the food crisis on the island, said Yamin Hossain, additional district magistrate of Cox's Bazar, yesterday.

The Coast Guard will provide security for safe transportation of the essentials, he said after an emergency meeting of officials at the deputy commissioner's office.

Operation of passenger and cargo vessels on this route remains suspended after several vessels were fired upon from Myanmar since last Thursday. This led to shortage of food and other essential supplies in the island.

Within a day or two, a vessel from Cox's Bazar's BIWTA jetty will make regular trips to the island to keep it supplied, the additional district magistrate added.

If needed, trawlers from Bholarchar in Teknaf will

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Gaza ceasefire plan hangs in balance

Hamas seeks changes; Blinken says some proposals unworkable; 38 more Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes

REUTERS, *Cairo*

- Israel, Hamas committed war crimes in Gaza: UN inquiry
- Lebanon's Hezbollah fires barrages of rockets at Israel
- Gaza death toll rises to 37,202

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said yesterday that Hamas had proposed numerous changes, some unworkable, to a US-backed proposal for a ceasefire in Gaza, but that mediators were determined to close the gaps.

The proposal outlined by US President Joe Biden envisages a truce and a phased release of Israeli hostages in Gaza in exchange for Palestinians jailed in Israel, ultimately leading to a permanent end to the offensive.

At a press conference with Qatar's prime minister in Doha, Blinken said some of the counter-proposals from Hamas administering Gaza had sought to amend terms that it had accepted in previous talks.

"Hamas could have answered with a single word: Yes," Blinken said. "Instead, Hamas waited nearly two weeks and then proposed more changes, a number of which go beyond positions that it had previously taken and accepted."

The US has said Israel has accepted its proposal, but Israel has not publicly stated this.

Izzat al-Rishq from Hamas' political bureau said its formal response to the US proposal was "responsible, serious and positive" and "opens up a wide pathway" for an accord.

Hamas also wants written guarantees from the US on the ceasefire plan, two Egyptian security sources said.

Major powers are intensifying efforts to halt the conflict in part to prevent it spiralling into a regional war, with a dangerous flashpoint being the escalating hostilities on the Lebanese-Israeli border.

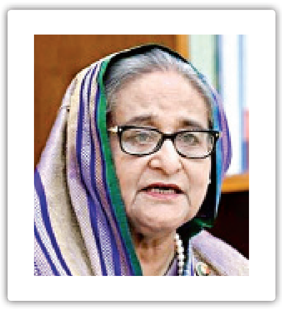
Lebanon's Hezbollah militia, backed by Iran, fired barrages of rockets at Israel yesterday in retaliation for the killing of a senior Hezbollah field commander. Israel said it had in turn attacked the launch sites from the air.

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK CASE

Efforts on to arrest 15 fugitive convicts including Tarique

PM tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told parliament yesterday that 15 convicts in the August 21 grenade attack case, including BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, are absconding and efforts are on to arrest them.

"Out of the 49 convicts, 34 were arrested," she said in response to a question from Farida Yasmin, Awami League MP from a reserved seat, during the question-answer session.

With Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, the session was held at the beginning of the day's sitting.

"Among the convicts, 19 were sentenced to death and 19 to life imprisonment, and the rest got different jail terms," said Hasina, also leader of the House, adding that Dhaka's Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 passed the judgment on October 10, 2018.

She said Interpol issued red notices against convicts Maulana Tajuddin, Harris Chowdhury, and Ratul Ahmed Babu alias Ratul Babu, who are now abroad.

Two cases -- one under the penal code and another under the Explosive Substances Act -- were filed over the grenade attack on AL's anti-terrorism rally on the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004.

The PM said two charge sheets were filed against 52 people in the cases.

She said that out of the 52 charge-sheeted accused, three were executed in other cases before the verdict was declared.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Kuwait fire kills 49 Indian workers

Dozens injured

AFP, *Kuwait City*

A fire in Kuwait killed 49 people, all Indian nationals, when it ripped through a building housing nearly 200 foreign workers yesterday, the government said.

The blaze, which broke out in the six-storey building south of Kuwait City around dawn, also left dozens injured, the health ministry said.

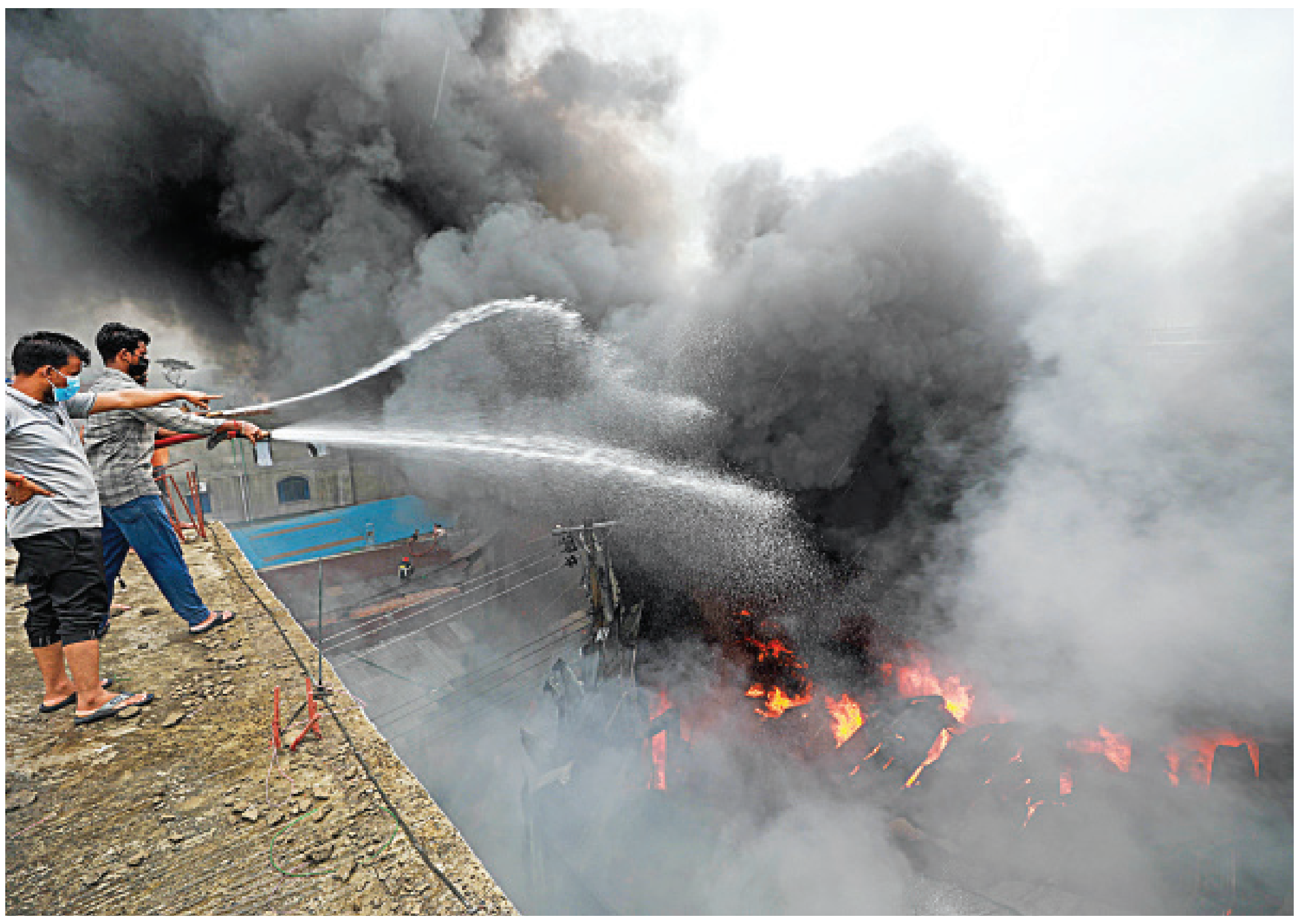
Flames engulfed the lower floors as black smoke poured out of the upper-storey windows, unverified images posted on social media showed.

The interior ministry revised the death toll up to 49, from 35 earlier, after forensic teams scoured the charred building.

"The number of deaths as a result of the fire in the workers' building... has risen to 49," the ministry said.

The official Kuwait News Agency quoted Health Minister Ahmed al-Awadhi as saying hospitals had received 56 people injured in the fire in the Mangaf area, which is heavily populated with migrant workers.

The building, whose exterior was blackened with soot, housed 196 workers, according to information given to the interior minister by their employer.



Workers trying to douse the fire that ravaged through Gartex Garments Ltd warehouse, in the City Gate area in Chattogram, yesterday morning. Six firefighting engines later brought the blaze under control around 1:00pm. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

AL leader knew about his murder but kept mum

Say investigators

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Investigators have found evidence that Saidul Karim Mintu, general secretary of Jhenaidah Awami League, knew about MP Anwarul Azim Anar's murder before it was made public.

MP AZIM
MURDER

Mintu learnt about the lawmaker's killing and even got the photos on May 16, but did not inform the law enforcers or the victim's family of the matter.

The detectives got the information by interrogating Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, relief and social welfare affairs secretary of Jhenaidah AL, and analysing his mobile phone records.

Even Babu, who is now on a seven-day remand, told the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police that he gave his phones to Mintu and shared information of the murder with him.

Over phone, Babu communicated with Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan, the coordinator of the murder. Amanullah and Babu in their earlier statements said they exchanged photos of the murder via WhatsApp and held

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

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DHAKA FRIDAY JUNE 14, 2024

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Free rein for gold smugglers in Jhenaidah

Azim 'invented' a token system for carriers, cops

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **RASHIDUL HASAN**

Since he was recruited as a carrier about six months ago, Sohel (real name withheld) transported smuggled golds on his motorbike from Jashore to Jhenaidah's Maheshpur border at least 27 times.

He was arrested by local police in January but came out of jail within weeks.

Ever since, police never stopped him as his bike's registration number was passed on to the local police as part of the deal with smuggling kingpins, Sohel told The Daily Star during a recent visit to the area.

The now slain Jhenaidah MP Anwarul Azim Anar is said to have invented this system, known as "token system," for easy movement of smuggled gold.

Secrecy in this gold smuggling operations is of utmost importance. So carriers like Sohel do not even know the names of their recruiters as well as the consignment receivers at the border.

"For the job, I would receive a monthly salary of Tk 40,000, no matter how many consignments I carried. However, the delivery operations remain suspended for the last few weeks," said Sohel, also a support staffer at a Jashore madrasa.

According to him, there are dozens of carriers like him whose only job is to pick up consignments from Jashore or other nearby districts and drop them off at Maheshpur border.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan rekindled batting form with an unbeaten team-high 64 runs off 46 balls against the Netherlands in a Group D T20 World Cup fixture at the Arnos Vale Ground in Kingstown yesterday, helping his side to a 25-run win in a high-stakes encounter. PHOTO: BCB

Shakib inspires Tigers closer to Super 8s

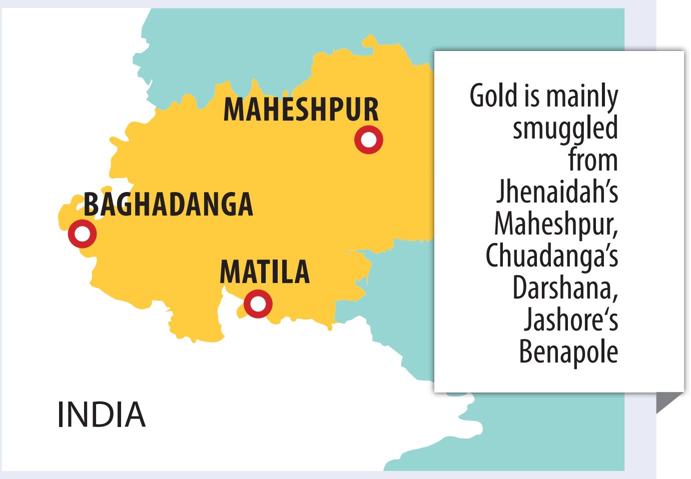
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan returned to form to put Bangladesh on the brink of the Super Eight of the ongoing T20 World Cup with a convincing 25-run win over the Netherlands in a Group D encounter at the Arnos Vale Ground in Kingstown on Thursday.

Shakib's statement-making 46-ball 64 that saw Bangladesh set a competitive 160-run target was well-complimented by young leg-spinner Rishad Hossain, who picked up two crucial wickets in one over, to help the Tigers sway the momentum of the game towards them, as the Tigers restricted the Netherlands to 134 for eight.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

- BGB seized 925.919kg gold from bordering districts from 2014 to 2023
- 27.713kg gold seized in first 3 months of 2024
- BGB arrested 290 people, filed 289 cases from 2014 to 2022



Gold is mainly smuggled from Jhenaidah's Maheshpur, Chuadanga's Darshana, Jashore's Benapole

YEAR	WORTH OF SEIZED GOLD	WEIGHT OF SEIZED GOLD
2022	Tk 26.29 crore	38.40 kilograms
2023	Tk 31.83 crore	37.56 kilograms

AL leader Mintu assured killers of payment

DB says in report to court

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **RASHIDUL HASAN**

Azim

Saidul Karim Mintu, general secretary of Jhenaidah Awami League, assured one of the masterminds of MP Anwarul Azim Anar murder that he would pay after the job was done.

The assurance came when Mintu talked to Aktaruzzaman Shahin over WhatsApp on May 5 or 6.

On June 5, Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan, the coordinator of the killing mission, confessed this before a Dhaka court.

Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, relief and social welfare

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

CLIMATE CHANGE

Bangladesh may lose a third of agri output by 2050

Says a recent WB report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Climate variability could result in the loss of one-third of Bangladesh's agricultural GDP by 2050, said a recent World Bank report.

By 2040, it could cause the loss of 6.5 percent of the country's cropland, said the report titled 'Framework for Implementing Green Growth in Bangladesh'.

The report, which was released yesterday, said climate variability could result in the loss of 18 percent of the cropland in southern Bangladesh.

Bangladesh faced an estimated average annual loss of $1 billion (0.7 percent of GDP) from tropical cyclones alone.

Also, the coastal population is at risk from events such as 100-year coastal floods, which could become more frequent.

"Climate and other environmental hazards have greater impacts on the poor and other vulnerable groups. Efforts to reduce poverty, particularly amongst populations whose livelihoods rely heavily on natural resources,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Rejoinder, our reply

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman Bangladesh sent a rejoinder to a report published on the front page of The Daily Star titled "Biman U-turns to buy Airbus Planes", on May 29, 2024. Below, we are publishing the full text of the rejoinder (as is), followed by our reply.

BIMAN'S REJOINDER

As per The Daily Star's report a new appraisal committee was formed on April 22, 2024 regarding the purchase of Airbus 350.

Biman Management challenges the veracity of this report as in reality, existing Techno-Financial Committee (TFC), which

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

St Martin's running out of supplies

Explosions in Myanmar rock neighbourhoods in Teknaf

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, *Cox's Bazar*

Amid growing skirmishes between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army across the border, movement of vessels between Teknaf and the Saint Martin's Island has become risky, causing uncertainty over supply of food and other essentials to the island.

Bangladesh government's initiative to send provisions to the island had to be postponed yesterday, as the fighting along the border escalated, threatening the safety of vessels on the Naf river.

The Saint Martin's Island is almost out of food and other supplies after the suspension of vessel movement on the usual route via the Naf. Over the last few days, several trawlers and speedboats had been fired upon from across the border.

St Martin's, which can only be accessed by boats, has not had regular supplies sent to it since June 6.

The tiny island depends on the mainland for almost all of its supplies.

The Cox's Bazar administration yesterday postponed its move to send two supply trawlers to the island from Teknaf. The tourist ship Baro Awlia would set sail for the island from the Cox's Bazar BIWTA jetty today with passengers, food, and supplies, said Mohammad Adnan Chowdhury, Teknaf upazila nirbahi officer.

Mujibor Rahman, chairman of St Martin's Union Parishad, said the food crisis on the island was turning severe.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

- Myanmar warships reach the Naf
- Fighting between Myanmar troops and Arakan Army turns fierce
- Move to send supplies to St Martin's postponed
- Supplies have not reached St Martin's in eight days
- Food prices skyrocket as stocks running out on island
- People make risky journeys across rough seas to reach Teknaf
- Dhaka issues protest note to Naypyidaw

BUSINESS

Reserves to get $2b boost this month

Forex reserves may receive over $2 billion this month, sending the total to nearly $21 billion, handing a much-needed relief to US dollar supply.

The reserves surged by $538 million on Wednesday and another $1.65 billion will be added from the IMF and the World Bank by June.

STORY ON B1

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ ফলিত পুষ্টি গবেষণা ও প্রশিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট (বারটান)
কৃষি মন্ত্রণালয়
"বারটানের ধ্যানজ্ঞান, উন্নয়ন করা পুষ্টিমান"

ঈদ-উল আজহায় করণীয়/বর্জনীয়

ত্যাগের মহিমা নিয়ে আবারও এসেছে ঈদ-উল আজহা। মহান সৃষ্টিকর্তার অনুগ্রহের আশায় নিজ নিজ সামর্থ্য অনুযায়ী প্রাণী কোরবানি দেবেন ধর্মপ্রাণ ও সামর্থবান মুসলমানরা। এই সময়ে সুস্থ থাকার জন্য ফলিত পুষ্টি বিজ্ঞানের আলোকে নিরাপদভাবে মাংস প্রক্রিয়াকরণ ও সংরক্ষণ, রন্ধন ও পরিমিত খাদ্যাভ্যাস সম্পর্কে প্রাথমিক ধারণা জনস্বার্থে সবার জন্য তুলে ধরা হলো-

নিরাপদ মাংস প্রক্রিয়াকরণ ও সংরক্ষণ

- কোরবানির প্রাণী জবাই থেকে শুরু করে মাংস কাটা, সংরক্ষণের সঙ্গে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল সরঞ্জামাদি (দা,ছুরি,চাটাই,হাড়ি,বস্তা ইত্যাদি) জীবাণুমুক্ত করে নিতে হবে। যেসব ব্যক্তি এই কাজগুলো করবেন তাঁরাও নিজেদের পরিচ্ছন্নতা নিশ্চিত করবেন।
- জবাইকৃত প্রাণীর মৃত্যু নিশ্চিত হওয়ার পরে শরীর হতে চামড়া ছাড়ানোর কাজ শুরু করতে হবে।
- প্রাণীর চামড়া ছাড়ানোর সময়ে এবং মাংস কাটার সময় যেন কোনো ক্ষতিকর অণুজীব মাংসে যুক্ত না হতে পারে সেটা নিশ্চিত করতে হবে। কুকুর, বিড়াল, হাঁস-মুরগি, পোকামাকড়, মাছি বা অন্যান্য প্রাণী দ্বারা মাংসকে যেন কোনো অণুজীব সংক্রমণ না হয় সেদিকে বিশেষ নজর দিতে হবে।
- মাংস কাটার সময়ে প্রাণীর শরীরের কোনো রোগাক্রান্ত অংশ পাওয়া গেলে সতর্কতার সঙ্গে সেটা আলাদা করে ফেলতে হবে। আলাদা করা অংশটুকু স্বাস্থ্যসম্মত উপায়ে মাটি চাপা দেয়ার ব্যবস্থা নিতে হবে।
- মাংস সংগ্রহ শেষে জবাইয়ের স্থান ও মাংস প্রক্রিয়াকরণের স্থান জীবাণুমুক্ত করতে হবে এবং বর্জ্য অপসারণের ব্যবস্থা নিতে হবে।
- কাঁচা মাংস ৪ ঘণ্টার বেশি সময় স্বাভাবিক তাপমাত্রায় (Room Temperature) সংরক্ষণ করা থেকে বিরত থাকুন।
- সবসময় কাঁচা ও রান্না করা মাংস আলাদা আলাদা স্থানে রাখুন। কাঁচা মাংসে থাকা ক্ষতিকর অণুজীব রান্না করা মাংসে সংক্রমিত (Cross Contamination) হতে পারে।
- মাংসের রক্ত ধুয়ে, ভালো মতো পানি ঝরিয়ে তারপর সংরক্ষণ করুন।
- সংরক্ষণের জন্য সঠিকভাবে মাংসে জ্বাল দিয়ে রাখতে হবে এবং ছয় ঘণ্টা পরপর সেটা পুনরায় জ্বাল দেয়া হলে মাংস নষ্ট হওয়ার ঝুঁকি কম থাকে।

পুষ্টিমান বজায় রেখে রান্না ও পরিমিত খাদ্যাভ্যাস

- রান্নার আগেই মাংসের দৃশ্যমান চর্বি কেটে আলাদা করে ফেললে অতিরিক্ত চর্বির ক্ষতিকর প্রভাব এড়ানো যায়।
- রান্নার সময় মাংসের টুকরোগুলো ছোট করে কাটলে সেই সঙ্গে মাংসটি টক দই, লেবুর রস, সিরকা, পেঁপে বাটা দিয়ে মেখে রাখলে একদিকে যেমন কম সময়ে মাংস সেদ্ধ হয়, তেমনি মাংসের চর্বির ক্ষতিকর প্রভাব অনেকটাই কমিয়ে যায়।
- ঈদ ও ঈদ পরবর্তী সময়ে খাবারের মধ্যে মাংসের পাশাপাশি কিছু আঁশযুক্ত খাবার রাখা ভালো যেমন, শাক-সবজি, বিভিন্ন ফল বা ফলের সালাদ ইত্যাদি। মাংস সাধারণ সময়ের চেয়ে বেশি খাওয়ার ফলে অনেক সময় কোষ্ঠকাঠিন্য দেখা যায়। আঁশজাতীয় খাবার খেলে এই ধরনের জটিলতা কম হবে।
- লাল মাংসে (Red Meat-গরু,খাসি প্রভৃতি প্রাণীর মাংস) হজমে দেহের প্রচুর পানি পরিশোষিত হয়। তাই দৈনিক অন্তত ৮-১৪ গ্লাস পানি অথবা ২.৫-৩.৫ লিটার পানি পান করুন। পাশাপাশি তাজা ফলের শরবত, ইসবগুলের ভুষি ও অন্যান্য তরল খাবার বেশি করে খাওয়া স্বাস্থ্যের জন্য উপকারী।
- কোরবানির দিনে অন্যান্য সময়ের তুলনায় মাংস বেশি খাওয়া হয়। তাই অতিরিক্ত ক্যালরি পোড়াতে প্রতিদিন নিয়মিত হাঁটা বা ব্যায়াম (শারীরিক পরিশ্রম) করা ভালো।
- প্রাণীর মগজ, কলিজা সেই সঙ্গে ভোলে সবচেয়ে বেশি চর্বি থাকে, তাই খাওয়ার সময় সেগুলো পরিমিত খাওয়াই ভাল।
- লাল মাংসে "Saturated Fat" বা সম্পৃক্ত চর্বি বেশি পরিমাণে থাকে। এটি অতিরিক্ত গ্রহণ করলে ওজন বাড়ার পাশাপাশি রক্তনালিতে চর্বি জমার ঝুঁকি সৃষ্টি হয়, যার ফলে রক্তচাপ, স্ট্রোক ও হার্ট অ্যাটাকের ঝুঁকি বাড়ে। তাই পরিমিত পরিমাণে মাংস গ্রহণ করা স্বাস্থ্যের জন্য উপকারী।

খাদ্য ও পুষ্টি সংক্রান্ত বিভিন্ন পরামর্শ পেতে অনুসরণ করুন বারটান সোশাল মিডিয়া অ্যাকাউন্ট সমূহ
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TEESTA RIVER MANAGEMENT
Govt mulling feasibility study to secure Chinese loan

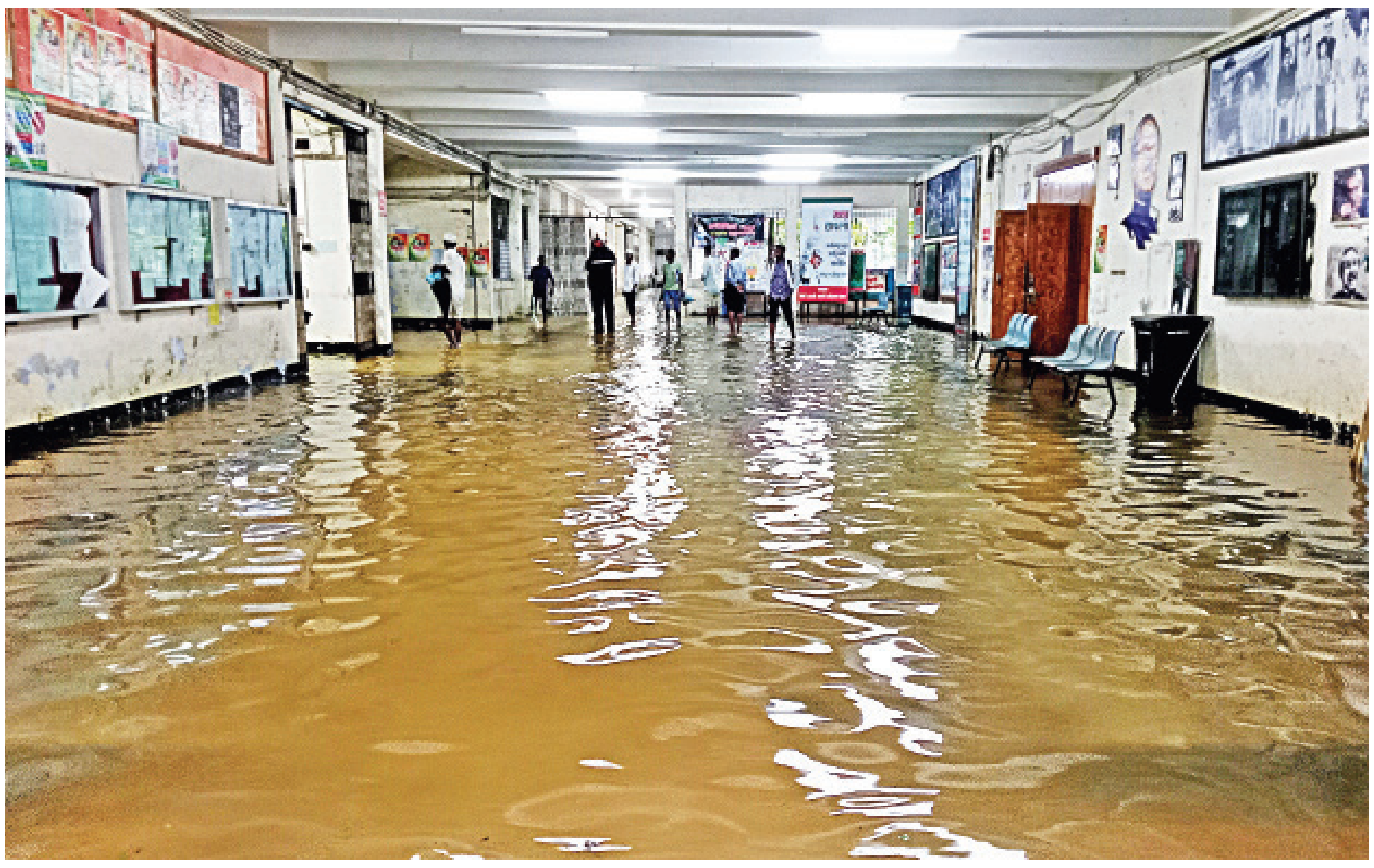
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina informed the parliament on Wednesday that the government is considering a proposal for a detailed feasibility study for the implementation of the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project.

To implement the Tk 821 billion project, the government prepared a Preliminary Development Project Proposal (PDPP) and submitted it to the Economic Relations Division (ERD) to secure foreign funding, Hasina, also leader of the House, said in response to a question from Kurigram-2 MP Md Hamidul Haque Khandker.

"At the 51st meeting of an ERD committee, which is responsible for mobilising foreign funds, it was

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4



People wading through ankle-deep water at the outdoor department of Osmani Medical College Hospital in Sylhet city yesterday. Incessant rains since Wednesday night have left the hospital, along with many other areas, waterlogged, disrupting services and causing immense sufferings to the patients, attendants and doctors. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

RMG worker stabbed to death by muggers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gazipur*

A garment worker was stabbed to death by muggers in Gazipur's Konabari area Wednesday night.

The deceased, Ruby Khatun, 22, was a junior operator in the trimming section of Shanon Sweater Limited, said Roknuzzaman Sarkar, sub-inspector (SI) of Konabari Police Station.

Quoting witnesses, the SI said the incident occurred around 8:15pm on the Dhaka-Tangail Highway when three muggers on a motorcycle intercepted Ruby on an auto-rickshaw and tried to snatch her phone. When she resisted, they stabbed her and fled the scene.

BURIMARI LAND PORT
Trade to remain shut for 7 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

The export and import activities through Burimari Land Port in Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat will remain suspended for seven days from tomorrow on account of Eid-ul-Azha.

Mehedi Hasan, assistant director of the Bangladesh Land Port Authorities at Burimari Land Port, said the movement of passport-holding travellers through the check-post will continue as usual.

He added that trade activities through the Burimari Land Port will resume on June 22.

Free rein for gold smugglers in Jhenaidah

FROM PAGE 1

"We don't have to do anything. The smuggling syndicate members do all the job," he said.

According to intelligence and police sources, about 40 bikers are engaged in carrying consignments to Jashore and Jhenidah borders.

"We deliver the consignment to a designated place at the border, where another carrier receives it. The consignment is then smuggled into India considering the border security situation," a second carrier said.

According to him, the carriers at the border who smuggle the gold into India get Tk 1 to Tk 2 lakh, depending on the consignment size.

Most carriers have gone into hiding after Bangladesh and India police opened an investigation into the murder mystery surrounding Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim Anar in Kolkata, although a number of consignments crossed into India in recent days, according to sources.

Azim was one of the influential kingpins who used to control the smuggling racket since Maheshpur became a safe gateway, as parts of its border with India have no fence, according to four carriers, three local elected representatives and an intelligence source.

AZIM: INVENTOR OF TOKEN SYSTEM

Gold smuggling through this border has been taking place for the last four to five decades, with Azim assuming a leading role about 10 years ago, they said.

But long before that, he started smuggling gold into India through a group of bikers in 1986, when he was a student and actively involved with the Purbo Banglar Communist Party, according to an intelligence source.

Over time, he came up with the idea of recruiting salaried carriers and introducing a token system for law enforcers, the intelligence source adds.

The token system works as a gate pass: when carriers produce it, law enforcers do not "disturb" them. In exchange, the law enforcers get a "handsome cut".

Abul Kalam Azad, chairman of Barobazar Union Parishad, said he is aware of the token system.

"Law enforcers would not stop the bike once you showed the token. But those days are gone now that we have declared a war against smuggling," he told The Daily Star.

According to the intelligence source, Azad was once part of Azim's racket, an allegation Azad rejected.

"I am not involved with gold smuggling," he said, even before this newspaper could finish asking him the question about his link.

Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Maheshpur Police Station, denied having any facilitating role in the smuggling operations.

"We do not know about any token system. Police along with the Border Guard Bangladesh are working round the clock to stop all sorts of smuggling, including gold," he said.

A HOTSPOT

A senior police official in the district admitted that Maheshpur is a hotspot for smuggling gold into India. "But we often cannot take action as public representatives are involved."

According to police sources, smuggled gold enters Bangladesh mainly from Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Singapore and Malaysia through Dhaka, Sylhet and Chattogram airports.

A significant portion of the gold is then smuggled into India through Chuadanga, Jashore and Jhenaidah borders, with Jhenidah's Matila border point being one of the most preferred routes. Sometimes, the racket uses rail routes as well, police sources said.

Instead of directly smuggling gold into India from other countries, smugglers use Bangladesh as a transit route as both the legal system and payment method involving gold are stricter in the neighbouring country.

MASTERMIND UNTOUCHED

Over the years, police and BGB members seized some gold consignments and arrested some carriers, but the masterminds have always remained untouched.

Any information leak, even the possibility of it, can lead to murders.

On January 17 this year, two men were shot dead in Baghadanga village of Maheshpur following a dispute over a gold consignment.

According to police and local journalists, the killings are linked to a gold consignment weighing 4.66 kilogrammes.

The 58 BGB battalion seized the consignment in the morning and the two were killed in the afternoon. It later emerged that the consignment's owner fled to India after the incident.

OC Mahbubur Rahman said an investigation into the matter is underway.

Local BGB seized around 38.4 kgs of gold in 2022, around 37.56 kgs in 2023, and 27 kgs in the first three months of this year.

At least 30 people were arrested in connection with the seizures and 25 cases were filed, but police could not track down a single mastermind in any of the cases.

Incidents of any gold carriers facing punishments are also rare. In the last 10 years, only two carriers have been handed a one-year jail term and a fine of Tk 50,000 each.

Lt Col Shah Md Azizush Shahid, commander of the Maheshpur 58 BGB battalion, said in most cases, they can only arrest the carriers.

"We cannot track down the mastermind as we are not an investigation agency. We simply hand the arrestees over to the police, who carry out the probe," he said.

Bangladesh may lose a third of agri output by 2050

FROM PAGE 1

continue to be hampered by climate change," the WB said in the report.

Green growth -- which balances economic prosperity with environmental compliance, benefits and protection -- can be a strong and sustainable driver of growth.

Subsequently, the report proposed nine key policy directions that aim to achieve three overarching objectives: effective environmental governance and energy transition, new engines and skills for green growth and a just transition to a resilient, green and healthy society.

The policy directions include strengthening environmental governance, promoting renewable energy trade, promoting inclusive connectivity through green transport and logistics systems, investing in green industries and human capital, and improving public health and wellbeing, among others.

It is important that all the recommended policies work together for them to be successful, the report said.

"Global experience shows that growth that harms the environment cannot be sustained. On the other hand, green growth can offer a strong and effective way to reduce poverty while safeguarding our environment, essentially serving as a catalyst for growth," said Abdoulaye Seck, the WB's country director for Bhutan and Bangladesh.

Highlighting several shortcomings of budget implementation in climate financing, the report says Bangladesh has multiple environmental laws, regulations and plans and yet demonstrates weak performance in environmental management.

Implementation challenges primarily relate to two issues.

One is a case for prioritisation of public investment within the annual development programme managed by the planning ministry together with line ministries.

Second, limited coordination exists between the ADP formulation process and the annual budget process, which is managed by the finance ministry.

"These shortcomings have resulted in an inefficient public investment management system, with insufficient budgetary allocations to investment projects and a low execution rate," the WB said in the report.

Bangladesh's climate-related allocation currently stands at 7.5 percent of the total budget or 0.8 percent of GDP.

The report also highlighted weaknesses in Bangladesh's financial sector weaknesses.

Structural weaknesses in Bangladesh's banking system and institutional bottlenecks pose some of the biggest challenges to increasing the volume and range of green financing instruments, resulting in green investments being perceived as riskier than non-green ones.

"Borrowers face huge hurdles in adopting and financing green practices, resulting in insufficient financial flows and an inadequate pipeline of projects," the WB said.

The report also proposed investing in urban mass transit systems that are green, accessible, reliable and inclusive.

It also called for implementing green building policies and guidelines, promoting the use of electronic vehicles (2/3 wheelers) for inclusive green growth, and promoting pedestrian and bicycle-friendly urban streets.

St Martin's running out of supplies

FROM PAGE 1

Stocks were running out, resulting in prices skyrocketing.

Fierce clashes were going on between Myanmar junta forces and the rebel Arakan Army in Rakhine state.

Locals of Teknaf said they spent a sleepless night on Wednesday as the sounds of heavy explosions from Myanmar shook their neighbourhoods until 4:00pm yesterday.

A local, Abdur Rahman, said the explosions were so loud that people in his neighbourhood were in a state of panic.

Residents of Teknaf said two Myanmarese warships reached the Naf, on the Myanmar side across Shah Porir Dwip, Wednesday afternoon and then the fighting intensified.

Quoting local public representatives, Teknaf UNO Adnan said warplanes and helicopters were used and at least 300 explosions were heard.

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh and Bangladesh Coast Guard are on alert, he added.

Meanwhile, about 280 people -- mostly labourers who had gone to the island for work -- reached Teknaf on small boats, said Abdur Rashid, president of Trawler Owners' Association of Teknaf-St Martin's route.

The boats avoided the Naf, where the water is usually calm, and reached the west side of Shah Porir Dwip braving the choppy sea.

Kefayet Ullah, a journalist of St Martin's Island, said the sea was rough and travelling on a fishing trawler could be risky.

But many locals of the island who had been stuck in Teknaf braved the rough sea and went home on fishing trawlers.

Meanwhile, Dhaka has written to Naypyidaw, protesting incidents of shooting at Bangladeshi trawlers between Teknaf and the St Martin's Island.

Nobody of Bangladesh should be targeted, a foreign ministry official told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that Bangladesh had protested incidents of shelling inside its territory before.

"Any conflict inside Myanmar is their internal affair, but that should not affect the people and properties in Bangladesh," the official said.

The conflict between the Myanmar junta force and the Arakan Army intensified since February. The junta troops had to step back and many fled to Bangladesh during battles.

The Arakan Army states that the objective of its armed revolution is to restore the sovereignty of the Arakan people.

Rejoinder, our reply

FROM PAGE 1

was working for last 06 (six) months on the Airbus was given the responsibility to evaluate the earlier report and submit its report.

It is worth mentioning that no new committee/second committee was formed rather due to normal retirement of the Committee Chairman from the service, then the Co-Chairman was given the responsibility of the existing TFC.

The same TFC applied the standard apps used by other airlines in calculating fluctuation of prices like cost of ticket, fuel and other incidental expenses and earning. So the TFC did not make a U-turn as alleged rather used technology to provide right picture about the purchase.

The report also mentions that Biman is a losing concern about which we would like to state firmly that Biman is always on the operational profit and has been able to pay all its dues and installments to all the foreign companies including Boeing.

It is noteworthy that, Biman Bangladesh Airlines is a 100% state-owned national flag carrier limited company and fully covers all operating expenses including aircraft purchase, payment of advance installments and maintenance related expenses with its own income.

Biman is being rated AAA long term rating by Dun & Bradstreet South Asia Middle East Ltd., a renowned US credit rating agency. During Covid pandemic Biman was given BDT1000 Crore by the Government as loan under incentive package but The Daily Star failed to mention that the amount with interest was paid back to the Government in less than 01 (one) year.

Besides, there are standard laid down policies for purchasing new aircraft to the fleet. Aircraft procurement process is conducted by following the said policy without any deviation. Discussions with Airbus have recently started with the signing of a Joint Communique on the acquisition of Airbus and mutual cooperation in the aviation sector.

At the same time, discussions are ongoing with Biman's long-time tested business partner, the aircraft manufacturer Boeing Company. The final decision will be made public through press briefing after the conclusion of due internal process. Besides, as part of the expansion process, the pilot recruitment program is currently ongoing.

The national flag carrier, Biman Bangladesh Airlines has been providing regular passenger and cargo services as well as operating Hajj flights, VVIP flights, UN mission flights and special flights on various national and international calamities like Covid-19.

With a fleet of only 21 (twenty-one) state-of-the-art aircraft, Biman Bangladesh Airlines currently operates regular flights to 23 (twenty-three) international and 8 (eight) domestic destinations despite many limitations. Recently, 04 (four) new routes have been launched by the existing 21 (twenty-one) aircraft. It may be noted here that out of 21 (twenty-one) aircraft, only 10 (ten) are used for long range, 06 (six) short range and 05 (five) domestic destinations.

In order to increase the number of passengers by air, in the coming days, Biman Bangladesh Airlines is constantly working to expand the passenger services to destinations like Male, Kunming, New York, Sydney, Wuhan, Jakarta, Seoul etc. Due to various reasons, it has not been possible to add the required number of aircraft to the fleet till now. As a result, it is not possible to launch flights on many attractive routes despite of huge demand.

In order to increase the network and quality of passenger services in keeping pace with the increasing passengers demand, a plan has already been adopted to expand the aircraft fleet from 21 (twenty-one) to 47 (forty-seven) by 2035. For this purpose, the process of reviewing the proposals of the aircraft manufacturers is ongoing as per the guidelines of the Biman Board of Directors and the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism.

In order to cope with the competitive aviation business and to operate business profitably, when a process for procurement of aircraft is underway to implement future fleet expansion which is expected to go through various stages before finalization, such kind of news are being used to mislead the public with ill intention by making concocted story with speculative and unsubstantiated information.

Such kinds of news damages the image of the state flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines. Biman Bangladesh Airlines is a state-owned airline which sometimes has to operate under the requirement of the nation. Biman's Positive contribution seldom gets media coverage.

A case in point is the recent Malaysian Flights where Biman charged only about BDT70,000 whereas other airlines charged over BDT100,000 per passenger. The Daily Star failed to report this comparison to the public.

Biman has consistently maintained its success as a profitable company. Biman has been making profit consistently especially in the last three years (post-Covid period) and is operating profitably in the current fiscal year as well.

In such a situation, Biman Management urges all concerned to stop publishing misleading news that creates negative impression in the public mind based on unsupported, partial and false information and refrain from trying to hinder the development of Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

THE DAILY STAR'S RESPONSE

Only selective portions of Biman's 854-word rejoinder directly pertains to the report in question while the rest is details in length the many achievements of the national flag carrier, which are not relevant to the topic at hand.

The Daily Star acknowledges the usage of the term "new committee" and only in that regard, we stand corrected – but we still stand by the fact that reconstituted committee did not have the same members.

While the chairman of the committee retired and went back to his mother organisation (Bangladesh Air Force) in the time period between the two reports, that is hardly the only change in constitution of the committee.

The general manager of finance and accounts, the general manger of internal audit, a deputy secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism (MoCAT) and the dean of aviation standardisation of the regulations and safety department from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University (BSMRAAU) were noticeably missing from the reconstituted committee.

The reconstituted (second) committee additionally had the director of engineering and material management, the deputy general manager of cost and budget, the dean of the faculty of aviation engineering and technology of BSMRAAU, and a senior assistant secretary from MoCAT – all new faces in the committee that produced the second report.

The first committee had 20 members, meaning 25 percent of the committee was reconstituted for the second evaluation.

Given that the reconstituted committee had three days to overturn the evaluation, the four new members out of 19 hardly had any time to fully acquaint themselves with the complex research this issue required and come to a conclusion.

The fact still remains, that this committee was given such a short time – which was not contested by the rejoinder – to evaluate a multimillion dollar deal that will impact the aviation sector in next two decades to follow.

The rejoinder said that the technofinancial committee used "technology" and "standard apps" to provide the "right picture" about the purchase – both vague terms. This begs the question – was the first committee not using technology to create their extremely detailed and technically exhaustive report?

A comparison between the two reports that they are differ mainly in two regards: the cash-flow statement and the recommendation about whether or not to procure the aircrafts.

The two reports are almost identical in the sections detailing the challenges of inducting Airbus planes, and the estimates of investment required.

This includes the cost estimates for maintenance, cost estimates for training and recruitment, and details on how the planes will be financed and what the financial packages will be.

This raises the question – if "technology" was used to arrive at different finding for profit and loss, then why are the sections on evaluation of investment estimates identical? At no point in its second evaluation report or Biman's rejoinder has Biman shown how it overcame these investment challenges to arrive at the net profit estimates that it did.

About losses – the newspaper simply detailed out which sectors were not profitable, and cited audit objections made by the government's Commercial Audit Directorate that were submitted to a Parliamentary Standing Committee.

The Directorate's report said that in the 2022-23 fiscal, Biman Bangladesh Airlines made a net loss of Tk 259.1 million (Tk 25 crore 91 lakh) in its main airline business. The report also detailed that Biman concealed its liabilities, e.g. money owed to Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.

The rejoinder stated that a plan has already been adopted to expand the aircraft fleet from 21 (twenty-one) to 47 (forty-seven) by 2035. The Daily Star is in possession of documents showing that at the time of publication, the Biman Fleet Planning Committee's permission had not been taken before making strides in procuring Airbus planes, a deviation from Biman's own procurement policy.

The Daily Star stands by its report.

Israeli forces

FROM PAGE 12

the offensive that began on October 7, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement yesterday. Some 30 Palestinians were killed in the previous 24 hours, the ministry added.

In a statement early yesterday, Hamas urged Blinken to put "direct pressure" on Israel for permanent Gaza ceasefire.

"He continues to talk about Israel's agreement of the latest (ceasefire) proposal, but we have not heard any Israeli official speak out on this," it said.

Israel is standing behind a ceasefire proposal for the eight-month-old offensive in the Gaza Strip, White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said yesterday, and the goal is to bridge gaps with Hamas and get to a deal soon.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a Group of Seven (G7) meeting of leaders in southern Italy, Sullivan said the world should encourage the Palestinian group to accept the proposal and avoid stalemate.

The offensive in Gaza has led to widespread destruction of homes and other infrastructure, with hospitals out of service and the UN warning of famine.

Singer's commitment to improving quality of life

MHM Fairoz
Managing Director and CEO
Singer Bangladesh Ltd.

What trends are you observing in consumer behaviour during this Eid season? Which types of home appliances have the highest demand? Can you share any projections or expectations for this year's Eid sales compared to the previous years?

Singer Bangladesh Ltd. is one of the leading consumer durable companies in the country. We have always catered to the needs of consumers in our 118 years of operation in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has immense potential to become the 9th biggest economy in the world by 2030. We are also aiming to become a $1 trillion economy by 2040. We are preparing to become a part of this growth journey. With the growth of the economy, consumer behaviours are also changing rapidly.

SINGER | beko
Concept Store

This Eid season, consumers are looking for refrigerators with more capacity. Simultaneously, customers are also looking for appliances at affordable prices. Direct-cool refrigerators have always had a higher demand. The demand for no-frost refrigerators is also increasing. Eid-ul-Adha always comes with an increasing demand for deep freezers, which has remained the same.

As the T20 World Cup is ongoing, there is a good demand for LED TVs as well. We have our flagship Singer Primax series to serve these needs. Customers are also looking for variations in appliances like microwave ovens and grinders. We are expecting a substantial growth in sales compared to the previous year.

What special offers or promotions is Singer introducing for customers this Eid?

Singer is offering a wide array of consumer promotions for Eid-ul-Adha. As you know, Turkish superstar Burak Özçivit is now the brand ambassador of Singer Beko's consumer brand. During his visit to Bangladesh, some of our customers had a chance to meet him. The opportunity to fly to Istanbul to meet him is also up for grabs.

We are also offering up to a 100 percent discount on refrigerators and freezers through scratch cards and up to Tk 20,000 discount in exchange offers on selective models. We are offering refrigerators starting at only a monthly instalment of Tk 1,677.

Customers can also purchase the Singer LED TV and get a chance to win one for free. We are offering up to a 12 percent discount on Singer Green inverter AC.

How do you anticipate the recent national budget will impact the home appliances market, both in terms of consumer spending and the cost of business? From your perspective, what are the key challenges and opportunities facing the home appliances industry in the coming years, and how is Singer preparing for them?

In our 118 years of operations, we have always been compliant with government policies. However, we are concerned about the proposed budgetary changes for the 2024-25 fiscal year, particularly the ones to potentially impact the step-down tax exemption for 10 years (SRO 104 of 2020), and customs and VAT incentives offered to the unit investors of the private economic zones.

BEZA has been instrumental in attracting significant investments to Bangladesh's Economic Zones based on the Tax Exemption, Customs and VAT incentives framework. The concept of the economic zone is a milestone towards planned industrialization in Bangladesh, which will certainly lead to accelerated revenue mobilization in the future. In response to the government's planned industrialization initiatives, Singer Bangladesh Ltd. invested $78 million in the Bangladesh Special Economic Zones (BSEZ) and a step-down tax exemption for 10 years was the cornerstone of the decision-making process. The latest budget proposal can potentially hamper the prospect and feasibility of this investment.

Operating costs within private economic zones are significantly higher due to the rental/lease model with an upfront payment of the entire lease value. This leaves a zero asset base in the end. Fiscal incentives may partially offset these additional expenses. Withdrawing tax exemption for private economic zones could negatively impact the profitability and competitive edge of our ongoing project right before it opens commercial operation. This uncertainty could discourage future investments as well.

We expect that the government will go through with the promised tax exemption and other incentives for the investors, who are already committed to projects under the current framework. This will uphold a favourable investment climate in BEZA and ensure the financial viability of ongoing ventures.

Can you share any upcoming product innovations or technological advancements that Singer is working on to meet future consumer demands and stay ahead in the market?

Earlier this year, Singer Bangladesh announced a series of transformations, including a state-of-the-art manufacturing plant, a unique concept store, and a workspace representing the company's new vision. These transformations brought Koç Group and Arcelik's global expertise and standards to Bangladesh and enhanced the consumer experience. This transformation also signifies that Singer Beko will be introducing global contemporary technologies for our consumers. Our operational knowledge enables us to better understand the needs of Bangladeshi consumers, which is why we have always been relevant in the market.

What is your long-term vision for Singer, and how do you plan to achieve sustainable growth in the coming decade?

We aim to improve the consumer durables industry and the quality of life for our fellow citizens. Bangladesh has the eighth largest population in the world and offers enormous potential with its ever-expanding middle class and young population. By combining our technology and research and development capacity on a global scale, we are developing products that match the specific needs of consumers in Bangladesh.

SINGER | beko
Eid Special Offer
on Refrigerator and Freezer
Up to 100% Discount on Scratch Card
Exchange Offer Up to 20,000 Tk.
EMI starts from only 1,677 TK.
HOT OFFER
Up to 5,500 Tk. Discount on 260L and 230L
Get a Chance to Win 4 Days 3 Nights Trip to Istanbul!
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*Conditions Apply

Death anniv of Habibur Rahman Milon

CITY DESK

Today is the 9th death anniversary of Habibur Rahman Milon, a journalist and columnist, said a press release.

Milon was the chairman of the Press Institute of Bangladesh and the president of the unified Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ). He was also one of the founders of Bangabandhu Parishad.

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Born in Sarail, Brahmanbaria, in 1935, Milon was honoured with the Ekushey Padak in 2012 for his contributions to journalism.

He passed away on June 14, 2015.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 14

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-30	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Bridge lies incomplete for two years

Commuters forced to use earthen diversion road

SUZIT DAS, *from Rajbari*

Commuters in Rajbari Sadar upazila have been suffering for over two years as construction work of a new bridge over the Mora Kumar river was abandoned by the contractor firm after they demolished the old bridge there.

Local Government Engineering Department in the upazila took the initiative to demolish the old girder bridge on the river connecting Kolarhat-Nimtala road in December 2021, and replace it with a new 20-metre-long and 7.33-metre-wide bridge at a cost of Tk 1,89,71,000.

A contractor firm from Barishal, Rupali Construction, was awarded the tender for the project, slated to be completed by June 2023.

After demolishing the old bridge and making a narrow, earthen diversion road for vehicles to cross over during the project duration, the contractors, however, abandoned the work and left the site.

The Kolarhat-Nimtala road connects Rajbari district headquarters to the rest of the district. Also, Dhaka-bound passenger buses and other vehicles from Rajbari and Faridpur use the road. Since the old bridge was demolished, plying of buses, trucks, private cars, ambulances, and all other four-wheelers has remained suspended.

At present, commuters can only use rickshaws and easy-bikes on the unpaved diversion road to cross the river and get on other vehicles.

Visiting Kolarhat area recently, this correspondent saw an around 20 feet deep ditch was dug on Kolarhat-Nimtala road for construction of the new bridge, with the diversion road beside it to allow small vehicles to ply. However, there was no signboard on the road.

"It is very difficult to use the unpaved diversion road as wheels of vehicles get stuck in deep mud and get damaged if it rains," said Mizan Sheikh, 33, a rickshaw-van puller.

Md Afzal Mollah, 24, a truck driver, said they now have to travel 7-9 kilometres more to reach their destinations from Kolarhat Bazar as they cannot use the diversion road.

Sohidul Islam, 25, owner of a shop at Kolarhat Bazar, said, "There are nearly 725 shops on both ends of the spot where the old bridge used to be. Our businesses are severely affected in absence of the bridge to connect to the road."

Md Seken Mollah, 55, a grocer, echoed him.

Contacted, AKM Rafiqul Islam, senior assistant engineer of LGED in Rajbari, said they cancelled the work order to Rupali Construction and fined them Tk 16.61 lakh for abandoning work.

"We also issued a re-tender for the bridge's construction. Hopefully the work will begin soon," he added.

Air pollution behind rise in asthma cases: Saber

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Increasing number of asthma patients in Bangladesh is directly linked to high levels of air pollution, said Environment Minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury in parliament yesterday.

He was responding to a query from Awami League MP M Abdul Latif during a question-answer session.

Regarding illegal brick kilns, the minister disclosed that significant enforcement actions have been taken. "From April 2019 to April this year, 2,338 drives were conducted against illegal brick kilns," he said.

These efforts resulted in 4,436 cases being filed and 98 individuals sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, with fines totaling Tk 111.50 crore, Saber added.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Anisul Huq told parliament that among 12 cadet colleges in the country, three are only three girls' cadet colleges. He also said there are none in the southern region.

Besides, Civil Aviation Minister Muhammad Faruk Khan told the House it is not true that Biman flights operate with empty seats.

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MIRANZILLA HARIJAN COLONY

Don't evict residents: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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The HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Md Atabullah issued the order following a petition seeking necessary directives.

The court asked the DSCC to make alternative arrangements for the residents and then take the initiative to move them.

60 eminent citizens protest the eviction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sixty eminent citizens have expressed their anger over Dhaka South City Corporation's attempt to evict the Harijan community of Miranzilla City Colony without providing rehabilitation.

"This colony in Bangshal is 400 years old, where thousands of people are living in inhumane conditions. The Harijan community also believes that the mayor's decision to evict them from the colony amounts to a severe violation of human rights," they said in a statement yesterday.

Sultana Kamal and Rasheda K Chowdhury, advisors of the former caretaker government, Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori, Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB, ZI Khan Panna, advocate at the Supreme Court, lawyer Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad, and Syeda Rizwana Hasan, executive director of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, were among the signatories.

Invitation to BID (ITB)
Ultra-Portable X-ray System with Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Tender Ref. No: icddr,b/SCM/OTM/24/06/NS-24-2646 **Date: June 13, 2024**

icddr,b invites renowned equipment manufacturers and authorized agents/ distributors to participate in the bid for the supply and installation of 10 (Ten) units of Ultra-Portable X-ray System with Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the USAID's Alliance for Combating TB in Bangladesh Activity.

Bid documents are available in web address below:
https://www.icddrb.org/work-with-us/tender-notices

Pre-Bid Meeting: A Pre-bid meeting will be held on June 24, 2024, at 3:00 PM (BST) via Microsoft Teams. Interested bidders must notify icddr,b of their interest in participating in the Pre-bid session by emailing **[tenderquery@icddrb.org]** by **4:00 PM (BST) on June 23, 2024**. Please mention **'Bid Reference'** and **'Pre-Bid Participation for Ultra-Portable X-ray System'** in the email subject line.

Bid Submission: Bidders shall submit their password-protected Technical and Financial bids via email to **[tender@icddrb.org]**. Bids must be received no later than **July 03, 2024, by 4:00 PM (BST)**. The bids will be opened at **4:30 PM (BST)** on the same day in presence of the bidders, if any. Please refer to the bid document for further details.

icddr,b reserves the right to accept or reject any bid wholly or partly without assigning reasons. This ITB will be part of the contract and binding upon the bidder.

icddr,b

Senior Manager, Supply Chain Management
Tel: +88 02 222277001-10, Ext# 4414/4404/4400

EXIM

Export Import Bank
of Bangladesh PLC.

Registered Office: 'EXIM Bank Tower', Plot # 15, Road # 15,
Block # CWS (C), Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh

Price Sensitive Information

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of the Company in its 195th meeting held on 13 June 2024, commencing from 3:00 p.m., has taken the following decision, which may be considered as price sensitive information:

"The Board of Directors of the Bank has accorded its approval for issuance of EXIM 6th Subordinated Bond for Tk.300.00 (Three Hundred) Crore only as a process of inclusion in Tier-II capital for a period of 7 (seven) years through private placement subject to the approval of the Regulatory Authorities and compliance of all formalities in this respect."

Dated, Dhaka
13 June 2024.

By order of the Board
Sd/-
Md. Monirul Islam
Company Secretary

Office of the Planning & Development
University of Dhaka.

Fax-88-02-55167810
E-mail- vcoffice@du.ac.bd
registrar@du.ac.bd

INVITATION FOR ON LINE TENDER.
(OPEN TENDERING METHOD)

Memo No.: P&D/PRESS/PDO/EQUIPMENT/2023-24/39/1325 Date : 12/06/2024.

1	Name of Work	Supply & Installation of Desktop Computers, Laptop, Printer, Air-Conditioner & CC Cameras (Lot by Lot wise).
14	Price of Tender Document	5,500/- (Five Thousand Five Hundred) to be deposited as per Instructions stated in website.
3	Tender Closing Date & Time	26/06/2024 Time up to 12.00 Noon.
4	Tender Opening Date & Time	26/06/2024 Time- 12.30 Pm
5	Tender Opening Place	E-Tender Room, 1st floor, Administrative Bldg. University of Dhaka.
6	Tender Published on Website	http:// e-tender.univdhaka.edu

12.06.24
(Md. Amir Hossain Bhuiyan)
Project Director,
University of Dhaka.

GD-1001

Green Field Factory

FROM PAGE 5

ventilation to the interior. Surrounding the factory and on the parkland, roof are more gardens and courtyards creating places of calm relaxation, social interaction and recreation.

SHAH MUHAMMAD MOHSIN KHAN MAUSOLEUM

This uplifting, light dappled mausoleum in Manikganj is built for the local community.

Located in the grounds of a family home, this structure was built to preserve the client's father's memory and continue his legacy. A single space, with a simple palette of materials, is elevated to a spiritual level through the manipulation of light entering the contemplative space. The plan and circular turreted motif is inspired by the multi domed mosques of the Sultani period.

Established in 2015, the RIBA International Prize is one of architecture's highest global accolades.

The 22 award-winning buildings are spread across 14 countries.

Revise CSA before

FROM PAGE 5

but lacks sufficient technical expertise at lower levels. He warned that this imbalance could hinder organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

The rules also fail to specify inter-agency collaboration procedures and stakeholder engagement strategies, which Supan argues are essential for effective cyber-security management.

Regional Director of Article-19, Sheikh Manjur-E-Alam, criticised the government's approach to hastily implement laws without thorough consideration and finalisation.

"Implementing rules based on a flawed law will not yield any positive results," he added.

The speakers highlighted the urgent need for substantial revisions to the Cyber Security Act, 2023, before the implementation of the draft Cyber Security Rules, 2024.

DNCC, DSCC gear up

FROM PAGE 5

on-site to clean the areas after waste collection.

Abu Nasher, spokesperson for DSCC, said, "We will take all measures to ensure waste disposal during Eid. We also want help from residents. If they help us, it will be easier."

Meanwhile, DNCC will deploy 9,337 employees for the waste management task.

On the first day of Eid, 480 vehicles will be utilised.

DNCC will distribute one lakh eco-friendly biodegradable bags along with bleaching powder and disinfectants.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh assured the public that the waste generated from sacrificial animals will be cleared within 24 hours.

DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam announced that they will dispose of sacrificial animal waste within six hours on Eid Day.

Negligence of ACs

FROM PAGE 5

"We have also instructed our area-based police officers to increase vigilance so that no untoward situations take place during the Eid holiday," he added.

The DMP also issued instructions for setting up check posts, which involve deploying enough officers on time, providing training to staff, investigating theft incidents, and having ACs monitor check post activities through mobile patrols coordinated with OCs.

A high official of the DMP said they are also working to install GPS trackers on the patrol cars so that no one can be insincere while deployed on duty.

Rajan Kumar Saha, assistant commissioner of the Badda Zone of DMP, said, "Zone-based force has been created ahead of Eid and the patrol team is working cautiously.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

অনবোর্ড সার্ভিস পরিচালনার জন্য উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

SR-5
SR-6

১। The Public Procurement Rules-2008

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S(24)(157)

GD- 1007

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Invitation to BID (ITB)
Ultra-Portable X-ray System with Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Tender Ref. No: icddr,b/SCM/OTM/24/06/NS-24-2646 Date: June 13, 2024

icddr,b invites renowned equipment manufacturers and authorized agents/ distributors to participate in the bid for the supply and installation of 10 (Ten) units of Ultra-Portable X-ray System with Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the USAID's Alliance for Combating TB in Bangladesh Activity.

Bid documents are available in web address below:
https://www.icddrb.org/work-with-us/tender-notices

Pre-Bid Meeting: A Pre-bid meeting will be held on June 24, 2024, at 3:00 PM (BST) via Microsoft Teams. Interested bidders must notify icddr,b of their interest in participating in the Pre-bid session by emailing **[tenderquery@icddrb.org]** by **4:00 PM (BST) on June 23, 2024**. Please mention **'Bid Reference'** and **'Pre-Bid Participation for Ultra-Portable X-ray System'** in the email subject line.

Bid Submission: Bidders shall submit their password-protected Technical and Financial bids via email to **[tender@icddrb.org]**. Bids must be received no later than **July 03, 2024, by 4:00 PM (BST)**. The bids will be opened at **4:30 PM (BST)** on the same day in presence of the bidders, if any. Please refer to the bid document for further details.

icddr,b reserves the right to accept or reject any bid wholly or partly without assigning reasons. This ITB will be part of the contract and binding upon the bidder.

icddr,b

Senior Manager, Supply Chain Management
Tel: +88 02 222277001-10, Ext# 4414/4404/4400

EXIM BANK
Shariah Based Islami Bank

Export Import Bank of Bangladesh PLC.

Registered Office: 'EXIM Bank Tower', Plot # 15, Road # 15,
Block # CWS (C) , Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh

Price Sensitive Information

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of the Company in its 195th meeting held on 13 June 2024, commencing from 3:00 p.m., has taken the following decision, which may be considered as price sensitive information:

> "The Board of Directors of the Bank has accorded its approval for issuance of EXIM 6th Subordinated Bond for Tk.300.00 (Three Hundred) Crore only as a process of inclusion in Tier-II capital for a period of 7 (seven) years through private placement subject to the approval of the Regulatory Authorities and compliance of all formalities in this respect."

Dated, Dhaka
13 June 2024.

By order of the Board
Sd/-
Md. Monirul Islam
Company Secretary

Office of the Planning & Development
University of Dhaka.

Fax-88-02-55167810
E-mail- vceoffice@du.ac.bd
registrar@du.ac.bd

INVITATION FOR ON LINE TENDER.
(OPEN TENDERING METHOD)

Memo No.: P&D/PRESS/PDO/EQUIPMENT/2023-24/38/1325 Date : 12/06/2024.

1	Name of Work	Supply & Installation of Desktop Computers, Laptop, Printer, Air-Conditioner & CC Camera (Lot by Lot wise).
14	Price of Tender Document	5,500/- (Five Thousand Five Hundred) to be deposited as per Instructions stated in website.
3	Tender Closing Date & Time	26/06/2024 Time up to 12.00 Noon.
4	Tender Opening Date & Time	26/06/2024 Time- 12.30 Pm
5	Tender Opening Place	E-Tender Room, 1st floor, Administrative Bldg. University of Dhaka.
6	Tender Published on Website	http:// e-tender.univdhaka.edu

12.06.24
(Md. Amir Hossain Bhuiyan)
Project Director,
University of Dhaka.

GD-1001

Green Field Factory

FROM PAGE 5

ventilation to the interior. Surrounding the factory and on the parkland, roof are more gardens and courtyards creating places of calm relaxation, social interaction and recreation.

SHAH MUHAMMAD MOHSIN KHAN MAUSOLEUM

This uplifting, light dappled mausoleum in Manikganj is built for the local community.

Located in the grounds of a family home, this structure was built to preserve the client's father's memory and continue his legacy. A single space, with a simple palette of materials, is elevated to a spiritual level through the manipulation of light entering the contemplative space. The plan and circular turreted motif is inspired by the multi domed mosques of the Sultani period.

Established in 2015, the RIBA International Prize is one of architecture's highest global accolades.

The 22 award-winning buildings are spread across 14 countries.

Revise CSA before

FROM PAGE 5

but lacks sufficient technical expertise at lower levels. He warned that this imbalance could hinder organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

The rules also fail to specify inter-agency collaboration procedures and stakeholder engagement strategies, which Supan argues are essential for effective cyber-security management.

Regional Director of Article-19, Sheikh Manjur-E-Alam, criticised the government's approach to hastily implement laws without thorough consideration and finalisation.

"Implementing rules based on a flawed law will not yield any positive results," he added.

The speakers highlighted the urgent need for substantial revisions to the Cyber Security Act, 2023, before the implementation of the draft Cyber Security Rules, 2024.

DNCC, DSCC gear up

FROM PAGE 5

on-site to clean the areas after waste collection.

Abu Nasher, spokesperson for DSCC, said, "We will take all measures to ensure waste disposal during Eid. We also want help from residents. If they help us, it will be easier."

Meanwhile, DNCC will deploy 9,337 employees for the waste management task.

On the first day of Eid, 480 vehicles will be utilised. DNCC will distribute one lakh eco-friendly biodegradable bags along with bleaching powder and disinfectants.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh assured the public that the waste generated from sacrificial animals will be cleared within 24 hours.

DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam announced that they will dispose of sacrificial animal waste within six hours on Eid Day.

Negligence of ACs

FROM PAGE 5

"We have also instructed our area-based police officers to increase vigilance so that no untoward situations take place during the Eid holiday," he added.

The DMP also issued instructions for setting up check posts, which involve deploying enough officers on time, providing training to staff, investigating theft incidents, and having ACs monitor check post activities through mobile patrols coordinated with OCs.

A high official of the DMP said they are also working to install GPS trackers on the patrol cars so that no one can be insincere while deployed on duty.

Rajan Kumar Saha, assistant commissioner of the Badda Zone of DMP, said, "Zone-based force has been created ahead of Eid and the patrol team is working cautiously.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
চিফ কমার্শিয়াল ম্যানেজার (পূর্ব) এর কার্যালয়
বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে, চট্টগ্রাম

অনবোর্ড সার্ভিস পরিচালনার জন্য উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

SR-5
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S(24)(157)

GD- 1007

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

TOOFAN
THIS EID UL ADHA

Eid offerings in cinema halls
ONLY ONE HARD-HITTER?

As Eid-ul-Azha approaches on June 17, 2024, film enthusiasts are eagerly anticipating the seasonal cinematic offerings. For cinema halls, this period is a vital one, as it brings a surge in audience numbers. Here are some eagerly anticipated films you can enjoy with your family this Eid

SAEED KHAN SHAGOR

'Toofan': The main attraction

The spotlight this Eid will undoubtedly be on Shakib Khan's ***Toofan***. Directed by Raihan Rafi and produced under the banner of Alpha-i, the film is set for a nationwide release on June 17, 2024. Shahriar Shakil is at the helm of production, with digital partner Chorki and international distributor Shree Venkatesh Films (SVF) from Kolkata.

Since the teaser dropped on May 7 on Chorki and SVF's YouTube channels, ***Toofan*** has become a hot topic across both Bengals. The teaser showcases Shakib Khan in a never-before-seen avatar. The film's action-packed look, atmosphere, dialogue delivery, and cinematography have captivated audiences throughout the teaser. Following this, the item song ***Laage Ura Dhura*** featuring Kolkata's busy actress Mimi Chakraborty and sung by Pritom Hasan, was released, gaining significant popularity. The song's lyrics, presentation, and the appearances of Shakib Khan, Mimi, and Raihan Rafi in a cameo have been widely appreciated.

The film boasts a star-studded cast from both Bengals, including Chanchal Chowdhury, Mimi Chakraborty, Jisshu Sengupta, Misha Sawdagar, Fazlur Rahman Babu, and Shahiduzzaman Selim. Notably, it marks the return of Bangladesh's popular actress Masuma Rahman Nabila to the big screen after a long hiatus.

Despite some cinema halls expressing concerns over high rental fees making it difficult to screen the film, the majority of theatres that operate year-round are eager to book it. The issue was a hot topic at the Bangladesh Film Exhibitors Association's annual general meeting, attended by over 60 theatre owners nationwide.

All in all, there's no doubt that ***Toofan*** will be the centerpiece of this Eid's cinematic celebrations.

'Moyurakkhi': A tale of love and betrayal

On June 6, the item song ***Piriter Bazar*** from the movie ***Moyurakkhi*** was released on YouTube. This video mesmerises with its eclectic mix of visuals, stills, and lyrical typography, notably featuring imagery inspired by rickshaw art.

Directed by Rashid Palash, ***Moyurakkhi*** has been long in the making, with multiple release dates being postponed in the past. The film's poster was first unveiled by Rashid on his Facebook page, announcing its imminent Eid release.

EID-UL-AZHA
RASHID POLASH
ময়ূরাক্ষী
বেঈমান পাখির গল্প

The storyline, screenplay, and dialogues for the film were crafted by Golam Rabbani, and it stars Eamin Haque Bobby and Sudip Biswas Deep in the lead roles. The music direction is handled by Jahid Nirob.

According to Rashid Palash, the film revolves around a poignant story of love and betrayal, inspired by a true event.

Controversy surrounds the film as actress Shimla claims that the story mirrors her life. She has even threatened legal action against the director. Shimla's real-life drama includes her marriage to Palash on March 3, 2018, which ended in divorce on November 6 of the same year after she discovered he had hidden a previous marriage.

Following the divorce, Palash attempted to hijack Biman Airlines flight BG-147 out of despair, a tragedy that ended with his death at Shah Amanat International Airport. The film's teaser hints at a plot involving an airplane hijacking and the life of an actress, sparking debates about whether it's based on Shimla's life. Despite the controversy, ***Moyurakkhi*** is poised to be a significant draw for audiences this Eid.

'Aguntok': A dark mystery

The latest addition to the list of Eid releases is ***Aguntok***. After receiving clearance from the censor board, the official trailer was released on YouTube. The trailer depicts a series of mysterious murders in the city, with no one able to unravel the identity of the perpetrator. This gripping plot features Puja Chery and Shamol Mawla sharing the screen, with Puja playing an inquisitive journalist navigating through violence and mystery.

Directed by Sumon Dhar, ***Aguntok*** received uncut clearance from the censor board on Monday. Producer and distributor Zahid Hasan Abhi confirmed that discussions are already underway with Cineplex multiplexes for the film's screening. However, netizens have noted similarities between the trailer and storyline of the film with ***Ratsasan*** and ***Gumnaam***, suggesting it might have drawn inspiration from these.

'Revenge': A run-of-the-mill commercial film?

Among the Eid releases, MD Iqbal's ***Revenge*** trailer has been deemed the least captivating. The trailer lacks innovation, sticking to the commercial cinema formula without offering anything new. The dialogues are clichéd, and the expressions are all too familiar.

Even the background music appears to be lifted from Tamil films. The main roles are played by Shobnom Yesmin Bubly and Ziaul Roshan, with Misha Sawdagar portraying the villain.

'Dark World': A producer's 'ambition'

Dark World exemplifies the ambition of producers who wish to star in their own films. Munna Khan, the producer, also takes on the lead role in this film, set to release this Eid. Directed by Mustafizur Rahman Manik, the trailer initially seemed promising. However, Munna Khan's poor dialogue delivery and overacting have already disheartened potential viewers.

Despite casting popular actress Koushani Mukherjee from West Bengal and featuring talented musicians like Asif Akbar, Imran Mahmudul, and Atiya Anisha, the film's success hinges on Munna Khan's ability to win over the audience with his performance.

NEWS

Fake refrigerants seized at Ctg port

FROM PAGE 12

regulations of the Department of Environment and Fire Service and Defense Office.

Customs officials who took part in the physical examination said the confiscated products do not properly adhere to the conditions.

The cylinders are being imported under the deceptive names of refrigerant gases such as R-22, R-134A, R-404A, R407A, and R-32.

But the import documents, including the packaging list and Bill of Entry (BE) copies, do not explicitly mention the names, the report said.

The Daily Star has managed to obtain all the import documents for the six confiscated shipments. The documents show that the allegations made by the intelligence agency are indeed true.

The importers include Nishat Traders, Asian Refrigeration Works and TS Enterprises.

According to the documents, Nishat Traders imported 34,140 refrigerant cylinders in three shipments from China this month.

The consignments brought by the importers are from Galaxy Import & Export Trade Limited in China.

Tanshia Overseas, a Clearing and Forwarding (C&F) agent, was responsible for clearance of these consignments on behalf of the importers.

Kamrul Hasan, managing director of the agency, said, "We contacted the importers after receiving information about the seizure by customs. They have denied wrongdoing."

He also said that a meeting will be held with the customs officials on the matter soon.

US, Ukraine ink 10yr defence deal

FROM PAGE 12

the agreement says.

Under the agreement, the United States restates its support for Ukraine's defense of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, amid a renewed push by Russia on Ukraine's eastern front.

It also outlines plans to develop Ukraine's own defense industry and expand its military.

Ukraine needs a "significant" military force and sustained investments in its defense industrial base consistent with NATO standards, the text says.

It will allow the two countries to share intelligence, hold training and military education programs and combined military and exercises.

With Trump leading Biden in many election polls, the future of the agreement remains unclear.

Trump has expressed skepticism of Ukraine's continued fight, saying at one point that he would end the conflict on his first day in office. Trump has also pushed for Europe to take on more of the burden of supporting Kyiv.

AL leader Mintu assured killers

FROM PAGE 1

affairs secretary of Jhenaidah AL, who is now on a seven-day remand, told investigators that he met and discussed Amanullah in person and over phone over the payment after the murder.

Babu and Amanullah even exchanged photos of the murder over mobile phones.

Babu, a cousin of Akhtaruzzaman and close to Mintu, was supposed to pay Amanullah a portion of the blood money on May 23 after collecting it from Mintu.

The Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police mentioned the information in an investigation progress report to a Dhaka court yesterday. The court also placed Mintu on an eight-day remand after the investigators sought a 10-day remand for him.

Mintu was shown arrested in connection with the murder of Jhenaidah-4 (Kaliganj) MP Azim.

Locals said Mintu had a political rivalry with MP Azim.

An investigator told The Daily Star yesterday that a Bangladeshi politician was supposed to pay Tk 2 crore for the murder.

MP Azim was murdered a month ago, but investigators were yet to specify the motive behind the killing. Five people, including two AL leaders, were arrested in the abduction case filed in Bangladesh and two others in the murder case lodged in India.

Besides, the body of MP Azim was yet to be identified.

Law enforcers of India have recovered human flesh and some bones. But it could not be ascertained whether those were of MP Azim.

Azim's daughter is yet to get the green signal to go to India for DNA test, said Abdur Rouf, personal secretary of MP Azim.

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and stayed at a friend's home for a night. He left the following day, saying that he would visit a doctor.

On May 22, India and Bangladesh police said the lawmaker was murdered.

Updating the investigating progress, Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (DB) of the DMP, yesterday said they learnt from Amanullah's statement that Aktaruzzaman contacted a Bangladeshi politician on May 6 over the phone for Tk 2 crore for the killing.

"Of the money, Tk 20 lakh was supposed to be paid to the [killers] upon their return to Bangladesh and the remaining Tk 1.80 crore was to be paid between May 26 and May 29," he told reporters.

After the killing of MP Azim, the killers returned to Bangladesh, and Aktaruzzaman fled to the US, he said.

Aktaruzzaman gave Amanullah the task of coordinating the killing while Mintu gave Babu the job of communication with the killers about payments, said Harun.

"We will now try to know why Babu on behalf of Mintu contacted Amanullah upon his return to Bangladesh on May 15 after the killing. We will also want to know why Mintu did not inform the law enforcers despite seeing the photo of murdered MP Azim on Babu's mobile phone," he added.

Record number of sacrificial animals

FROM PAGE 12

At least 21 lakh such animals were not sold across the country last year due to a drop in the purchasing capacity of the people, among other reasons.

Many of the unsold animals were also not sold elsewhere throughout the year, while some farmers may have kept them to be sold this year, which is why the number is so high, said a senior official of the DLS.

However, there is a possibility of low sales this year as well due to the high inflationary pressure on the middle and lower-middle classes – a cause for concern among cattle farmers.

In the fiscal 2022-2023, the average inflation rate was 9.02 percent, far higher than the average of six percent in recent years.

Reajul Huq, director general of the DLS, said many sacrificial animals were not sold last Eid-ul-Azha. Meanwhile, in addition to Eid, the dependence on animals, such as goats, has increased in various social events, further increasing the production for such animals at times other than the festival.

"These are the reasons behind the record number this year. The highest increase was in the number of cows," adding, "We went from door to door to collect the data. There is no manipulation here."

According to the data, while the number of cows and buffaloes saw a rise, that of goats and sheep has decreased.

The number of cows and buffaloes for this Eid-ul-Azha is 5.16 lakh higher than last year, meaning it has increased by around 11 percent – the highest increase in seven years.

On the other hand, cattle farmers said they, along with the buyers, are struggling due to the inflationary pressure and increase in production cost.

- Supply of animals is **1.30**cr this year
- Demand is expected to be **1.7**cr
- Sales of cattle of Tk **10,000**cr expected online
- Prices are higher due to increased production costs

However, keeping the farmers in mind, the prices of the animals are to be kept at a tolerable level because higher prices may result in the animal remaining unsold.

Mohammad Imran Hossain, president of Bangladesh Dairy Farmers Association, the national organisation of the country's cattle farmers, said this year's number of animals was highest in the country's history.

"If you analyse DLS data of the past seven years, a constant growth in production can be seen. This record number is a result of that."

He said the supply this year will be higher than the demand and as such, the prices cannot be too high.

"The production costs have increased by 10 percent from last year, while the prices of the animals are up by only five percent."

Hossain added that for the past four or five years, they have been observing that many cattle are being illegally brought into Bangladesh from neighbouring countries. "As a result, our own farmers are facing losses."

He said they sent a letter to the livestock and fisheries ministry asking for an investigation into the matter, adding that if the government does not pay serious attention in this regard, the cattle farmers will have to keep paying for it.

Meanwhile, sacrificial animals are being sold online since 2020, when the country went into a lockdown due the Covid-19 pandemic.

Businesspeople are expecting more online sales this year compared to the last.

DLS DG Reajul said over 400,000 sacrificial animals were sold during last Eid-ul-Azha and he was expecting the number to reach 500,000 this year.

Bus, launch terminals

FROM PAGE 1

long downpour, with some failing to reach their terminals and stations on time.

Rokib Kamal, a private firm employee, who got stuck at Bangla Motor during the rain, said, "My bus was scheduled to leave at 7:00pm from Fakirapool, but I could not reach the counter on time due to the rain, and my bus left without me."

However, he also mentioned that the operator at the counter had been gracious enough to offer him a seat on the next bus.

Several bus operators told this newspaper that the number of passengers started increasing in the afternoon.

Mosharref Hossain, general manager of Hanif Paribahan, said, "Most homebound passengers got drenched on their to the counters."

Also due to the rain, the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority had to suspend the launch service for half an hour from 5:30pm to 6:00pm.

"When the rain stopped, we resumed the ferry services at 6:00pm," Alamgir Kabir, joint director of BIWTA, told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, most trains, except for a few, left the capital on time.

Railways Minister Zillur Hakim said yesterday that all necessary preparations had been made for the smooth operation of trains ahead of the holidays.

"Apart from one or two trains, 30 trains have so far left on time," he told reporters while visiting Kamalapur Railway Station at 3:00pm.

"We've also launched special trains for transporting mangoes and cattle."

However, all northbound trains on the Dhaka-Mymensingh and Dhaka-Tangail rail routes were delayed, causing major inconvenience for thousands of passengers, our Gazipur correspondent reported from the Joydebpur station.

Joydebpur Junction Station Master Hanif Ali said, "Only one train has left Dhaka since noon," he told this correspondent at 5:00pm.

Over half of cropland in hungry Gaza damaged: UN

REUTERS, *Geneva*

More than half of Gaza's agricultural land, crucial for feeding the territory's hungry population, has been degraded by conflict, satellite images analysed by the United Nations show.

The data reveals a rise in the destruction of orchards, field crops and vegetables in the Palestinian enclave, where hunger is widespread after eight months of Israeli bombardment.

The World Health Organisation warned on Wednesday that many people in Gaza were facing "catastrophic hunger and famine-like conditions".

Using satellite imagery taken between May 2017 and 2024, United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) found that 57 percent of Gaza's permanent crop fields and arable lands essential for food security had shown a significant decline in density and health.

"In May 2024, crop health and density across the Gaza Strip showed a marked decline compared to the average of the previous seven seasons," UNOSAT said yesterday.

"This deterioration is attributed to conflict-related activities, including razing, heavy vehicle movement, bombing, and shelling."

The decline, UNOSAT said, marked a 30 percent increase in damaged agricultural land since it published its last analysis in April, reports Reuters.

G7 ITALIA
2024

From left, President of the European Council Charles Michel, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, French President Emmanuel Macron, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, US President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen pose for a group photo at Borgo Egnazia resort during the G7 Summit hosted by Italy in Apulia region, Savelletri yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

UKRAINE SUPPORT PLAN

G7 leaders agree $50bn deal

REUTERS, *Borgo Egnazia*

Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) major democracies yesterday agreed an outline deal to provide $50 billion of loans for Ukraine using interest from Russian sovereign assets frozen after Moscow launched its invasion of its neighbour in 2022.

The political agreement was the centrepiece of the opening day in southern Italy of the annual summit of G7 leaders, attended for a second successive year by Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The Ukrainian leader was scheduled to sign a new, long-term security accord with US President Joe Biden later yesterday, as well as one with fellow G7 member Japan.

Many of the G7 leaders are struggling at home but determined to make a difference on the world stage as they also seek to counter China's economic ambitions.

"There is a lot of work to be done, but I am sure that in these two days we will be able to have discussions that will lead to concrete and measurable results," Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni told her G7 guests as their talks started in a luxury hotel resort in the southern region of Puglia.

The G7 plan for Ukraine is based on a multi-year loan using profits from some $300 billion of impounded Russian funds.

The technical details will be finalised in the coming weeks, a G7 diplomatic source told Reuters. The source, who asked not to be named, said the additional funding would arrive by the end of this year.

A senior US official said the United States had agreed to provide up to $50 billion itself, but that amount could decline significantly as other countries announced their participation.

The aim of the deal was to ensure it can run for years regardless of who is in power in each G7 state - a nod to concerns that US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump might be much less sympathetic to Kyiv if he beats Biden in November, according to a person close to the talks.

While Meloni is flying high after triumphing in weekend European elections, the leaders of the other six nations - the United States, Japan, France, Germany, Britain and Canada - face major domestic woes that risk undermining their authority.

Hezbollah attacks 9 Israeli military sites with rockets

REUTERS, *Beirut*

Lebanon's Hezbollah said yesterday it had launched rockets and weaponised drones at nine Israeli military sites in a coordinated attack, ramping up hostilities on Lebanon's southern border for the second consecutive day.

The attacks were made in retaliation for an Israeli strike on Tuesday that killed a senior Hezbollah field commander.

The group said in a statement it had fired volleys of Katyusha and Falaq rockets at six Israeli military locations. Its Al-Manar television reported more than 100 rockets fired at once.

Hezbollah's statement said it had also launched attack drones at the headquarters of Israel's northern command, an intelligence headquarters and a military barracks.

A security source told Reuters that involved firing at least 30 attack drones at once, making it the group's largest drone attack to date in the eight-month-old Israeli offensive in Gaza.

The group said yesterday's attack was in response to the killing. It had already carried out at least eight attacks on Wednesday in retaliation.

Israeli strikes have killed more than 300 Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon - more than it lost in 2006, when the sides last fought a major war, according to a Reuters tally.

WSJ says its journo will face 'sham trial' in Russia

AFP, *New York*

The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) yesterday lashed out at Russia's "outrageous" announcement that its imprisoned reporter Evan Gershkovich will face trial on spying charges.

"Evan Gershkovich is facing a false and baseless charge. Russia's latest move toward a sham trial is, while expected, deeply disappointing and still no less outrageous," Journal chief editor Emma Tucker and top executives said in a statement.

Russian authorities accuse Gershkovich, a Russia correspondent for the leading US business newspaper, of spying and working for the CIA.

He has been imprisoned since his arrest in March 2023 while on a reporting trip to the Urals city of Yekaterinburg.

The Journal's statement said he has so far been held 441 days "for simply doing his job. Evan is a journalist."

Smoke rises following a fire at an oil refinery, on the outskirts of Erbil, Iraq yesterday. At least 10 people including firefighters were injured while battling to control the blaze, the civil defence agency reported. PHOTO: REUTERS

Shakib inspires Tigers

FROM PAGE 1

The result also means Sri Lanka are out of the tournament, managing just one point in three matches.

Just a victory in their final group game against a lower-ranked Nepal on June 17 will ensure Bangladesh's progression to the next round. But even if the Tigers lose to Nepal, it would take either of two unlikely outcomes to materialise -- the Netherlands beating Sri Lanka by a healthy margin or Nepal beating South Africa -- for Bangladesh to be denied a Super Eight spot.

Shakib replied to a barrage of criticism for his underperformance in the first two matches in the best way possible -- becoming the eighth batter to reach the landmark of 800 runs in the T20 mega event while reaching his 13th T20I fifty off just 38 deliveries.

He smashed a total of nine boundaries and starred in three crucial stands of 48, 41, and an unbroken 29 with Tanzid Hasan (35 off 26), Mahmudullah Riyad (25 off 21), and Jaker Ali (14* off 7), respectively, to propel Bangladesh to a competitive score.

Meanwhile, Rishad bowled a momentum-changing 15th over just when it was needed the most, with the Netherlands cruising towards the target at that point -- needing 56 off the final six overs with seven wickets in hand and two Dutch batters, skipper Scott Edwards and Sybrand Engelbrecht, well set in the middle.

Rishad was taken for seven runs, including a boundary, in the first three deliveries but the 21-year-old showed why Bangladesh needed to include a genuine leggie in their T20 World Cup squad for the first time as he had Engelbrecht top edge one to Tanzim Sakib at point.

Just a ball after ending a crucial 42-run stand between Engelbrecht and Edwards, Rishad had Bas de Leede stumped -- enticing the batter forward with a sharp turn and bounce that was complimented by Liton Das' brilliant glovework behind the wickets -- as the Netherlands suddenly found themselves in a spot of bother at 111 for five after 15 overs.

Mustafizur, who bowled brilliantly to give away just 12 off four overs, made the dangerman Edwards his sole victim of the day in the 17th over before Rishad had Logan van Beek top-edge one for a caught and bowled in the very first delivery of the next over.

Rishad finished with figures of three for 33 as the Netherlands could never bounce back from that situation.

Govt mulling

FROM PAGE 2

decided that a proposal would be sent to China, for project funding," she said.

Bangladesh sent the PDPP of the project to China in March 2021 seeking a loan for the project.

After evaluating the PDPP, the Chinese government identified some weaknesses in the project, and they sent their recommendations on the project to the government in March this year, Hasina said.

Hasina told the House that the Chinese government, in their evaluation, mentioned a lack of detailed proposals on land development and water navigation. They also suggested downsizing the project by excluding some of the components and recommended implementing the project in phases.

She added that a Chinese company, "Power China", had sent a proposal to the Water Development Board for a detailed feasibility study of the project, which is now under consideration.

BANGLADESH ELECTION COMMISSION
Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase)
Nirbachan Bhaban (Floor-8)
Agargaon, Dhaka-1207

Invitation for Tenders

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH					
1	Ministry/Division	Bangladesh Election Commission			
2	Agency	Election Commission Secretariat			
3	Procuring Entity Name	Project Director, Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase), Bangladesh Election Commission.			
4	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka			
5	Invitation for	Purchase and upgradation of Network Equipment for Data Centre and Personalization Centre			
6	Invitation Ref. No. & Date	17.14.0000.240.07.171.2024/1961 ; Dated: 13 June, 2024			
KEY INFORMATION					
7	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)			
FUNDING INFORMATION					
8	Budget and Source of Funds	GoB (Development Budget)			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
9	Project / Program Code (if applicable)	224331200			
10	Project Name (if applicable)	Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase)			
11	Tender Package No.	GD-41.1			
12	Tender Package Name	Purchase and upgradation of Network Equipment for Data Centre and Personalization Centre			
		Date	Time		
13	Tender Publication Date	14 June 2024			
14	Pre-Tender Meeting Date and Time	01 July 2024	11:00 A.M.		
15	Tender Last Selling Date and Time	15 July 2024	04:00 P.M.		
16	Tender Closing Date and Time	16 July 2024	11:00 A.M.		
17	Tender Opening Date and Time	16 July 2024	11:30 P.M.		
18	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address			
19	Selling Tender Document (Principal)	Assistant Director (Finance), Room No. 818 (Floor-8), Nirbachan Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.			
	NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS				
20	Pre-Tender Meeting	Conference Room No. 721, Nirbachan Bhaban (Floor-7), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.			
21	Receiving Tender Document				
22	Opening Tender Document				
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
23	Eligibility of Tenderer	1. Tender shall have the legal capacity to enter into the contract under the applicable law. 2. Tenderers shall have to be enrolled in the relevant professional or trade organizations registered in Bangladesh. 3. Tenderers shall have to fulfil its obligation/obligations to pay taxes under the provisions of laws and regulations of Bangladesh. 4. Detail information is provided in the tender document.			
24	Brief Description of Services	"Purchase and upgradation of Network Equipment for Data Centre and Personalization Centre" As Specified in the Tender Document			
25	Price of Tender Document (Tk.)	BDT 3000.00 (Three thousand only) Non-refundable.			
26	Package No.	Identification of Package	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk)	Completion Time
	GD-41.1	Purchase and upgradation of Network Equipment for Data Centre and Personalization Centre	Dhaka	75,00,000.00 (Seventy-five lac only)	90 days from the date of signing contract.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS					
27	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Brigadier General Abul Hasnat Mohammad Sayem			
28	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Project Director			
29	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase), Nirbachan Bhaban (Floor-8), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.			
30	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone: 00-88-02-55007594; e-mail address: pd.idea2.bd@gmail.com			
31	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all the Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings.				

Abul Hasnat Mohammad Sayem
Brigadier General
Project Director
IDEA Project (2nd Phase)

GD-1005

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Reclaim footpaths from extortionists

Footpaths choked with hawkers causing nuisance for pedestrians

It's no secret that the teeming thoroughfares of Dhaka also teem with hawkers, a combination that has long been a source of pain for pedestrians. According to a recent report by this daily, illegal occupation of footpaths by hawkers has turned these public spaces into hotbeds of extortion, with local political leaders, police, and even hawkers' associations collecting fees in the name of "renting" them. Our reporters' account of the money changing hands through this system is quite telling.

For example, on the footpath adjacent to the General Post Office (GPO) in Dhaka, a hawker has to pay Tk 150 daily. It rises to Tk 250 during peak sales periods like Ramadan and Puja. A one-time payment of Tk 1.5 lakh is apparently needed to secure a spot big enough for a stool and a table, while "permanent" ownership would cost between Tk 8-10 lakh, depending on how close it is to the GPO gate. At Motijheel's Shapla Chattar area, hawkers have to pay Tk 100-300 daily, depending on the size of their space, with the rate rising to Tk 400 during festivals. Vendors operating between Elephant Road and New Market areas have to pay Tk 10,000-20,000 twice a year, plus daily fees of Tk 150-300. Similar arrangements likely exist in other major hubs for hawkers including Gulistan, Paltan, Farmgate, Kamalapur Railway Station, Fulbaria, etc.

What this shows us is that there is a very organised, politically-controlled system governing footpath occupation that has proved to be impossible to dismantle, despite occasional eviction drives by the city corporations. According to an estimate, there are around 5 lakh hawkers in Dhaka. Their existence has created a unique urban challenge in which we have to balance pedestrian rights with the rights of hawkers to a livelihood. We cannot deny that hawkers play an important role in our economy by providing affordable goods to citizens. So, while it is undeniable that their vulnerability has fuelled a corrupt ecosystem that benefits a select few at the expense of the many—with pedestrians often forced onto busy roads, risking their lives—we must find a balanced approach that benefits both groups.

Firstly, we need to strictly enforce existing regulations against illegal street occupations. City authorities and law enforcement must work in tandem to ensure that footpaths are kept clear for pedestrian use. But evicting hawkers without any rehabilitation plan is neither fair nor sustainable. The authorities, therefore, must pursue a comprehensive course of action. That may include designating special times and places for hawkers, providing them with legitimate spaces to conduct their businesses without disrupting pedestrian flow. Issuing ID cards and collecting nominal fees can also help formalise their operations, ensuring that they contribute to the city's revenue rather than paying extortion money to corrupt elements.

Protect children from online abuse

Concerted efforts needed to stop such exploitation

There is no denying that many children in Bangladesh face violence and exploitation at home or outside. But how many of us are aware that they can be equally unsafe in online platforms as well? In 2023, the US-based non-profit National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)'s CyberTipline received more than two million reports related to the upload of child sexual abuse material from Bangladesh alone. This is quite staggering and alarming.

Such materials often end up on the internet when children and parents, unaware of the risk of posting personal data online, share images and videos without proper security measures. Referring to global data by the Internet Watch Foundation, a Prothom Alo report said that 92 percent of the 275,652 websites containing child sexual imagery found by the organisation last year contained self-generated imagery. Of that, 55 percent were created by children aged 7 to 10 years.

In Bangladesh, internet and social media literacy among parents is often low, so they may remain in the dark about who their children are interacting with online and what material they are posting. Online predators can fish for children's profiles, collect personal data, and use it to entice, stalk, harass, blackmail and exploit them. Because of the social culture of victim blaming, children may not even share the ordeals they face online with an adult. Parents, on the other hand, may not report such abuse because of the existing barriers in our legal system. Therefore, a concerted effort by the government, parents, NGOs, law enforcement agencies, and educational institutions is needed to protect children from sexual exploitation.

The government, with the help of grassroots non-profits, must conduct campaigns to raise awareness about such abuse. Information about online risks and safe internet use should be properly included in the curriculum. We also need to encourage children's participation in off-line activities for which more parks and playgrounds are a must. Moreover, parents' involvement in children's social and online life should be increased. Legal loopholes enabling online predators and paedophiles must also be removed, so that people feel comfortable about reporting threats against children and using the existing helplines to their full capacity. Finally, we must denounce sexual objectification of children in visual media and reality shows so that children are not influenced by it.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

First prisoners at Auschwitz

During World War II, on this day in 1940, the first transport of Polish political prisoners arrived at Auschwitz, which became Nazi Germany's largest concentration, extermination, and slave labour camp, where more than one million people died.

What does poverty research in Bangladesh require?

Dr Selim Raihan
is professor of economics at the University of Dhaka and executive director of South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM). He can be reached at selim.raihan@gmail.com.

SELIM RAIHAN

Research on poverty in Bangladesh requires answers to four fundamental questions: i) what are the poverty trends in the country?; do the official figures present a true picture?; ii) how do different shocks (economic and non-economic) affect poverty and vulnerability?; iii) what are the structural factors behind poverty?; and iv) what are the important aspects of addressing poverty in a sustainable way?

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the headcount poverty rate (as per the cost of basic needs method) in the country declined from 80 percent in the early 1970s to 18.7 percent in 2022. Between 2016 and 2022, the national poverty rate declined from 24.2 percent to 18.7 percent. Both the rural and urban areas experienced a drop in poverty rates. While the official statistics paint an optimistic picture of poverty reduction, alternative surveys suggest a more nuanced reality. According to two rounds of surveys conducted by SANEM in 2018 and 2023, which tracked the same 10,000 households nationwide, the decline in national poverty rate has been slower than reported, while urban poverty has risen. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which measures various deprivations at the household level in health, education and living standards, corroborates this trend. The surveys also highlight a worrying trend of increasing inequality, while food security, a critical component of poverty, has worsened too.

The persistent vulnerability among a large section of the country's population remains a pressing concern despite high economic growth, rise in per capita income, export and remittance performances, and microfinance initiatives. Vulnerable households are those who are categorised as non-poor but may fall into poverty due to any economic or natural shocks. SANEM's surveys indicate that the pandemic caused a sudden spike in poverty rates, reversing some of the progress made before. Climate change poses another significant threat to development. My recent research suggests that if there is inaction in addressing climate change, a rise in temperature by two degrees Celsius by 2040 could increase the headcount poverty rate in Bangladesh by 3.5 percentage points. The ongoing inflationary pressure adds woe to the vulnerabilities. The coping strategies to different shocks, available to poor and vulnerable households, remain limited and repeated shocks make these households exhaust those limited options.

INFLATION
20

VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

In-depth poverty research in Bangladesh requires understanding the structural factors behind poverty. The ownership structure plays a critical role, as unequal distribution of assets can lead to wealth concentration in the hands of a few. The labour market is another determinant; limited access to well-paying jobs and the prevalence of low-wage work perpetuate a cycle of poverty. Gender disparities further compound poverty, particularly for women who often face barriers to equal rights in property, receiving equal pay, and are sometimes subjected to practices like child marriage, which can limit educational and economic opportunities. Exclusion based on ethnicity, disability or social stigma can restrict access to resources and services, leading to entrenched poverty.

A significant aspect of Bangladesh's labour market is its informality, which leads to a lack of job security, benefits, and legal protections for workers. Unemployment and underemployment are persistent issues. Among the youth, the NEET (not in education, employment, or training) rates are concerning, pointing to a generation at risk of being left behind. The labour force participation (LFP) among females remains low due to cultural norms and structural barriers. Workers face poor working environments, low wages, and little to no social security. Occupational rigidities, such as difficulty in transitioning between jobs or sectors, further exacerbate the situation. Lack of opportunities for productive and diversified employment means that workers are often stuck in low-value, labour-intensive jobs with little chance for advancement or skill development. This situation can be called the "low pay, low productivity, and low compliance" cycle.

Bangladesh's economic, social and institutional paradigms shape the pathways to poverty reduction. The economic paradigm is related to the pattern of structural transformation of the economy. Despite notable progress over the past five decades, the lack of economic and export diversification undermines the prospects of reduction in poverty and vulnerability in a sustainable manner. The policy regime, related to the pattern of structural transformation, has remained narrowly focused towards supporting a few sectors. There is a need for productive economic and export diversification supported by a broad-based policy regime.

The social paradigm refers to the pattern of social development. Over the past five decades, there have been some notable improvements in health and education. Success in health and education came with finding some low-cost solutions to addressing child and maternal mortality, and a rise in school enrolment. However, with the evolving demographic structure of the population and growing demand for high-skilled labour, the current and future outlooks remain bleak. Low public spending on health and education and inefficiencies in these sectors act as barriers to reaping the benefit of demographic dividends.

The institutional paradigm refers to the quality of institutions and the political economy of development. In Bangladesh, weak formal institutions, in the form of weak state capacity, weak regulatory regime, prevalence of corruption, crony capitalism and dominance of informal institutions, seriously undermine the scope for enhancing the capabilities of poor and vulnerable people. For example, the weak state capacity in mobilising tax revenue limits the state's capacity to spend high on health, education, and social protection. At the same time, high reliance on indirect taxes leads to a regressive tax system that affects poor people.

We can highlight three important aspects for sustainably addressing poverty in Bangladesh. First, there should be a meaningful solution to the ownership issue. The economic, social, and institutional paradigms for poverty alleviation have to ensure that both material ownership and the feeling of ownership among poor and vulnerable people are enhanced. Second, economic and social capabilities of poor and vulnerable households have to be enhanced through economic diversification, labour market reform, and investment in health and education. And third, the state has to effectively redistribute resources from rich to poor through taxes and social expenditures.

PROJECT ▤ SYNDICATE

Europe must fight the far-right surge

Philippe Legrain,
former economic adviser to the president of the European Commission, is a visiting senior fellow at the London School of Economics' European Institute, and the author of 'Them and Us: How Immigrants and Locals Can Thrive Together.'

PHILIPPE LEGRAIN

Far-right populist parties performed exceptionally well in the European Parliament elections, finishing first in France, Italy, and three other countries. They won nearly a quarter of the seats in parliament, just behind the centre right.

With Europe already reeling from the war in Ukraine, the threat of a second Donald Trump presidency in the United States, stagnant living standards, strained welfare systems, and extreme weather events, nationalists pose a severe threat. These parties are often sympathetic to Russian President Vladimir Putin and downright hostile to green policies, migrants, and European Union institutions.

Mainstream pro-European parties have three broad options for responding: complacency, co-optation, or counterattack. Let's start with the case for business as usual. Many Europeans believe—incorrectly—that EU elections are inconsequential. Turnout is much lower than in national elections, and many people cast protest votes, often against governing parties.

Even so, pro-EU parties will still command a majority in the next parliament. The centre-right European People's Party (EPP), led by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, actually gained seats.

Moreover, far-right parties are deeply divided. They are split between two rival parliamentary groups, and some are unattached. They disagree on the Ukraine war, economic policy, LGBTQ rights, and, crucially, whether to work within the EU system or against it. Inevitably, such rifts dilute their influence.

But complacency is dangerous. The centre held only because it is defined ever more broadly, encompassing not only the EPP and the Socialists and Democrats (S&D), but also the classical and social liberals of Renew Europe and the Greens. Von der Leyen seemingly has enough votes in parliament to be re-elected as commission president—but only just. And anything can happen in a secret ballot. This hardly suggests a strong and stable pro-EU centre, especially because the EPP gained ground partly by campaigning against the bloc's green agenda.

More worryingly, the elections reordered the political landscape in key member states. Despite neo-Nazi tendencies and questionable ties to Russia and China, the extremist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) finished second in Germany, ahead of Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats (SPD). In France, National Rally won 32 percent of the vote, more than double that of President Emmanuel Macron's centrist allies—a crushing defeat that led Macron to call a snap election. Europe's two most powerful leaders are thus severely weakened, leaving the bloc potentially rudderless in the face of immense economic, security, and climate challenges.

The second option, then, is to accommodate the far right, a common outcome at the national level. Many centre-right parties adopt the far right's language and policies, notably on migration (as do some centre-left ones). In several member states, they even govern together.

At the EU level, pragmatists argue that some far-right parties can be brought into the conservative mainstream. The risk is that the far right co-opts the centre right, rather than vice versa. Consider how the EU's approach to asylum-seekers has shifted from then German Chancellor Angela Merkel's welcoming policy in 2015 to near-universal hostility now. Moreover, far-right parties can gain strength as their views become normalised, as evidenced by the victory of Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom (PVV) in last year's Dutch general election.

> **Above all, embracing the far right can backfire spectacularly. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party, for example, once sat in the EPP; now he is a pro-Putin renegade who treats the rule of law and democratic rights with contempt.**

Above all, embracing the far right can backfire spectacularly. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party, for example, once sat in the EPP; now he is a pro-Putin renegade who treats the rule of law and democratic rights with contempt.

That leaves the third option: fight the far right. Macron has opted to pursue this course by calling a snap legislative election. This is widely viewed as a high-stakes gamble, given Macron's unpopularity and the electorate's hostile mood. France could conceivably elect a far-right prime minister in a run-off vote next month. In that case, Macron would become a lame duck for his remaining three years in office.

But his position was severely weakened in any case, and his governing coalition, which lacks a parliamentary majority, was at risk of losing a no-confidence vote. By dissolving the National Assembly, Macron has regained the initiative, creating two possible paths for defeating the far right.

For one, the campaign may focus on voters' attention on the far-right threat, which could help Macron cobble together a parliamentary majority comprising left and right parties united in their desire to keep the National Rally at bay. Given Macron's unpopularity, this seems somewhat unlikely.

More plausibly, Macron could set up the far right to fail. Populists tend to perform best when they are outsiders challenging established parties, not wielding responsibility. Observe how Conservatives in the United Kingdom, having delivered on their Brexit promise, have been skewered by the reality of it, while the popularity of Wilders' PVV has already dipped now that it is in government.

If the National Rally wins a majority, or ends up leading a broader right-wing coalition, it would likely struggle with the harsh responsibilities of governing—such as difficult fiscal decisions—and whether and how to cooperate with EU institutions. Moderating its hardline policies could erode its anti-establishment edge; enacting them could plunge the country into crisis. Either way, this could undermine the popularity of its leader, Marine Le Pen, ahead of her likely presidential run. Better a far-right prime minister in 2024 than a far-right president in 2027.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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GPO Box: 3257

Subscription:
01711623906

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bangla.thedailystar.net/

Young people are realising the damage they are causing themselves by being ruled by the smartphone.

SOURCE: **ARIANNA LAHIRI**

Is it possible to escape from the seduction of smartphones?

NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Aasha Mehreen Amin
is joint editor at The Daily Star.

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

A week or so ago, I was scrolling through my newsfeed when I found an interesting title of an episode of Al Jazeera's popular show, *The Stream*: "Why are Gen Z and Millennials ditching their smartphones for dumb phones?" It immediately caught my attention; I couldn't help notice the irony of clicking on a programme about young people weaning themselves off their smartphones while I was devouring my smartphone's content of the day. It was a bit like a non-member eavesdropping into an Alcoholics Anonymous group made up of a generation considered being literally born in the era of smartphones. I mean, being from Gen X would put me in their parents' (I refuse to say grandparents) category, and what could I, who spent most of her youth in the analogue days, find anything in common with them, right? Well, actually, quite a lot.

It was uplifting and sobering to see that these young people are smart enough to realise the need to opt for ways to take back control of their lives, to "live in the moment" and improve their social skills. The wisdom of a 24-year-old who switched to a dumb phone because he had spent 15 years of his life with a smartphone, blew my mind, "I don't hate smartphones—I just feel I'm too immature to use it."

There's no point in denying that I am totally dependent on my phone for practically everything—being in touch with loved ones, colleagues, acquaintances, the tailor, AC Moinul (guy who fixes the air conditioner), the news, and, of course, my daily fill of mindless scrolling and reel-watching. In fact, my partner and I play a vicious mind game of trying to make each other feel guilty by saying "You really spend too much time on your screen" just when either of us are in the middle of our smartphone fix. We deny and claim that "I just picked it up" to check if there was any breaking news or important message from our daughter who lives in a different time zone. But deep down, we know the ugly truth: the bug of relentless connectivity to some world or the other has infected us, and there seems to be no cure.

It's not that we don't know that we are abusing this amazing, smart device that feeds us whatever it thinks we need to be fed with. We know that if we look at the screen just before hitting the bed, the bright screen fools our brain into thinking it is daytime, and hence wakes it up more instead of allowing it to get ready for a few hours of much-needed respite. There is scientific evidence that the unpredictability of what will come next on the screen gives the brain high levels of the feel-good hormone dopamine, which makes us want more and more of these hits. Now I know why I can't even look at the book I have been trying to read since January, and instead go back to watching bits and pieces of *Friends* or endless reels on contraptions to get the perfect jawline.

But let's get back to the topic of the show. Apparently, young people are realising the damage they are causing themselves by being ruled by the smartphone. Gen Z, the generation born into this technology, has no other idea of, say, socialising, except through social media. Face-to-face interaction or even talking on the phone feels alien to them. Social media addiction or "problematic use of social media," whatever you may call it, is a cause of worry not just for parents and guardians but for young people themselves. Studies have found that too much time on social media (which is usually through their smartphones) or any kind of screen time can have serious side effects such as anxiety, not being able to interact face to face, having difficulties concentrating, insomnia, constant headaches, and severe mental health problems such as anorexia and suicidal thoughts. So how can people, especially teenagers and young adults, get out of the irresistible lure of the smartphone?

It is a lifestyle issue, said Jose Briones, one of the panellists introduced as an advocate of digital minimalism and offline living who actually switched to a "dumb" flip phone for basic functions like text and call. He recommended using a smartphone during work hours (since for many people work requires them to be on their devices) and switch to a dumb phone after work.

Another panellist, Shayonee Dasgupta, said she had taken great lengths to detox herself from her smartphone, which was causing her anxiety. Since even disabling apps did not work (as she would reinstall everything right after) she installed an app that would impose a heavy monetary fine whenever she violated her screen-time limit. The prospect of losing so much money incentivised her to keep within the limit.

But is there a healthy limit for screen time? Journalist and author Sophia Smith Galer argued that the idea is too generalised, and that the healthy limit for screen time really depends on how individuals use it. For some people, those four hours of screen time may be very productive, while for others it may actually be harmful. Parents and guardians have sued companies for what they consider promoting harmful content to their children, and there is credible evidence to support this view. According to Sophia, the technology can be intentionally harmful, and she proposed that the algorithmic feeds should be altered for the better. That would put the onus on the companies, and only legislation can make them think of public interest over profits.

Data privacy is a constant worry around social media and smartphone use—something that we still have not been able to solve. Thus, the trend to turn away from smartphones even if it's for a certain period and turning to their dumb predecessors may be catching on, especially in advanced countries where the awareness level regarding these harmful effects is high.

In Bangladesh, however, smartphones still rule, and for many it is a status symbol. You will find very few people, especially teenagers and young adults—regardless of economic backgrounds—who consider their smartphones as their most precious possession. For many of us, it is like a body part we never want to be out of sight. But we, too, are facing the fallout from overdependence on these devices, especially overconsumption of the content they offer, social media in particular. Taking cues from discussions like the one on *The Stream*, which, by the way, shows the good side of online technology, we can take back the power from our controlling, devastatingly alluring, smartphones.

What does the new budget imply for menstrual health?

Maisha Zaman
is a contributing writer at The Daily Star. She can be reached at maisha.zmm@gmail.com.

MAISHA ZAMAN

Amid the controversial tax increases on some essentials in the recently revealed proposal for the FY2024-25 national budget, one positive initiative by the government has been to continue exempting VAT and supplementary duty (SD) on the import of specific raw materials required to produce sanitary pads and diapers for the second consecutive year.

However, two critical questions prevail: i) has the VAT exemption helped to reduce period poverty in the country?; and ii) has society progressed in terms of normalising menstruation?

To answer these questions, let's first look into the definition of period poverty, which is "the lack of access to safe and hygienic menstrual products during monthly periods and inaccessibility to basic sanitation services or facilities as well as menstrual hygiene education."

An analysis of the initiatives listed in the Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) platform in Bangladesh, mentioned in the latest technical brief on menstrual hygiene management by icddr,b (2022), shows that 18 organisations implemented 51 interventions across 27 districts. However, only four projects lasted more than a year. Moreover, only 36 percent of the interventions disseminated menstrual products, 22 percent focused on menstrual product development, and 19 percent on policy reformation. Despite the usage of disposable menstrual products or clean, reusable materials among adolescent girls being above 60 percent and 50 percent, respectively, only nine percent practised adequate menstrual hygiene.

A more recent baseline survey by Inspira Advisory and Consulting for Plan International Bangladesh in Bhola and Satkhira districts found that among 168 cloth users, 88.7 percent of respondents used old clothes (kameez, saree, bed sheets, etc) to manage their menstruation, reusing them for three to six months. Although most of the respondents preferred using disposable sanitary pads, they lacked access due to significant distance to pharmacies. Dirty toilets, too much crowd, inadequate space, lack of privacy, and lack of water and soap in the toilets were cited as the top reasons for menstruating girls missing schools. Affordability of sanitary pads has not been mentioned. The report further highlights that 81.2 percent of mothers believed menstruation implies the flow of impure blood from the bodies, and most girls obtained knowledge about menstruation from their mothers.

Despite some noteworthy initiatives to improve menstrual health, such as the Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO) project by UNDP, which empowers marginalised rural women in Kurigram to produce and sell sanitary pads, the extent and reach of such initiatives by different organisations need more research.

Organisations are increasingly becoming aware about enhancing access to and knowledge of menstruation and menstrual products. However, unless the government reforms policies and invests more in capacity-building, the progress of remarkable initiatives by various public and private sector organisations is likely to remain slow. Most relevant policy documents, except the National MHM Strategy 2021 and the National Strategy for Adolescent Health 2017–30, lack the mention of menstrual hygiene management. Such lacking can beget lesser actions towards breaking stigma surrounding menstruation, potentially hindering efforts to break the stigma and reduce period poverty in the country.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) made some recommendations in March this year, prior to the presentation of the proposed budget, suggesting that the total tax incidence (TTI) on imported raw materials used for the production of sanitary napkins should be zero, along with an exemption on all forms of VAT, customs duty (CD), SD, advance income tax (AIT), and regulatory duty (RD). They also recommended reducing the tax on imported sanitary pads to 31.93 percent in FY2024-25 while ensuring tariff protection for domestic producers.

The document further highlights government programmes with budget allocations of less than Tk 100 per beneficiary per month. For instance, the allocation is only Tk 22 per month for improving the work environment in the ready-made garment (RMG) sector and only Tk 48 per month for maternal, child, reproductive and adolescent health. Given that the average price of sanitary pads ranges from approximately Tk 55 to over Tk 500, they continue to remain unaffordable for marginalised communities, who don't receive adequate investment and resources and therefore monetary freedom to spend on menstrual products.

VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

Furthermore, limited research in Bangladesh on period poverty and menstrual health and hygiene primarily focus on adolescent girls. Research on the extent to which working women, transgender individuals and non-binary people face period poverty is amiss. There is also a dearth of research on issues such as the feasibility of alternative products such as menstrual cups and whether men have become more sensitised to menstruation. The last National Hygiene Survey was conducted in 2018, and the latest research currently available covers only a few districts or regions in the country. This renders us from a more comprehensive view of menstrual needs in the country, especially in terms of the impact the VAT exemption had in FY2023-24.

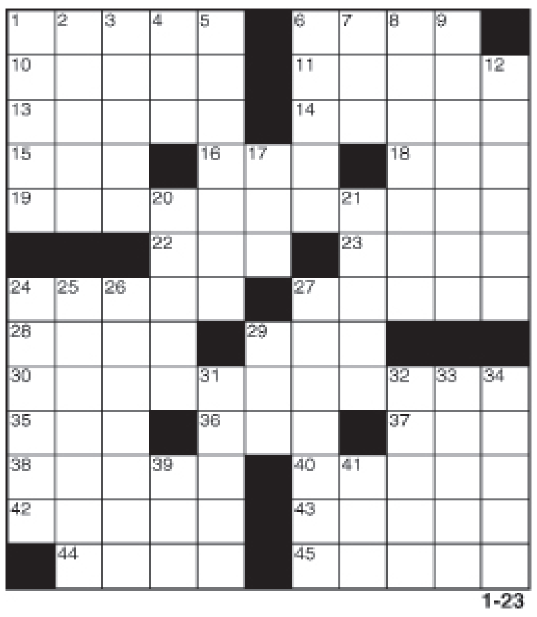
The aforementioned aspects should be carefully considered, and proactive measures must be taken to improvise the VAT exemption strategies. Government bodies and regulators need to ensure these improvements are effectively reflected in future budgets.

As the saying goes, time is of essence, and therefore utilising resources effectively can significantly improve the lives of menstruators in Bangladesh.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 A heap
6 Small fastener
10 Uncontrolled fear
11 Dutch bloom
13 Fury
14 Yoga pose
15 Zero
16 Boxing great Muhammad
18 Fellows
19 Measuring by walking
22 Make a choice
23 Smell
24 Opium flower
27 Impassioned
28 Beige
29 Sewing aid
30 Making a short visit
35 Scot's cap
36 Pants part
37 Way off
38Argentina-set musical
40 Fill with joy
42 Varnish ingredient
43 Thesaurus author
44 Beholds
45 Winter gliders

DOWN
1 Stretches over
2 "Be quiet!"
3 Trig topic
4 Game cube
5 Small but full of fight
6 Laundry problem
7 Greek consonants
8 Stylish
9 Want badly
12 Cook in a skillet
17 Ignited
20 Batter's high hit
21 Leaving
24 Annoy
25 Musical ranges
26 Word of honor
27 Hand quintet
29 Diner dessert
31 Schemes
32 No longer a minor
33 Destined
34 Worries
39 Suit accessory
41 "Very funny!" online



WEDNESDAY'S ANSWERS

■	C	R	A	G	■	A	H	A	B	■
C	R	E	M	A	■	S	A	R	A	H
L	A	P	E	L	■	S	T	A	R	E
A	V	A	R	I	C	E	■	B	A	R
M	A	I	■	L	A	T	T	I	C	E
S	T	R	E	E	P	■	O	A	K	S
■	■	■	C	O	R	O	T	■	■	■
A	L	T	O	■	I	V	O	T	E	D
C	O	R	N	I	C	E	■	A	X	E
C	S	I	■	S	E	R	V	I	C	E
R	I	V	A	L	■	S	E	W	E	R
A	N	I	S	E	■	E	R	A	S	E
■	G	A	P	S	■	T	A	N	S	■

Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to **dsopinion@gmail.com**

City Edition

Star
DHAKA FRIDAY JUNE 14, 2024, JAISHTHA 31, 1431 BS

SPORT

What to WATCH

Nagorik TV and Star Sports 1
T20 World Cup
Afghanistan vs Papua New Guinea
Live from 6:30 am

USA vs Ireland
Live from 8:30 pm
South Africa vs Nepal
Live from 5:30 am (Saturday)

BATTERS FIND MOMENTUM before bowlers hold nerve

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh put on an all-round effort to keep their Super Eight chances in their own hands following a 25-run win over Netherlands yesterday in the teams' T20 World Cup match at the Arnos Vale Ground in Kingstown.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh: 159-5 in 20 overs (Shakib 64 not out, Tanzid 35, Mahmudullah 25; Aryan Dutt 2-17, Paul van Meekeren 2-15)

Netherlands: 134-8 in 20 overs (Sybrand Engelbrecht 33; Rishad Hossein 3-33, Taskin 2-30, Mustafizur 1-12, Sakib 1-23, Mahmudullah 1-6)

Result: Bangladesh won by 25 runs

Player-of-the-match: Shakib Al Hasan

All they required was for Shakib Al Hasan to provide that spark. The Bangladesh ace all-rounder turned up with the bat in what was a significantly better showing from the top-order, and in the Powerplay effort as well. In the end, the Tigers needed their bowlers to shine as they turned back the tide after the Dutch were in a decent position in chase.

Shakib hit his first T20I fifty in 19 innings and paced himself well enough to hold the innings together during an unbeaten 46-ball 64. Along with Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Shakib picked up 54 runs in the first six overs despite the Tigers losing two wickets.

After Tanzid departed to a 26-ball 35, Shakib allowed the rest of the batters to pivot around him, with Mahmudullah Riyad scoring an important 25 as Bangladesh later picked up 47 runs in the last five overs to notch 159 for five.

"It was important for someone from top four to bat through the innings. Happy to contribute. It was a tough pitch at the start; we held our nerves. [It] was a challenging total, not a winning one, but bowlers chipped in perfectly," Shakib said at the post-match presentation after being handed player-of-the-match award.

Netherlands were 104 for three in 15 overs and appeared to be coasting towards Bangladesh total before Rishad Hossain turned the game around. Sybrand Engelbrecht, in particular, was going great guns before he miscued a Rishad delivery that turned and bounced, leading to a top-edge before Tanzim Sakib took the catch. In that very over, Bas de Leede danced down the track, only to be beaten by turn, before Liton Das's sharp reflex got Bangladesh truly back in the game.

Mustafizur Rahman then did what he does best, producing 17 dot balls in his four overs and conceding 12 runs for a wicket as Tigers killed off the game slowly. Shakib credited Rishad and Mustafizur's effort. The surface at Arnos Vale Ground was an unknown quantity for both sides. Shakib said they had to keep wickets in hand so that they could accelerate at the back end.

"Rishad and Fizz, the way they bowled, took the game away from Netherlands," he said.

"Hardly any international game was played here in the last 4-5 years. So, we didn't know what a good score was and had to keep wickets till 14-15 overs and take it from there. 160 in a World Cup game is always tricky. Netherlands had their moments. Ten runs an over on this ground in the last 7-8 overs, wind going in one way, made it tough to defend. But credit to bowlers for pulling it off," he added.

The Tigers' bowlers have had the opportunity to bowl first in both their first games but when asked to defend in the death overs, the sharpness and skill of the bowlers were exhibited. However, a better batting effort would help the side gain momentum as Bangladesh now look to ensure a Super Eight berth with a win over Nepal in their next game.

Rishad turning the tide with turn

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh are not accustomed to seeing what leg-spinner Rishad Hossain is dishing out in the ongoing T20 World Cup.

One cannot only be spellbound by the 21-year-old's game-changing wizardry but must also be charmed by his congruity with orthodoxy in his craft, especially at a time when being orthodox is deemed as the doom for most spinners, particularly in the 20-over format.

In that quest to further put sheen on his limited skillset and solidify his stature as a leg-break bowler, Rishad seemed to have found the missing link in his arsenal – the ability to get his leg-breaks to turn.

With this addition, at least in the first three matches of the T20 World Cup, he has become a real trump card for the Tigers and ardent fans of the country's cricket have tasted a proper serving of what a leg-spinner brings to the table.

Rishad stamped his importance in the side as a difference-maker with his latest exploits against the Netherlands -- a crucial tie in Bangladesh's path to the Super Eights.

The task at hand for the Netherlands in the game after the 14th over was to get 56 runs off 36 deliveries in pursuit of Bangladesh's 159-run total, with the score at three down for 104.

The Dutch had skipper Scott Edwards and Sybrand Engelbrecht well-set in the middle, having put together a 42-run stand and skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto brought on Rishad to personify the role of a leggie.

He tossed one that turned away sharply from Engelbrecht and the batter could not help himself which led to his dismissal. A ball later, he looped one in that drifted towards Bas de Leede and to his surprise, turned away sharply. The right-handed batter was lured into the shot and lost track of his back leg as Liton Das whipped off the bails in a flash.

He came back to the bowl the 18th and picked another wicket, finishing with three for 33, to cap off a memorable day for Bangladesh which will be remembered for Rishad's game-changing acumen.

The 21-year-old had shown what he's made off earlier in the tournament as well, when he turned the match on its head against Sri Lanka by picking up two in an over in contrasting styles.

The first was the typical leg-spinner's wicket where Charith Asalanka fell by trying to take Rishad on and the way he took the next wicket was nothing less than a dream sight for fans of Bangladesh cricket as he bowled a ripper that turned away from leg-stump, took the outside edge of Wanindu Hasaranga's bat and found its way into the hands of first slip.

The key component that has stood out is Rishad's ability to get his leg-breaks to turn. Before coming into this World Cup, fans and experts alike had come to terms with this key limitation of his.

Rishad's strength lies in his accuracy, the elevation from which he releases the ball, the ability to extract bounce and a natural drift. But right from the onset of this tournament, he has, almost magically, added the ability to turn the ball.

Against Sri Lanka, Rishad caught everyone's attention when he registered an average turn of 3.6 degrees, which at that point was the most in that ground in the tournament.

Many, including his mentor Sohel Islam, have credited the type of wickets in the USA for the turn.

"The turn is not an issue. From what I've seen, it's his accuracy. Turn depends on the surface. If the surface is sticky then turn will be more and if it is flat, turn will be less. The main thing is whether he is being able to get bounce and drop the ball," Sohel told The Daily Star.

But getting this amount of turn cannot only be due to the surface. It might be small tweaks he has made under the supervision of Mushtaq Ahmed who himself was a legendary leg-spinner.

Whatever the reason behind Rishad's new found turn, Bangladesh are reaping the benefits of it. The fans are witnessing something they had never seen before in the Bangladesh national team. They've had to be in awe of leg-spin legends of other nations but are beginning to see samples of leg-spin artistry from one of their own.

'Approach and attitude': Booters' bright takeaways

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's qualifying campaign of the FIFA World Cup 2026 left little room for an optimistic postmortem, but forward Rakib Hossain reckons that the men in red and green have shown improvement in two aspects: a never-say-die "attitude" and "approach" in playing a comparative attacking brand of football than before.

The charges of Javier Cabrera returned home from Qatar yesterday after drawing curtains in Tuesday's 4-0 loss to Lebanon, leaving them with a solitary point from six Group I encounters in the second round.

Although an encouraging show in 2023 SAFF Championship had expectations escalated, Bangladesh conceding a whopping 20 goals quantified a lacklustre campaign.

Moreover, they displayed a polarising performance in their home and away fixtures -- significantly worse in the latter since they only allowed four goals in home fixtures -- against vastly superior opponents in Australia, Palestine and Lebanon.

For Rakib, "a change of team attitude has been the biggest achievement" despite unfavourable outcomes.

"Our target was to finish third, but silly mistakes made us suffer," Rakib said.

The 25-year-old forward believes that Bangladesh could rectify mistakes if they get to play much stronger oppositions on a regular basis, especially abroad where the playing field offers a faster pace than familiar conditions at home.

Rakib, however, remains hopeful that "something good awaits" his side in upcoming SAFF Championship and Asian Cup Qualifiers.

Christian Pulisic fires a low free-kick past Alisson as the U.S held Brazil to a 1-1 draw in a friendly in Orlando on Wednesday in a final tune-up for both sides ahead of the Copa America. Following a goal from Real Madrid forward Rodrygo in the 17th minute, Pulisic helped the U.S draw level and avoid a defeat against the record five-time world champions for only the second time in 20 matches.

PHOTO: AFP

Chance to jump-start the German machine

REUTERS, *Berlin*

Germany begin their quest for a first major title in a decade as the Euro 2024 hosts play their Group A opener against Scotland on Friday to kick off the tournament and what the country hopes will be a month-long party for visiting fans.

Germany have won four World Cups and three European Championships but their stellar tournament reputation has been somewhat tarnished with a series of failures since their 2014 World Cup victory in Brazil.

They went out of the next two World Cups in the group stage, their worst showing in over 80 years, and exited the last Euros in the round of 16.

With the tournament on home soil, there is only one outcome that will satisfy Germany's fans, who are desperate for the success they once took for granted: winning the title.

Despite their 2022 World Cup disappointment, a string of terrible results since, including a 4-1 home defeat to Japan back in September, and a change of coach a month later, the Germans still have their eyes on the big prize.

Coach Julian Nagelsmann, who took over in October 2023, made that clear only days before the tournament. "The normal ambition: we want to win it," Nagelsmann said of the team's goal.

His team are banking on a mix of hugely talented young players, including Jamal Musiala and newly-crowned Bundesliga champion Florian Wirtz, and experienced veterans such as 2014 World Cup winners Manuel Neuer, Thomas Mueller, and Toni Kroos.

The big question remains their goal-scoring ability with Kai Havertz, far from a natural number nine, being their first-choice striker. Burly Borussia Dortmund forward Niclas Fuellkrug will be on the bench.

They will need to underline those big ambitions against the Scots, who are playing in back-to-back European Championships for the first time since 1996.

Scotland, clear underdogs, are hoping for an early upset that could help guide them through the group stage for the first time in 11 international tournaments.

Apart from success on the pitch, the host country is also banking on a wave of enthusiasm from their own fans as well as an estimated 2.7 million visitors for the June 14-July 14 event.

Large fan zones have been set up across all major cities, including Berlin's massive fan space, stretching from the iconic Brandenburg gate far into the west of the city.

The fan zones were an overwhelming success during the 2006 World Cup in Germany, helping to fuel the party atmosphere of that tournament, dubbed locally the 'summer fairytale'.

Conditions are not quite the same this time, with more than one in four Germans having no interest in the Euros, and security being top of the agenda.

Thousands of police will be deployed around the clock in an attempt to head off potential threats from Islamists, hooligans, violent individuals, and cyberattacks.

Star DHAKA FRIDAY JUNE 14, 2024, JAISHTHA 31, 1431 BS

SPORT

EURO 2024
UEFA EURO2024 GERMANY
Biplob ©

EUROS RETURN with many contenders

AFP, *Berlin*

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D	GROUP E	GROUP F
GERMANY	SPAIN	SLOVENIA	POLAND	BELGIUM	TURKEY
SCOTLAND	CROATIA	DENMARK	NETHERLANDS	SLOVAKIA	GEORGIA
HUNGARY	ITALY	SERBIA	AUSTRIA	ROMANIA	PORTUGAL
SWITZERLAND	ALBANIA	ENGLAND	FRANCE	UKRAINE	CZECH REPUBLIC

The top two teams from each group along with the four best third-place finishers will progress to the round of 16. That will be followed by the quarterfinals, semifinals and the final.

OPENING FIXTURE
Germany vs
Scotland, June 15,
Saturday, 1:00 am

FINAL
July 15, Monday,
1:00 am

Euro 2024, beginning in Germany on June 14, is a mouth-watering prospect, as France and England lead the heavyweight contenders for a tournament which will be played out in some of the continent's finest stadiums across a football-mad nation.

The setting for the month-long competition is important, given the underwhelming nature of the last Euros three years ago, held all over the continent rather than in one country, and played before limited crowds during the Covid pandemic.

This time all fans will descend on 10 stadiums in Germany, many with memories of the unforgettable summer of 2006 when the country last staged a major tournament.

That 2006 World Cup was won by Italy, who come into this European Championship as title holders, but it also saw Germany emerge again as a force to be reckoned with after years in the doldrums.

Back then there were question marks about the host nation's chances, yet they reached the semifinals.

There are similar doubts this time surrounding Julian Nagelsmann's team, given Germany have exited the last two World Cups in the group stage and lost in the last 16 at the last Euros.

However, it would be foolish to talk down the three-time European champions too much given the players at their disposal.

There are good reasons why France and England are widely seen as the favourites to raise aloft the Henri Delaunay trophy at Berlin's Olympic Stadium on July 14.

France are Europe's top-ranked nation and have been in the last two World Cup finals. Their team has evolved since Qatar in 2022 but the quality at their disposal, beyond Kylian Mbappe, is fearsome and they are eager to win a first European Championship since 2000.

It is not always the case that everything goes to form. But if it does, and France and England top their groups, they will be on a collision course to meet in the semifinals at Signal Iduna Park.

England carry the burden of never having won the Euros. Beaten on penalties by Italy in the 2021 final, Gareth Southgate's team lost a nail-biting quarterfinal to France at the last World Cup.

The two men who could give them the edge are Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham.

Kane will be at home in his surroundings having just scored 44 goals in his first season for Bayern Munich.

Munich's Allianz Arena hosts the first semifinal. The other semifinal venue was Bellingham's home ground for the three years he spent at Dortmund, but he comes to the Euros after a fine first campaign at Real Madrid, fresh from winning the Champions League.

Absent from the last two World Cups, Italy will be in Germany to defend their European crown, despite losing twice to England in qualifying.

The Azzurri are in a group with Spain, semifinalists at the last Euros but who have not won a major tournament knockout game in 90 minutes since Euro 2012.

There may be as many as eight realistic potential champions, including 2016 winners Portugal, still led by Cristiano Ronaldo, even though he is now 39.

Belgium and the Netherlands will hope to make an impact too, but the Euros -- the third edition since expanding to 24 teams – is richer for the presence of less-fancied nations.

Albania, under the Brazilian Sylvinho, appear at only their second Euros, while Georgia make their debut.

Managed by former France and Bayern Munich defender Willy Sagnol, and led by Napoli winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, they will be worth watching.

Their tournament starts on June 18 against Turkey in Dortmund.

AT A GLANCE

- Euro 2024 will be the 17th edition of the competition and only the second occasion that the tournament will be hosted by Germany after West Germany hosted the tournament in 1988.
- Italy's triumph in the 2020 edition – their second European Championship - meant the Azzurri became the fourth side to have won the competition more than once after Germany (3), Spain (3), and France (2).
- Ten nations have won Europe's most elite international prize. Russia (as the Soviet Union) won the inaugural edition in 1960 beating Yugoslavia 2-1 in the final.
- Spain became the first team to win consecutive European Championships, in 2008 and 2012 respectively.
- Only on three occasions has a host nation gone on to win the title, with the latest side in that regard being France back in 1984. Spain (in 1964) and Italy (in 1968) are the other two sides to have triumphed on home soil.

- The tournament has seen 22 penalty shootouts overall. The first shootout took place in the 1976 final between Czechoslovakia and West Germany. It included one of the most iconic penalties ever scored as Antonín Panenka disguised a delicate chipped effort into the goal to secure Czechoslovakia the title.
- Netherlands hold the record for netting the most number of goals in a match. They thrashed Yugoslavia 6-1 in 2000 which remains the only time a team has scored six in a European Championship game.
- Cristiano Ronaldo tops the all-time scoring charts in European Championship history with 14 goals, five clear of second-placed Michel Platini. Ronaldo's goals have come across five different editions while Platini scored all of his nine goals in France's title-winning 1984 edition. Platini holds the record for most goals in a single edition.
- Ronaldo also holds the record for most appearances in Euros with 25 in total.
- Austria's Ivica Vastic became the competition's oldest goal-scorer at 38 years and 257 days when he converted a penalty in stoppage-time against Poland in the 2008 edition. Cristiano Ronaldo, aged 39 and set to feature in his sixth European Championship, will be eyeing to make that record his own.
- At 40 years and 86 days, former Hungary goalkeeper Gabor Kiraly, who played in the 2016 edition, became the oldest player to feature in the competition. He also garnered a lot of attention for goalkeeping wearing his grey sweatpants.

FIVE PLAYERS TO WATCH

JUDE BELLINGHAM (ENGLAND)

Fresh from helping Real Madrid to La Liga and Champions League glory in his first season in Spain, Jude Bellingham turns his attention to trying to end England's 58-year wait for major tournament glory.

The 20-year-old is part of a star-studded array of attacking talent alongside Harry Kane, Phil Foden and Bukayo Saka.

Bellingham played in a deeper role at the 2022 World Cup but he has thrived in the more advanced position given to him by Carlo Ancelotti this season, scoring 23 goals.

Victory at the Euros could also position Bellingham as the leading candidate to win this year's Ballon d'Or -- awarded to the world's best player.

KYLIAN MBAPPE (FRANCE)

Speculation over Kylian Mbappe's future has finally been put to bed, with the forward making his way to Real Madrid from PSG.

The 25-year-old has faced accusations that he has wasted some of his prime years in his homeland.

After becoming the first teenager since Pele to score in a World Cup final to help France to victory in Russia in 2018, he became the first player since 1966 to net a hattrick in the 2022 World Cup final which Les Bleus lost to Argentina on penalties.

But Mbappe also has a score to settle at the Euros. He missed the crucial penalty in France's shock last 16 exit to Switzerland three years ago, having failed to score in the coronavirus-delayed tournament.

FLORIAN WIRTZ (GERMANY)

Florian Wirtz carries the hopes of the home nation after playing a starring role in Bayer Leverkusen's unbeaten German league and cup double.

Germany have suffered a rare fallow period, bowing out at the group stage of each of the past two World Cups and the last 16 at Euro 2020.

Wirtz, named the Bundesliga's player of the season, offers hope that a new generation can rejuvenate the fortunes of the three-time European champions under Julian Nagelsmann.

Both a goalscoring threat and creative hub, Wirtz, 21, netted 18 goals and provided 20 assists as Leverkusen reached the Europa League final on top of their domestic dominance.

CRISTIANO RONALDO (PORTUGAL)

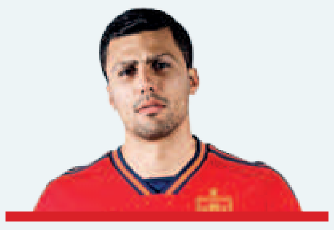
Cristiano Ronaldo continues to defy Father Time as he prepares to take part in a record sixth Euros at the age of 39.

Already the all-time top goalscorer in the comeptition, with 14 goals, the five-time Ballon d'Or winner is still setting new scoring landmarks in Saudi Arabia.

Ronaldo broke the Saudi Pro League record with 35 goals in his first full season in the Gulf.

Portugal have been in supreme form, winning all 10 of their Euro qualifiers.

However, coach Roberto Martinez must decide whether to trust in Ronaldo or to go with a younger, more mobile focal point to his attack such as Diogo Jota or Goncalo Ramos.



RODRI (SPAIN)

Manchester City's FA Cup final loss to Man United was Rodri's first defeat for club or country since March 2023, excluding penalty shootouts.

In a Spain squad lacking the star names of the past, the 27-year-old is now the standard bearer.

"He's the best midfield player in the current world by far," said City coach Pep Guardiola, himself a former midfielder.

Rodri's tenacity out of possession and poise on the ball will be the foundation on which Luis de la Fuente can build.

The three-time European champions will need it as they are in the toughest-looking group alongside defending champions Italy, World Cup semifinalists Croatia and Albania.

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App Store

Fake refrigerants seized at Ctg port

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Chattogram Customs House confiscated 62,000 suspected substandard refrigerant gas-filled cylinders at the port.

An intelligence agency recommended intercepting the shipments from China, customs officials said.

An intelligence report noted that poor-quality gas for AC and refrigerators posed health risks and can lead to accidents.

Numerous importers received shipments of refrigerant valued at Tk 400-500 crores at the port by providing false declarations, said the report.

The products are of extremely low quality and manufactured by a fraudulent company, the report added.

On papers, the confiscated cylinders were brought from a Chinese company named FORANE which maintains international standards. However, the confiscated cylinders were labelled FORAN and they resembled genuine FORANE cylinders, according to the detention report from customs.

The actual company's cylinders are priced at $7-8 each, whereas the fake cylinders cost less than $2.

Mohammad Fyzur Rahman, commissioner of Chattogram Custom House, said, "More than 10 shipments were confiscated during the clearance process. Additionally, release of approximately 40 consignments have been temporarily halted. It has been determined that counterfeit goods were brought under false declarations."

"Further steps will be taken based on the advice of the Directorate of Explosives," he added.

Importers are required to follow the Explosives Policy-1991 and obtain prior approval from the directorate.

Similarly, the importers also have to follow the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

EID RUSH BEGINS ... Due to the pressure of holidaymakers, the Dhaka-Tangail highway saw tailbacks of several kilometers till at least 7:00pm. People in and around the capital have begun their Eid journeys yesterday, ahead of the weekend, as the festival will be celebrated on June 17. The photo was taken from Ashulia's Baipail area around 2:30pm.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Bus, launch terminals see huge rush of homegoers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In spite of the rain, the capital's bus and launch terminals, as well as the Kamalapur Railway Station, began to fill up with passengers as thousands made the journey to their village homes yesterday, the last working day for government employees before the Eid-ul-Azha holidays began.

The rush of people heading home for Eid is expected to peak tomorrow after all the ready-made garment factories closed for the holidays, according to the police and transport operators.

Eid will be celebrated in the country on Monday.

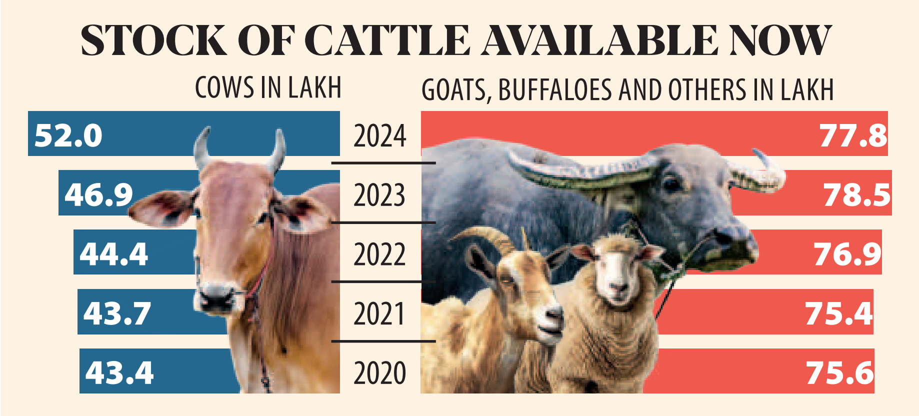
Heavy rain posed challenges for the homegoers trying to reach the bus and launch terminals and railway stations.

People got stranded at different points of the capital during the hour-

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Record number of sacrificial animals up for Eid sale

Traders anticipate low sales due to inflationary pressure on the middle class



SUKANTA HALDER

A record number of sacrificial animals are up for sale this Eid-ul-Azha due to the surplus of the animals, which were left largely unsold during last year's Eid.

The number was over 1.25 crore in 2023 and crossed 1.29 crore this year, according to Department of Livestock Services (DLS) data.

Of the animals, there are 53 lakh cows and buffaloes; 76 lakh goats and sheep; and 1,850 other mammals, it said.

The DLS data said there is a demand for 1.7 crore sacrificial animals this year.

According to businesspeople, this year's is the highest number of sacrificial animals for Eid-ul-Azha in the history of Bangladesh, which is why they would not be sold at prices as high as previous years.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Tk 29.40 lakh looted from bank's vault

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogura*

Robbers looted Tk 29.40 lakh after breaking into the vault of Matidali sub-branch of IFIC Bank in Bogura Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Quoting bank officials, Saihan Olliullah, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station, said the robbers entered the first floor of the two-storey building through the roof access and got into the branch breaking its locks.

Seeking anonymity, a police official said there were three CCTV cameras inside the branch. Two masked men entered the bank around 2:30am and covered the cameras with tissue paper.

Branch Manager Fahmida Firoz declined to comment when asked about the security at the branch.

Contacted, Snikdho Akhtar, additional superintendent of Bogura police, said, "Only four people are operating the branch -- manager, cashier, cleaner, and a watchman who is on duty during the daytime."

The branch did not have any nightwatchman, he said.

Police said two bank officials kept the money in the vault Wednesday. When they reached work yesterday morning, they found the vault broken and the money taken.

Filing of a case in this connection is underway, said police.

On January 26, robbers took away Tk 9 lakh from a sub-branch of NRBC Bank at Pallimanga under Sadar upazila breaking into its vault.

Police are still investigating the case.

Israeli forces strike deeper into Rafah

30 more Palestinians killed; Hamas urges Blinken to put 'direct pressure' on Israel for permanent ceasefire

AGENCIES

- Hamas fighters battle Israeli troops on streets
- Israeli military strikes 45 targets across Gaza
- Gaza death toll rises to 37,232

Israeli tanks advanced deeper into the western area of Rafah, amid one of the worst nights of bombardment from air, ground, and sea, forcing many families to flee their homes and tents under darkness, residents said yesterday.

Residents said the Israeli forces thrust towards the Al-Mawasi area of Rafah near the beach, which is designated as a humanitarian area in all announcements and maps published by the Israeli army since it began its Rafah offensive in May.

The Israeli military denied in a statement it had launched any strikes inside the Al-Mawasi humanitarian zone.

The Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, said its fighters were battling Israeli troops on the streets of the same area, reports AFP.

The Israeli military said it was continuing "intelligence-based, targeted operations" on Rafah, saying forces in the past day had located weapons, and killed Palestinian gunmen in close-range combat.

The military said it had struck 45 targets across the Gaza Strip from the air, including "military structures, militant cells, rocket launchers, and tunnel shafts".

The top world court, the International Court of Justice, in May issued a binding ruling for Israel to halt any offensive in Rafah and elsewhere that could bring about "the physical destruction" of the Palestinians.

Israel responded that it had not "and will not" engage in such operations against the Palestinians, reports Reuters.

At least 37,232 Palestinians have been killed and 85,037 have been injured in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

1.5m pilgrims reach Makkah as hajj begins today

AGENCIES

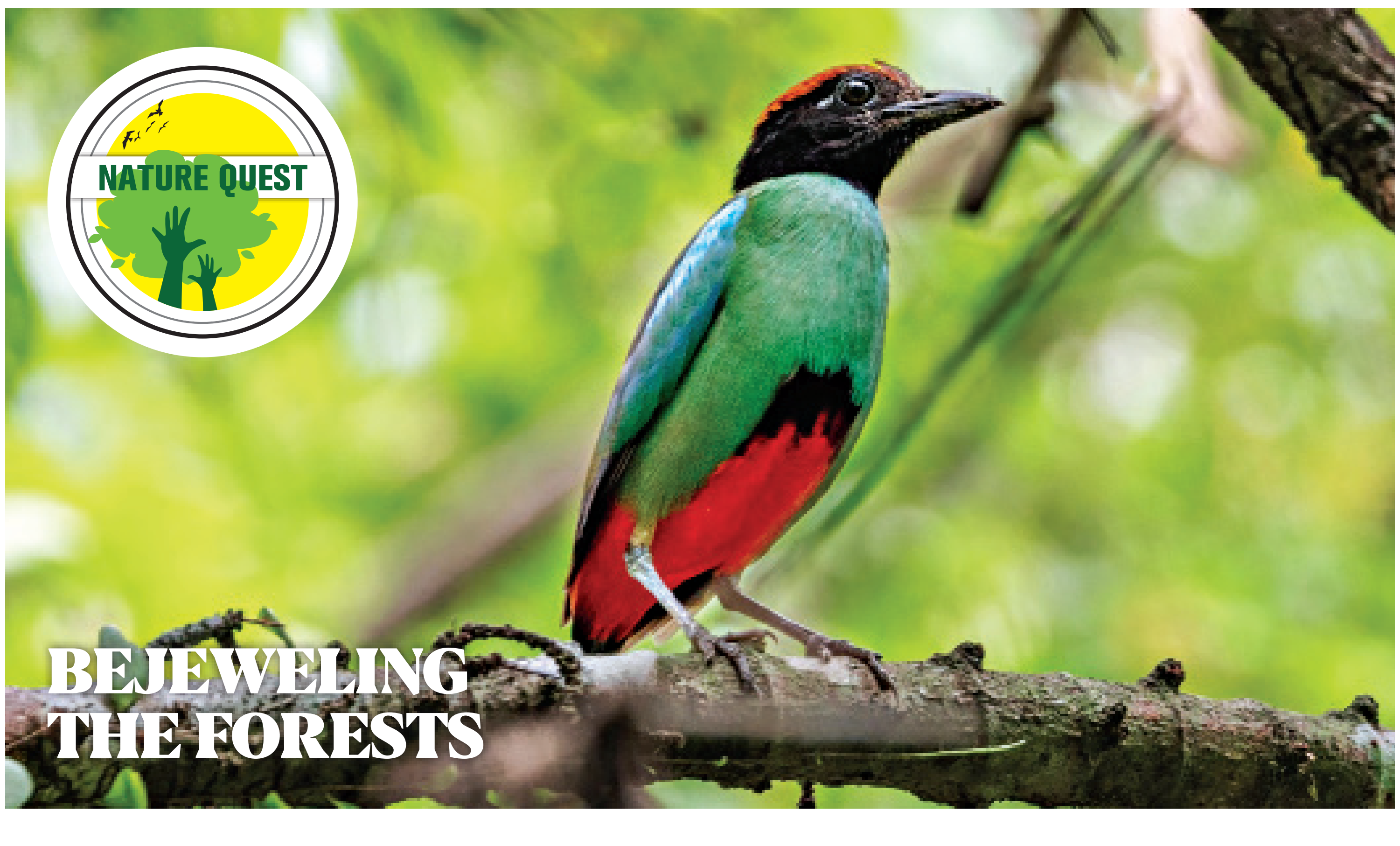
More than 1.5 million Muslims will begin the annual hajj pilgrimage in the Saudi holy city of Makkah today.

Crowds of worshippers have already begun to gather in Makkah in the days ahead of the hajj, the focal point of the Islamic calendar.

Saudi officials said they expect the number of pilgrims this year to exceed those in 2023, when more than 1.8 million people performed hajj.

The pilgrims included 4,200 Palestinians from the occupied West Bank who arrived in Makkah earlier this month, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs.

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip were not able to travel to Saudi Arabia for hajj this year because of the Israeli offensive in the enclave that began eight months ago.



A western hooded pitta spotted in the Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary in Chattogram. It's one of Asia's most frequently observed and familiar pitta's and it's no surprise that its range spans from eastern to southeastern Asia and maritime southeast Asia, where it lives in different kinds of forests, plantations and other cultivated areas. As lowland species, it's easily identified throughout its range due to the striking colours: emerald green body plumage, dark head, bright blue wings and a dash of red in the underbelly. Though it is abundant in its range, a slow decline in its population shows that within a decade or so, it might become a vulnerable species. Spotted from April to August during its breeding season, this bird highlights the sanctuary's dense forest and undergrowth as a vital habitat, underscoring the importance of preserving such natural environments and celebrating the region's rich biodiversity.

PHOTO: MONJUR MORSHED

US, Ukraine ink 10yr defence deal

REUTERS, *Italy*

US President Joe Biden and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy signed a 10-year bilateral security agreement yesterday aimed at bolstering Ukraine's defence against Russian invaders and getting Ukraine closer to NATO membership.

The deal, signed on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Italy, aims to commit future US administrations to support Ukraine, even if former President Donald Trump wins November's election, officials said.

"Our goal is to strengthen Ukraine's credible defense and deterrence capabilities for the long term," Biden said at a joint news conference with Zelenskiy.

He said the G7's message to Russian President Vladimir Putin is "You cannot wait us out. You cannot divide us." The group of rich nations also agreed to a $50 billion loan for Ukraine backed by profits from frozen Russian assets.

The US-Ukraine security deal is a framework for a long-term effort to help develop Ukraine's outdated armed forces and serve as a step towards Ukraine's eventual NATO membership, according to the text.

The Ukraine president called the agreement historic, saying it is a bridge toward his country's eventual NATO membership. "This is an agreement on security and thus on the protection of human life," he said.

Zelenskiy has long sought NATO membership, but the allies have stopped short of taking that step. The Western alliance regards any attack launched on one of its 32 members as an attack on all under its Article Five clause.

In the event of an armed attack or threat of such against Ukraine, top US and Ukrainian officials will meet within 24 hours to consult on a response and determine what additional defense needs are required for Ukraine,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

WALTON
Smart Fridge
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মিলিয়নিয়ার

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SECOND EDITION
DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 15, 2024
REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 146 | ASHAR 1, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | ZILHAJJ 8, 1445 HIJRI | 16 PAGES : TK 15.00

KSRM
শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

Hasina to visit India on June 21

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit New Delhi on June 21-22.

PM's Press Secretary Md Nayeemul Islam Khan confirmed it to The Daily Star last night.

The decision comes just a week after the PM's visit to India to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

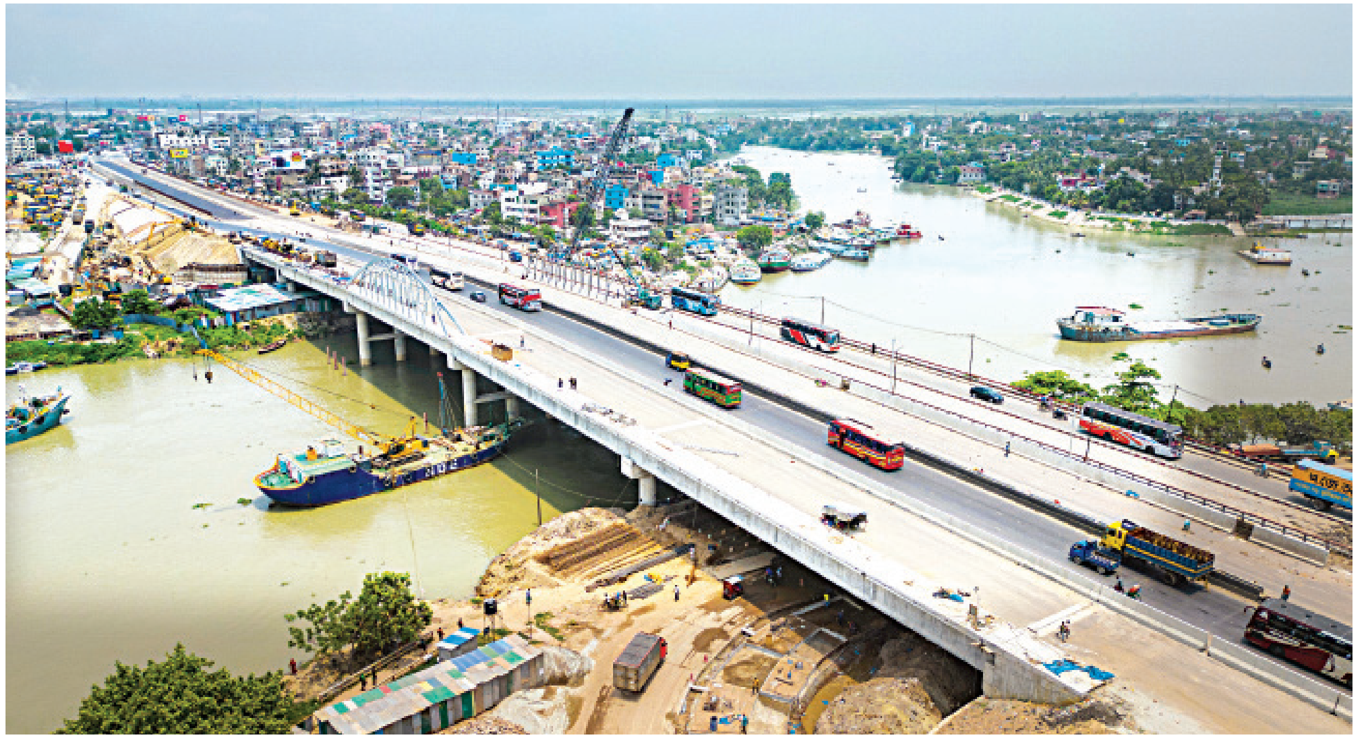
According to sources in the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi and Indian Ministry of External Affairs, Hasina and Modi will have a one-on-one meeting followed by a delegation-level meeting on June 22 at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi.

She is supposed to return home that day.

A diplomatic source in Dhaka told The Daily Star yesterday, "The decision for a bilateral visit to India is somewhat sudden, but leadership of the two countries wanted to have the visit now after the elections in both countries."

The source said the leaders of the two countries want to advance the existing relations that have

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



The new six-lane bridge adjacent to the existing four-lane Amin Bazar Bridge is now fully open to traffic. Two lanes of the bridge were opened in April and the remaining four on Wednesday. The bridge is expected to ease traffic congestion in the Gabtoli-Amin Bazar area. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

BNP revamping party, wings

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The BNP has started reorganising the party to inject vigour and form a strong base to relaunch its anti-government movement.

The party decided to revamp the organisation after evaluating the "success and failure" of its movement centring the January 7 national election.

As part of the move, the party dissolved the convening committees of its Dhaka south and North city units on Thursday night. The BNP also announced dissolution of the convening committees of its Chattogram and Barishal city units.

The central committee of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, led by President Sultan Salahuddin Tuku and General Secretary Abdul Monayem Munna, has also been dissolved.

Party sources said the move was made to relieve those leaders who failed to wage a movement centring on the January 7 national polls, and to bring "tested and young" leaders into the party's leadership.

The BNP and some other political parties boycotted the polls.

The sources said that after the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

3RD TRANCHE OF LOAN

IMF board to meet on June 24

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The International Monetary Fund will discuss releasing $1.15 billion in the third instalment of its loan to Bangladesh during its board meeting on June 24. This is part of the IMF's $4.7 billion loan programme for the country.

The date for the meeting was fixed yesterday. Bangladesh officials said they are hopeful that the loan proposal will be approved since the country has met all conditions except one set for the release of the third tranche.

In the board meeting, the multilateral lender will assess Bangladesh's progress in meeting the conditions set in December last year.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

EID RUSH

People suffer as highways clog up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As thousands of Eid holidaymakers left Dhaka yesterday, many suffered on roads due traffic congestions on three major highways and at an exit point of the capital in the morning.

Traffic situation improved in the afternoon, but vehicles moved slowly in some parts of two major highways in the evening.

Many passengers complained that some bus operators charged them extra fares taking advantage of the Eid rush.

Some said they had to wait for several hours to board buses even after buying tickets at higher prices.

Most of the trains left Kamalapur Railway Station on schedule.

SUFFERING IN MORNING

People leaving Dhaka using Mayor Hanif Flyover faced tailbacks in the morning.

Monirul Islam Bhuiyan, a banker, said he boarded a shuttle bus of a transport company in Kalabagan at 10:00am.

"It is now 1:30pm and I am still stuck on the flyover. I don't know how long it will take to reach Chattogram," he told this newspaper.

He reached Narayanganj's Signboard area at 2:00pm.

From Paduar Bazar to Chandina of Cumilla, a 7km stretch, vehicles moved slowly around 6:00pm, reports our Cumilla correspondent.

According to highway police, congestion happened after workers from Denim Processing Plant in Chandina blocked the highway around 11:00am, demanding arrear wages.

The blockade was withdrawn around noon, said Ahmed Sanzur Morshed, officer-in-charge of Chandina Police Station.

People bound for southern districts suffered delays on the Dhaka-Mawa Expressway due to a 6km tailback at the Mawa end of the Padma Bridge toll plaza.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Pilgrims arrive at the Mina tent camp during the annual hajj pilgrimage near the holy city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Two men vocal against Benazir accused of theft

STAR REPORT

Two local men, who earlier alleged that former police chief Benazir Ahmed had scared the Hindu people into underselling 605.77 bighas of land in Gopalganj and Madaripur, were accused of stealing from Benazir's Savanna resort.

Sarwar Hossain, a manager of the Savanna Eco Resort and Natural Park in Gopalganj, accused five named and several unnamed people in a case filed with Gopalganj Sadar Police Station on Thursday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

AZIM MURDER

Babu confesses meeting hitman over blood money

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER**

Azim

Accused Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu admitted to court that he was involved in the murder of Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim Anar.

Babu, relief and social welfare affairs secretary of Jhenaidah Awami League, confessed to having communications on WhatsApp with hitman Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan, on May 16, a day after Amanullah returned to Bangladesh from Kolkata after the killing.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

আমরা
শোকাহত

ঢাকা ব্যাংক পিএলসি.-এর সম্মানিত চেয়ারম্যান
জনাব আবদুল হাই সরকার এর সর্বকনিষ্ঠ বোন ফাতেমা বেগম,
১৪ জুন, ২০২৪, শুক্রবার সকালে শেষ নিঃশ্বাস ত্যাগ করেন।

(ইন্না লিল্লাহি ওয়া ইন্না ইলাইহি রাজিউন)

মৃত্যুকালে তাঁর বয়স ছিলো ৬৭ বছর। ফাতেমা বেগমকে
সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার বেলকুচি উপজেলায় তাঁর পিতার কবরের পাশে
সমাহিত করা হয়। তাঁর এই মৃত্যুতে ঢাকা ব্যাংক পরিবার
গভীরভাবে শোকাহত।

তাঁর মৃত্যুতে আমরা গভীর সমবেদনা জ্ঞাপন করছি এবং তাঁর আত্মার
মাগফিরাত কামনা করছি। মহান রাব্বুল আলামিন তাঁকে
জান্নাতুল ফেরদৌস দান করুন। আমিন।

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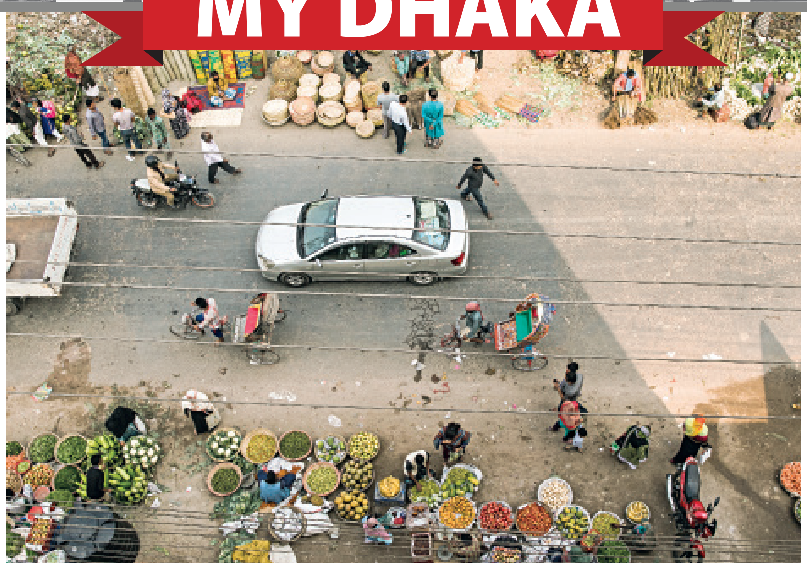


PHOTO: STAR

Scenes from a bazaar

RBR

Just a few kilometres off the city boundaries is a greener Dhaka. The colours and tempo of a busy market intrigues me with wafts of tea brewing in a soot-laden old kettle in a tea stall.

It is the people who make such bazaars come alive -- their everyday rituals resembling the background scene of a movie.

I was crossing through one such bazaar on the outskirts of Dhaka, early on a weekend morning. It felt like I was watching a motion picture, where everything moved at a slow, ritualistic pace.

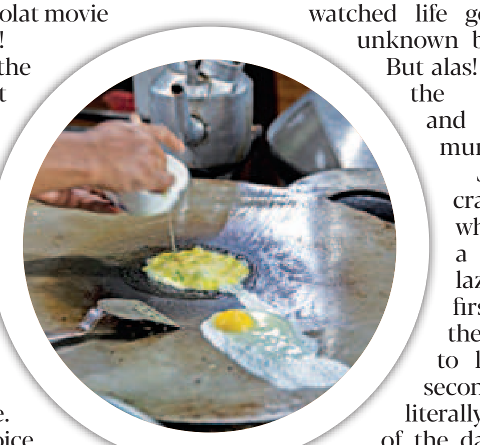
A group of beautiful women from the "bede" (snake charmers) community, caught my attention.

Hot pink, saffron yellow, and green sarees with hibiscus flowers tucked in their high buns -- these pretty ladies were decked up in jewellery. Rings on their toes, big dangling nose rings, and a pin stuck in their septum.

Their colourful glass bangles jingled while their silver chains with fish or snake pendants made them look naturally beautiful.

As always, they were raising money for an orphan's wedding. To make me believe their cause, they invited me to a Friday afternoon wedding on their boat.

This was my Chocolat movie moment, right there!



At 7:00am, the shabby market was buzzing with activities. Cooks in makeshift hotels beside the big banyan tree were busy serving orders. One hotel cook made the trunk of the old tree his support wall, where he set up his stove. My breakfast of choice was the obvious egg roll and a steaming cup of sugary milk tea.

The paanwallah with his assortment of jolly tins was making a sweet khili or a single betel leaf wrapped with sweet mouth fresheners for me, the treat was on the house for taking his pictures.

I was the odd one out in this "movie scene", a mere bystander envying their simple, easy life that was a shade of every colour of blue, black, and pink.

If given the choice, I could have watched life go by in that unknown bazaar forever. But alas! I had to break the magic spell and return to my mundane city life.

Just at the crack of dawn, when the sky is a hue of lapis lazuli, the crow's first cry brings these bazaars to life in a split second, almost literally rising out of the darkness of the night.

Thanks to the Padma Bridge, going on such drives or day trips has become much easier than manoeuvring through city traffic.

Drives to places like Bhanga Bazar for a cup of their fusion brew of tea and coffee in thick milk, or popping at least five to six piping hot roshogollas of Khoka Miyar Mishti shop in Tetul Tolar Mor in Faridpur.

If you are lucky, you might even stumble upon a weekly bazaar or haat in an open space surrounded by old trees.

These pop-up bazaars are the liveliest in the late afternoon and take up an almost fair-like atmosphere. These bazaars have everything ones heart could fancy, from people selling home-grown fresh vegetables, country chicken eggs, ducks, moa and narus, and handmade wares like cane baskets or pankhas.

I love how men sit with a glass box full of local sweets under the shade of a tree, sharing the space acharwallahs or kulfiwallahs.

I love watching people. I love the green, the cool summer breeze on my face. A few kilometres off the city boundaries is a greener Dhaka like you have never seen.

To the people of Dhaka, I suggest you sometimes venture out of the monotony and traffic of the city to discover all the little joys sitting on its outskirts.

3 Bangladeshis killed in Saudi Arabia road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Chandpur*

Three Bangladeshi migrant workers were killed in a road accident in Saudi Arabia on Thursday. They were residents of Chandpur's Faridganj and Haimchar upazilas.

The deceased were identified as Sabuj Chowkidar, 38, of Paschim Bishkatali village of Faridganj upazila, Md Sabbir, 21, of Charbhanga village of Haimchar upazila and Md Rifat, 20, of Kamalapur village of Haimchar upazila.

The accident occurred around 9:00am (local time) on Thursday when they were going to their workplace from Afif, a city in Saudi Arabia.

Sabuj's father Jamal Chowkidar said they received information about the accident at 4:00pm on Thursday.

Later, they were taken to a local hospital where doctors declared three people, including Sabuj, dead around 10:00pm, he said quoting relatives staying in Saudi Arabia.

Sabuj was driving the car at the time of the accident, he added.

Families of the victims are urgently calling for the cooperation of the departments of the government concerned in bringing the bodies of their sons.

French left vows 'total break' with Macron policies

AFP, *Paris*

France's left put up a united front yesterday, vowing a "total break" with President Emmanuel Macron's policies if it wins historic polls, while far-right figurehead Marine Le Pen pledged a "national unity government" if her party emerges victorious.

President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday stunned France by calling snap legislative elections for June 30, with a second round on July 7, after Le Pen's far-right National Rally (NR) scored more than double the number of votes of his centrist alliance in last week's European elections.

After four days of intense negotiations, left-wing leaders including the hard-left France Unbowed (LFI), the Socialist, Communist and Green parties said late on Thursday they had agreed on an election alliance called the New Popular Front.

Yesterday, they unveiled a joint manifesto, whose headline measures included jettisoning Macron's controversial immigration and pension reforms if they win the polls.

Two men

FROM PAGE 1

The complaint said the accused stole three computers and a monitor from the office.

Sarwar was appointed as the manager by a committee formed by the district administration to manage the confiscated property and deposit the proceeds to a bank account.

The accused include Sajeeb Majumder, 33, Subrata Roy, 23, and Animesh Sen, 30, of Rajoir in Madaripur; and Bilpob Baul, 40, and Sanjoy Baul, 28, of Gopalganj town.

Of them, Biplob and his nephew Sanjoy, who live near the resort, earlier told reporters that the former inspector general of police often forced religious minorities to sell their properties.

According to the complaint, CCTV footage shows three men entering the office of the resort on Wednesday night and stealing some object.

Two members of the management committee, Bijon Kumar Nandi, fisheries officer, and Abdul Quader, deputy director of the agricultural extension department, said the faces of the suspects were not seen in the footage.

They added that the individuals were accused based on suspicion of several employees of the resort.

Besides, the complainant said he had gone to bed when the alleged theft happened.

Contacted, Sanjoy said, "We have been falsely accused because we spoke to the media against former IGP Benazir and other government officials. We are not poor. Why would we steal computers?

"Fear has gripped our family. Maybe we should leave the country."

Subrata, another accused, said he had not been anywhere near the resort in the last one month.

Hasina to visit India on June 21

FROM PAGE 1

deepened over more than a decade, especially in trade and connectivity.

One of the major points could be on the Teesta water sharing deal that could not be signed despite all preparations in 2011 because of the opposition from West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Also, from regional perspectives, Bangladesh faces the Rohingya crisis that has worsened because of intensification of conflicts between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army in the bordering Rakhine State.

"The details of the bilateral visit was yet to be prepared," a foreign ministry official told this correspondent.

Hasina is likely to visit Beijing on July 9-12.

People suffer as highways clog up

FROM PAGE 1

Ziaul Islam, in-charge of Mawa Traffic Police Outpost, told our Munshiganj correspondent that vehicles were caught in a snarl-up on the expressway early yesterday after a goods-laden truck broke down near the toll plaza. The truck was removed from the expressway after around five hours.

Kanchan Kumar Sinha, in-charge of Hashara Highway Police Station, said traffic became normal around 3:00pm.

Another traffic congestion was seen on the Dhaka-Tangail highway at the east end of the Bangabandhu Bridge. Vehicles moved slowly on this part of the highway for about five hours since early yesterday, causing suffering to the Eid holidaymakers.

Traffic was slow moving on a 20km stretch from the east end of Bangabandhu Bridge to Rabna Bypass in Tangail sadar upazila from 5:00am, said passengers and transport workers.

Sajedur Rahman, in-charge of Elenga Highway Police Outpost, told our Tangail correspondent that traffic situation deteriorated around 6:00am when a cement-laden truck overturned on the highway in Pauli area of Kalihati upazila.

The situation started becoming normal after the truck was removed from the highway around 8:30am, said the police official.

A huge pressure of vehicles on Nabinagar-Baipail-Chandra highway and Abdullahpur-Baipail road led to traffic congestions in some places, said Ayub Ali, officer-in-charge of Savar Highway Police Station in Dhaka.

Rush of vehicles led to a 3km congestion, stretching from Gabtoli to Baliarpur area, on Dhaka-Aricha Highway, Ayub told our Savar correspondent in the evening.

TRAIN SERVICES

A large number of people left Dhaka by trains yesterday and their journeys back home were largely hassle free.

More than 30 trains left Dhaka as of 7:00pm and only two of them ran behind schedule, Shah Alam Kiron Shishir, divisional commercial officer (Dhaka division) of Bangladesh Railway, told The Daily Star.

Rajshahi-bound Silkcity Express departed the capital one hour late while Chattogram-bound Chattala Express was one and a half hours, he said.

Departure of Rajshahi Commuter was delayed by two and a half hours.

Many passengers expressed satisfaction at the railway services as almost all trains left Kamalapur Railway Station on time.

IMF board to meet on June 24

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh could not meet the condition set for foreign currency reserves.

As per the loan conditions, the target for net international reserves (NIR) in December last year was $17.78 billion. However, a recent IMF review found the NIR was $16.73 billion at that particular time.

The NIR is defined as reserves assets minus reserve liabilities. Reserves liabilities are all foreign exchange liabilities to residents and nonresidents, including commitments to sell foreign exchange arising from derivatives and all credit outstanding from the IMF.

Bangladesh Bank and finance ministry officials said the country has met five other conditions, including a maximum limit of Tk 90,520 crore for the primary budget deficit in December. The government saw a budget surplus of about Tk 50,000 crore at that particular time.

The tax revenue collection target was set at Tk 1,43,640 crore for the first six months of the current fiscal year, but the government collected over Tk 1,62,000 crore.

The social spending target was set at Tk 30,990 crore for the same period, but the country spent more than Tk 55,000 crore.

For capital spending, the target was set at Tk 22,280 crore. However, Bangladesh spent about Tk 36,000 crore during the same period.

Bangladesh also met the two other targets -- maintaining a ceiling on reserve money and repaying foreign debt.

Ahead of releasing the third tranche of its loan, an IMF mission, led by Chris Papageorgiou, visited Dhaka from April 24-May 8 to review the programme performances.

In a media statement after the review, the IMF said its staff and the Bangladesh authorities have reached a staff-level agreement on the policies needed to complete the second review of the authorities' programme.

"The review is pending IMF Executive Board approval. Upon the Board's approval, Bangladesh will have access to SDR871 million [about $1,152 million] in financing," read the statement.

The Bangladesh authorities have made significant progress on structural reforms under the IMF-supported programme, including the implementation of a formula-based fuel price adjustment mechanism for petroleum products, it added.

The IMF also welcomed Bangladesh Bank's "bold actions" to realign the exchange rate and simultaneously adopt a crawling peg regime with a band.

Following the liberalisation of retail interest rates, IMF also said additional tightening of monetary policy should help alleviate any inflationary pressures resulting from the exchange rate reform.

On May 26, Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali told reporters that Bangladesh would get the third instalment by June.

The IMF approved the $4.7 billion loan in January last year. Bangladesh has received more than $1 billion in two instalments.

Tunisia sentences five over missing migrants

AFP, *Tunis*

A Tunisian court has sentenced five people to prison for organising an illegal migrant sea crossing that resulted in 18 deaths or disappearances, a spokesman said yesterday.

The boat carrying the migrants, all Tunisians, went missing off the coast of the southeastern city of Zarzis during an attempt to reach Italy in September 2022.

The five Tunisian defendants, including two still at large, received prison terms ranging from four to 10 years on Thursday night, said Lassad Horr, spokesman for the Medenine court.

The incident sparked protests and a general strike in Zarzis. President Kais Saied later ordered an investigation to uncover what happened.

The court spokesman said yesterday that a boat, two cars and a GPS device had been seized as part of the investigation.

BNP revamping

FROM PAGE 1

polls, party high-ups evaluated the movement outcome and its leaders' role and decided to reorganise the party based on the evaluation report.

"Movement, organisation, and election are interrelated. The move to reorganise the party is to strengthen the party's organisational capacity and to intensify the movement," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told The Daily Star.

He, however, said the process of dissolving committees and forming new ones is a routine task carried out by a political party.

BNP leaders said party acting chairman Tarique Rahman started the process following its post-election report.

He held a series of meetings with the leaders, including the latest one with the Dhaka city unit leaders on Thursday.

"He [Tarique] told the meeting that new committees will be formed and he sought cooperation from all," said a senior leader, wishing not to be named.

BNP standing committee member Goyeshwar Chandra Roy said dedicated and competent leaders would be included in the new committees.

Sources said new faces will be included in those committees which are yet to expire. However, those who failed to carry out their duties during the movement will be dropped.

"The party's acting chairman already has a list of such failed leaders," Goyeshwar said.

The BNP enforced hartals, blockades, and waged a non-cooperation movement to press home its one-point demand-- resignation of the government and parliamentary polls under an interim administration.

The government rather cornered the opposition party through pressure, arrest, and implicating top and mid-ranking BNP leaders in numerous cases, said party leaders.

Babu confesses meeting hitman

FROM PAGE 1

The duo then met in a vehicle on the Bhanga Expressway in Faridpur on May 17 to settle how the blood money will be paid.

They also exchanged photos of murdered MP Azim. The meeting was held in the vehicle of Amanullah. Babu then assured him of paying a portion of the blood money on May 23.

The Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police disclosed the summary of Babu's interrogation in the investigation progress report to a Dhaka court yesterday.

Mahfuzur Rahman, assistant commissioner of the DB, also investigation officer of Azim abduction case, appealed for recording Babu's confessional statement.

Following the petition, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Jasim recorded his statement. The court later sent Babu, also a cousin of Aktaruzzaman, one of the masterminds of the murder, to jail.

Besides Babu, three others -- Amanullah, his nephew Tanvir Bhuiyan, and Celesty Rahman, a friend of Aktaruzzaman -- earlier gave confessional statements in the case. They are now in jail.

A court source quoted Babu as saying that Azim was elected lawmaker from Jhenaidah-4 (Kaliganj) three times in a row.

Saidul Karim Mintu, general secretary of Jhenaidah AL, who is close to Babu, did not get the party ticket for the national polls. That's why a plan was made to clear his path to party nomination.

The source said Mintu, who is now on an eight-day remand in DB custody, tried to get the party ticket from the constituency in the last two national polls, but was not able to secure it due to Azim.

In 2022, Azim also wanted to become district AL general secretary. For this, there was a rivalry between the two.

Even on June 5, Babu filed a general diary with Jhenaidah Sadar Police Station, alleging that his three mobile phones were stolen, but those were with Mintu, investigators said.

Mintu gave Babu the idea so that police could not get the trace of communications between Babu and Amanullah.

Mintu even joined different programmes to get the AL ticket for the by-election in the constituency even before the government declared the seat vacant, sources said.

Ashraful Alam, Kaliganj municipality mayor, told The Daily Star, "The district general secretary has long been trying to get the AL ticket."

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and stayed at a friend's home for a night. He left the following day, saying that he would visit a doctor.

On May 22, India and Bangladesh police said the lawmaker was murdered.

Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (DB) of the DMP, said Mintu had a desire to become a lawmaker from the Jhenaidah-4 constituency.

"Amanullah worked for Akhtaruzzaman as the coordinator of the killing and Babu worked for Mintu to maintain communication with the killers," he added.

HOMEWARD BOUND

Clockwise from left, people throng the Sadarghat launch terminal to travel to the southern districts for the Eid holidays yesterday afternoon. Meanwhile, the Kamalapur Railway Station has been a hive of activity with people heading towards their hometowns. Many even had to take drastic measures like boarding a train through windows. Besides, desperate to go home, people tried to get on bus in the middle of the road in Shanir Akhra area.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS, PALASH KHAN, RASHED SHUMON**

Cattle sales yet to gain momentum

HELEMUL ALAM *and* **SHAHEEN MOLLAH**

Despite Eid-ul-Azha being just two days away, the cattle markets of Dhaka city have not yet gained momentum due to a lack of customers. Till yesterday evening, a good number of sacrificial animals, especially bulls, were present at all 16 cattle markets in Dhaka, but customer turnout was notably low until 5:00pm.

During visits to the Kamalapur and Kachukhet cattle markets, contrasting situations were observed. Kachukhet was flooded with bulls, while Kamalapur had 20-30 percent fewer bulls, according to traders and customers.

Government data shows 1.29 crore sacrificial animals are available this year, an increase of 4,44,034 from last year, with an excess of 22.8 lakh cattle compared to the demand.

One thing common though was a thin presence of buyers, despite yesterday being a holiday.

Government data shows 1.29 crore sacrificial animals are available this year, an increase of 4,44,034 from last year, with an excess of 22.8 lakh cattle compared to the demand.

This year, around 52 lakh cows, 1.60 lakh buffaloes, 68 lakh goats, 7,67,743 sheep, and 1,850 other animals are up for sale.

Sentu Bepary, a cattle trader from Meherpur, said, "Seven of us cattle traders brought 37 bulls to the Kamalapur cattle market four days ago, but have only sold one so far due to the low presence of customers."

Mannan Bepary, who brought 12 bulls from Sirajganj to Kamalapur, disagreed with the government statistics. "In our area, many cattle farmers did not raise bulls this year due to the high price of cattle feed and last year's losses," he said.

He noted that the number of bulls at the Kamalapur market is 30 percent less compared to last year's.

"We hope the sales will peak on the last day before Eid. However, last year's experience was very bad with many bulls remaining unsold or being sold at low prices on the last day," Mannan added.

Ismail Hossain, another trader, blamed the high prices of cattle this year on the expensive cattle feed. Others echoed him.

Shamshul Islam, a trader at Kachukhet who brought six bulls from Kishoreganj, expressed fear of incurring losses like last year. "I faced a loss of Tk 30,000 last year and hoped for a profit this year, but the market's situation doesn't look promising," he said.

Nurul Islam, a customer from Bhasantek, said the current prices are similar to last year's.

Dhaka's unused slaughterhouses

Designated spots lie idle, city corporations blame indifference of residents

HELEMUL ALAM

Unsafe and unsanitary animal slaughter practices often mar the Eid-ul-Azha celebrations in Dhaka.

With sacrificial animals being slaughtered in thousands on Dhaka streets, blood and other waste accumulate on them, which takes hours, if not days, to be removed. The situation further worsens if it rains during the day.

Though both Dhaka city corporations built four permanent slaughterhouses to address these issues, they remain largely unused due to residents' preference for traditional neighbourhood slaughtering and the logistical shortcomings of the designated facilities.

For the last four years, Dhaka South City Corporation has not provided logistical support for transporting animals to slaughterhouses on Eid day. Dhaka North City Corporation did not provide this service last Eid.

A VISIT TO SLAUGHTERHOUSES

During a recent visit to the DNCC slaughterhouses at Mirpur-11 and Mohammadpur Krishi Market, this correspondent found slaughter animals without any health checkups.

Meanwhile, the DSCC slaughterhouses at Kaptan Bazar and Hazaribagh, alongside the Mohakhali slaughterhouse of DNCC, were all found shut.

Construction of the Kaptan Bazar slaughterhouse, which began in 2018 and was supposed to be completed in 2019, is still ongoing.

Despite completing construction in September 2022, DSCC has failed to start operations at the Hazaribagh slaughterhouse. The project cost was Tk 79.71 crore.

The Mohakhali slaughterhouse, built around seven years ago, remains locked with no initiatives to make it functional.

WHAT AUTHORITIES SAY

The DSCC slaughterhouses are equipped with semi-mechanical equipment, according to a DSCC official. The upgraded design will enhance sanitary conditions and increase daily slaughtering capacity nearly fourfold compared to conventional slaughterhouses.

Hazaribagh will handle up to 1,200 cattle daily, while Kaptan Bazar's capacity will be around 600 cattle a day, he said.

The capacity for goats at each facility is about twice that of cattle.

Another DSCC official said 98 percent of the work on the Kaptan Bazar slaughterhouse has been completed, and they aim to complete the project by June 25.

The total project cost is around Tk 36.50 crore.

Meanwhile, the Hazaribagh slaughterhouse remains non-operational as DSCC failed to receive satisfactory bids, said DSCC state officer Md Moniruzzaman.

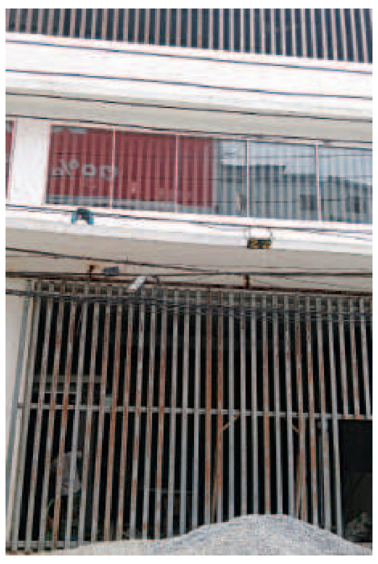
DSCC invited two tenders, with lease prices set at Tk 8.56 crore initially and Tk 6.15 crore later, but no offers were received.

"We are waiting to revise and lower the rate to attract bids for its operation and are preparing for another tender," Monir said.

Another DSCC official said while many organisations show interest, they lack prior experience in large-scale meat production and management.

DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam said the Mohakhali kitchen market, near the Mohakhali slaughterhouse, was converted into a Covid-19 hospital during the pandemic. He noted that the slaughterhouse has not been used since then. "People are not interested in bringing their animals to slaughterhouses. However, I recognise the need for a modern slaughterhouse. We are holding stakeholder meetings in this regard," he said.

He said poor response during previous Eids is the reason why the service of designated slaughterhouses was not provided last Eid.



The slaughterhouse in Mohakhali remains unused while the one at Kaptan Bazar (right) lies incomplete. Meanwhile, Hazaribagh slaughterhouse is still unopened.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Blacksmiths busy ahead of Eid

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

Blacksmiths in Chattogram city are passing a busy time ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha, making and sharpening tools for sacrificial animals.

Visiting several blacksmith shops in the port city's Tin Pooler Matha, Riazuddin Bazar, Lal Dighi's Jail Road, Muradpur, Choumuhuny, Bakalia-Kalamia Bazar, Halishahar-Boropol, and EPZ areas, this correspondent observed the local blacksmiths working for long hours to meet the demand.

People are visiting the shops in numbers to buy or sharpen machetes, choppers, cleavers, and butcher's knives of different sizes for a hassle-free Eid.

Additionally, the demand for tools for making kebabs and steaks, including skewers, is also on the rise, said traders.

This year, the price of these iron tools is comparatively higher than last year due to the ongoing market situation, they added.

"We have been preparing for Eid-ul-Azha since May 1. The demand for these tools usually rises five days before Eid. Price and quality depend on customers' demands and materials," said Pravat Karmakar, a blacksmith in Sagorika of Pahartali area.

"The price of knives starts from Tk 150 to Tk 850 per piece, depending on the size, while cleavers are priced between Tk 450 and Tk 1,200 depending on quality of iron," he added.

"We are selling some ready-made items as most people use these tools for a single day. We also have some tools prepared based on the customers' designs. From six-inch knives to 24-inch knives, you can buy all varieties from us," said Ajoy Karmakar, 60, whose shop is in Nayabazar area.

Rashed Islam, a seller at Golam Rasul Market, said alongside traditional iron tools, the demand for imported knives is also notable.

Ready-made sharp tools are also being sold by hawkers on the roadsides or on vans, while some vendors are going from door to door to sharpen knives and other tools.

"The knife sharpening business will continue round the clock till Eid day. We earn Tk 800-1,000 daily during this time," said Aziz Mia, 65.

ARSA commander held in Cox's Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

Rab claimed to have arrested a commander of Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) along with a G3 rifle in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar on Thursday night.

The arrestee, Mohammad Zakaria, was a resident of F-17 block in Balukhali Rohingya Camp-10, said Lt Col HM Sazzad Hossain, commanding officer of Rab-15, at a press briefing yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off that ARSA members smuggled firearms from Myanmar for subversive activities, Rab raided the camp and arrested Zakaria, he said.

Rab recovered the G3 rifle and five rounds of ammunition from the Ghati Beel area in Palongkhali union.

During primary interrogation, Zakaria admitted that ARSA members acquired the weapons, looted during recent conflicts in Myanmar, and smuggled those into Bangladesh.

Zakaria concealed the weapon in Camp-10. He is also accused in several cases filed with Ukhiya Police Station and has been arrested twice earlier.

'ANTI-ORGANISATION ACT'

Local BCL leader relieved of post

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

A BCL leader has been relieved of his post for alleged involvement in "crimes and anti-organisational activities" in Lalmonirhat.

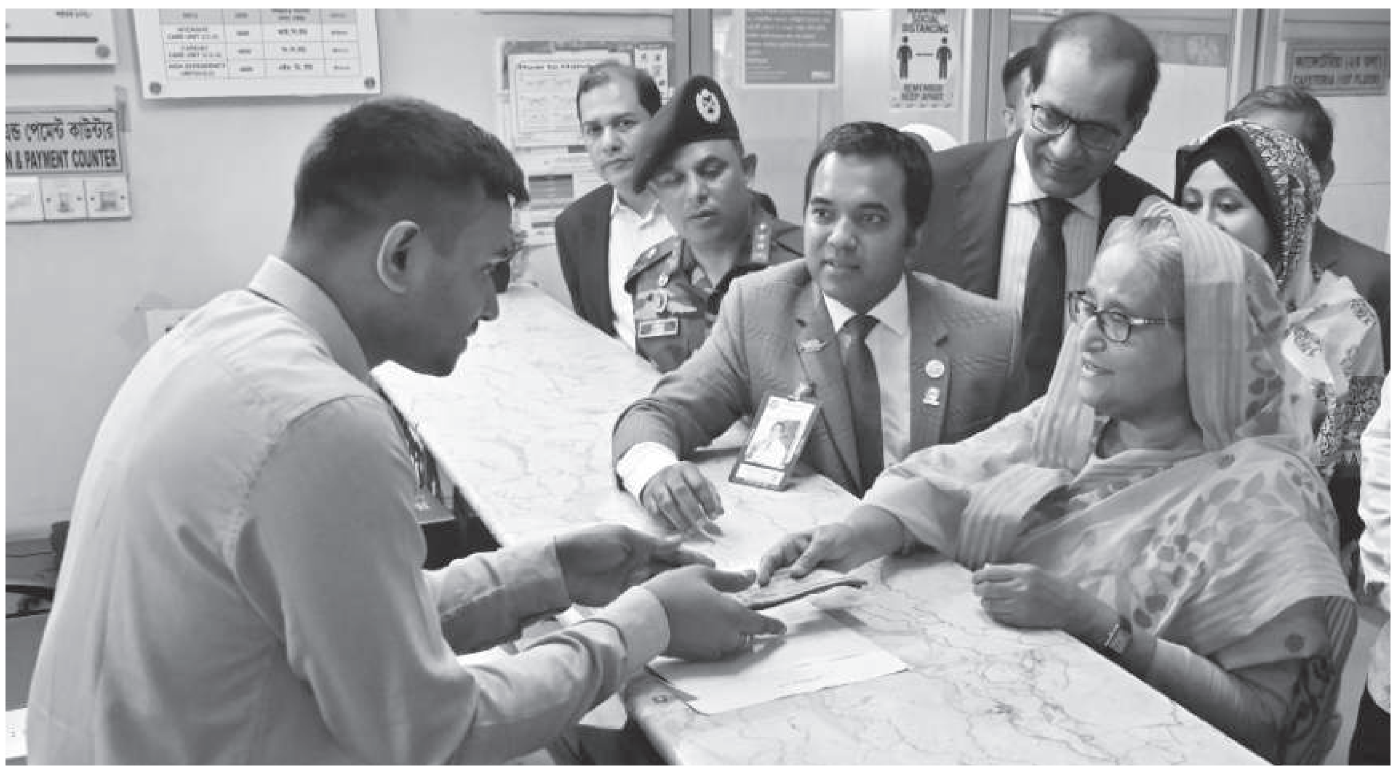
The BCL central committee took the decision against Rashed Zaman Bilas, president of the district unit of BCL, at a meeting on Thursday and issued a notice to this end yetsterday, said central committee president Saddam Hussain. The Daily Star has a copy of the notice.

BCL general secretary Sheikh Wali Asif Inan said, "We are embarrassed due to his [Bilas] activities."

BCL sources said Bilas is accused in several criminal cases, including extortion. On June 9, Bilas along with his accomplices allegedly extorted Tk 2.4 lakh from a cattle trader.

The trader filed a complaint with Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station, accusing five people including Bilas, said OC Omar Faruk. The complaint was turned into a case yesterday.

Meanwhile, villagers formed a human chain at Bhadai in Aditmari, demanding justice. Bilas could not be contacted over phone despite repeated attempts.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paying the registration and checkup fees at the Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Memorial KPJ Specialized Hospital in Tetuibari of Gazipur's Kashimpur yesterday. After the checkup, the premier held a meeting with the members of the board of directors, physicians, officials and nurses of the hospital and inquired about the institution's overall activities. PHOTO: **PID**

Work begins to breathe life into dying Ichamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

The long-awaited project to rejuvenate the Ichamati river began in early June under the supervision of Bangladesh Army, bringing joy to the people of Pabna.

Earlier, the Water Development Board (WDB) initiated the "Rejuvenating River Ichamati" project with a budget of Tk 1,554.90 crore. The project was later handed over to the Army Engineering Division.

"We have started dredging operations in the Madhpur-Jagannathpur area of Santhia upazila, Pabna, under the supervision of the Bangladesh Army Engineering Division," said Shudhangshu Kumar Sarkar, project director.

This three-year project involves dredging 110km of waterways. This includes 33.772km of the main river, 44.072km of connecting canals, 20km of the Sutikhali river, and 12.37km of Varara canal to restore water flow.

Sarkar, who is also the superintendent engineer of WDB Pabna, said, "Dredging of the main river will be conducted first, and then other works will begin."

In addition to dredging, the project includes constructing a 10km retaining wall, 10km of drainage, 23 new bridges, 56 ghats for boats, and a 10km walkway. The project also plans to plant 42,310 trees along the riverbanks.

A visit to the Madhpur-Jagannathpur area a few days ago revealed rapid progress in the dredging work.

The 82-kilometre-long Ichamati River, which originates from the Padma and reaches Hurasagar in Bera upazila, flows through the district headquarters of Pabna. However, it has been severely affected by encroachment and pollution over the decades.

"The people of Pabna have been striving to protect the Ichamati river, essential to their livelihoods," said SM Mahabubul Alom, founder of Ichamati Rokhkha Andolon.

After the project was approved by the Ecnec last October, the work was handed over to the Army Engineering Division, according to WDB.

Encroachers have occupied land forging documents in their names over the past few decades. The WDB has identified 1,053 illegal structures on the Ichamati.

Encroachers have filed a series of cases, with 73 cases still pending in court.

"The Ichamati will be dredged according to the CS map, and illegal structures will be removed as per court directions," said Md Mosharaf Hossain, assistant director of WDB Pabna.

Water level of 26 rivers rising

Flood, erosion fear grip shoal residents in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

Water level of 26 rivers including the Brahmaputra, Teesta and Dharla is rising in Kurigram and Lalmonirhat districts following rain and flow of upstream waters.

Many low-lying areas and shoals in the districts have already become inundated since yesterday morning, even as the water level has yet to cross the danger level.

The residents of the riverbank and shoal areas are living amid fear of flooding and erosion.

According to officials of the Water Development Board, the water level of Teesta has increased by 30cm and was flowing around 85cm below danger level at Doani Point of Teesta Barrage in Hatibandha upazila of Lalmonirhat yesterday morning.

Meanwhile Dharla's water level rose by 29cm at Shimulbari point of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila and was flowing 180cm below the danger line, and Brahmaputra was flowing 169cm below the danger level at Chilmari Point in Kurigram.

"Teesta's water started entering the houses in our village this [Friday] afternoon. The yards and tube-well are now submerged under water. If water level rises more, we would have to move elsewhere for shelter," said Achiya Bewa, 67, of Gobordhan shoal under Aditmari upazila of Lalmonirhat.

Sohrab Hossain, 60, of the same village echoed her.

Shunil Kumar, executive engineer of BWDB in Lalmonirhat, said, "The water level may rise further but for now there is no threat of flooding. Since the Brahmaputra river is flowing below the danger level in downstream, Teesta's water is receding rapidly."

Request for Bids giz

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is a global service provider in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education work to shaping a future worth living around the world. As a public-benefit Federal Government organization, GIZ supports the German Government, particularly the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) implementing development projects. In Bangladesh, GIZ is implementing the technical cooperation projects in the areas of energy, climate change, textile, human rights under the bilateral agreement, signed on 15 July 1972 between the Bangladesh and German Governments.

GIZ invites reputable companies to submit offers to supply the following categories of goods:

Inquiry No	Category Name
91176624	Design, supply, installation & commissioning of PMU-WAMS

The minimum qualification of interested vendors can be determined by the followings:
1. The organization must have the latest business registration certificate along with the VAT and TIN certificate.
2. The organization must have been operating for at least ten (10) years.
3. Must have a similar experience with at least 05 (Five) well-reputed organizations, (copies of contracts/POs/Work orders must be provided and submitted as evidence) for design, supply, installation & commissioning of PMU-WAMS.
4. Specifying brand/product name, model, and material details clearly in the offer is mandatory.
5. Supplier must provide warranty and must ensure strong after-sales services.
6. Payment terms: Advance payment may be given against Bank Guarantee issued by a reputable scheduled bank.

Interested companies with the above qualifications only are requested to collect specifications of the products and terms and conditions by following link: **https://enlistment.gizbd.org**. Please note, companies need to register themselves for collecting the tender documents.

Required documents to be attached with the offer:
1. Please quote the price including TAX and mention the VAT & Import duty amount separately.
2. Detail specifications with quoted items with warranty details. Please do not quote for any locally manufactured, assembled, or cloned product.
3. Supporting documents of the minimum qualification such as a copy of a valid trade license, VAT, TIN certificates, Tax Return certificates, valid authorization certificate, and any other document, etc. (where applicable).

Interested parties are requesting to submit the Technical & Financial Proposal by **30th June 2024 by 04:00 PM** in sealed envelopes to the following address: 89 Gulshan Avenue, Simpletree Anarkali (4th Floor), Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212.

The envelopes shall be addressed to "GIZ Contracts, Procurement and IT Unit" denoted with remark **"Inquiry no: 91176624 Design, supply, installation & commissioning of PMU-WAMS."**

For any inquiry and further communications, please write to **procurement-bangladesh@giz.de** with subject line **(i.e., Inquiry no & Category Name)**. Failing to fulfil minimum qualification and submit required documents as per instructions may cause disqualifications of the supplier.

GIZ reserves the right to accept or reject offers in part or full without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
National Skills Development Authority
Prime Minister's Office
Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka
www.nsda.gov.bd

Memo No. 03.14.2692.876.07.247.24.698 Date: 13-06-2024

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders have been invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following work:

Tender ID	Description of Goods	Tender Publish Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Document Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing & Opening Date & Time
998932	Event Management and Related Services for World Youth Skills Day, 2024	16-June-2024 Time:09.00	30-June-2024 Time:10:00	30-June-2024 Time:14:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal must be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches up to banking hours as stated on tender notice. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) (01762625528-31).

13/6/24
Md. Johar Ali
Member (Admin & Finance)
National Skills Development Authority

GD-1009

BANGLABANDHA PORT

Trade to remain suspended for 7 days

UNB, *Panchagarh*

Trade activities with India, Nepal, and Bhutan via the Banglabandha land port will remain suspended for seven days from June 15, on the occasion of Eid.

Importer and Exporters Group of the port took the decision in a meeting with the Phulbari Exporters Association of India, the C&F Agent Welfare Association, and the Truck Owners Association.

A letter regarding this has already been sent to the authorities concerned. However, the movement of travellers through the immigration checkpost will continue as usual.

Newborn's body found in front of DMCH

UNB, *Dhaka*

Police recovered the body of a newborn from a sidewalk opposite the emergency gate of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

A passerby noticed a dog tugging at a bag on the sidewalk and alerted the police via the national emergency hotline number, 999.

Sub-inspector Mohammad Selim of Shahbagh Police Station said upon receiving the call through the hotline, they discovered the body of the newborn girl inside a bag lying on the trash-covered sidewalk opposite the emergency gate around 11:00am.

The body was sent to the hospital morgue.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 15

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Barguna
e-mail: ee.barguna@dphe.gov.bd
website : www.dphe.gov.bd

Invitation for e-Tender notice				
1.	Ministry/ Division	Local Government Division		
2.	Implementing Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering Barguna District, Barguna.		
3.	Project/Program Name	Revenue		
4.	e-Tender IDs	999104, 999105		
5.	i. Construction of 40 Nos Twin pit Household Pucca Latrine ii. Construction of Community Based Water Supply scheme by installing 100mm x 50mm dia Tube well		Publishing Date 13/06/2024	Closing Date & Time 25/06/2024
6.	This is online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website: www.eprocure.gov.bd			
7.	Name, Designation & Address of Official	Sd/- (Md. Raisul Islam) Executive Engineer, DPHE, Barguna District, Barguna. Tel.No-02479930083.		

GD-1008

Dhaka South City Corporation
Office Of The Executive Engineer
Zone-02, Dhaka.

Ref No: 46.207.014.24.02.123.2024 Dated: 13/06/2024

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP portal (http//www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Executive Engineer, Zone-2 Dhaka South City Corporation for the procurement of following package, which will be available at e-GP website from 12/06/2024 at 22.00 PM

Sl No.	Tender ID, Ref No & package No	Name of works	Last Selling date and Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	Tender ID-964127 egpdscc/z02/w08 fy 2023-24	Development work of road and construction work of drain at Komlapur lane-bylane (H: N: 149/3 to H: N: 158, H: N: 143 to H: N 145, H: N: 158 to H: N 79/A, H: N 88/10 to H: N 157/4) under word 08, zone 02 DSCC	27-Jun-2024 11:30	27-Jun-2024 12:00
2.	Tender ID-964132 egpdscc/z06/w075 fy 2023- 24	Development work of road at Kyetpara Bazar CC Road to Iderakandi Azgar Memberá's house (Chainage 00 m to 435 m) under word 75, zone 06 DSCC.	27-Jun-2024 11:30	27-Jun-2024 12:00
3.	Tender ID-993288 egp/dscc/Z-05/24-25/P-04	Repairing Works of Road Cutting by different organization of ward no 6 and 8 under zone-2 (Group- kha). DSCC. FY 2024/2025	27-Jun-2024 11:15	27-Jun-2024 12:15

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e- Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (http:/www.eprocure.gov.bd).

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/৫৪৯/২০২৩-২০২৪

(Md. Harunur Rashid)
Executive Engineer
Zone -2 (Khilgaon)
Dhaka South City Corporation

GD-1010

No traffic jam on roads ahead of Eid

Says Quader

BSS, *Dhaka*

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said there is no traffic congestion on the country's roads and highways despite the pressure of vehicles during the Eid journey.

He made the remark while speaking at a press conference at the Awami League president's Dhanmondi political office in Dhaka.

Quader, also the AL general secretary, directed the authorities concerned to discharge their duties so that nobody can set up cattle markets on roads.

"Sacrificial animal-carrying vehicles and cattle markets may cause some traffic congestion... it is difficult to avoid sufferings when it rains. Attention should be paid to performing responsibilities and surveillance should be increased to prevent untoward accidents and loss of life on roads," he said.

About the remand of an AL leader over the killing of lawmaker Anar, the AL general secretary said it is not right to call anyone a criminal before a case is filed and the verdict is declared.

Two children drown in Gazipur pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Gazipur

Two children drowned in a pond in Gazipur's Sreepur upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Zahid, 10, son of Kalu Mia of Morolpara village, and Nasir, 10, son of Qaium.

The incident happened at Moralpara in Kawraid Union around 11:00am, said Akbar Ali Khan, officer-in-charge of Sreepur Police Station.

Abdus Samad, sub-inspector of Sreepur Model Police Station, said Zahid and Nasir were playing on the bank of a pond in Moralpara and fell into the water.

Later, locals rescued them and took them to Sreepur Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared them dead.

OC Akbar said the bodies were handed over to the families.

PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

Dev projects, dust pollution go hand in hand in Khulna

DIPANKAR ROY

Khulna city residents are suffering immensely as dust pollution has taken an alarming turn over the last couple of years due to several ongoing development projects.

Despite repeated calls from city dwellers, the Khulna City Corporation and Department of Environment are yet to take any measures in this regard.

According to the Air Quality Index, Khulna's air was extremely unhealthy from March till the first week of June.

KCC is working on a Tk 823 crore project to develop the city's drainage system alongside a Tk 607 crore road development project. Besides, several other projects of road department, electricity department, Khulna Wasa, Khulna Development Authority, and Public Works Department are also ongoing.

Usually, city corporation authorities are tasked with repairing and renovating roads after any development work. However, KCC and Khulna Wasa have been passing blame on each other for not fixing the roads afterwards.

Visiting different KCC areas, including BIDC Road, Zero Point, Kuet Bypass Road, Rupsha Shipyard Road, Abu Naser Bypass Road, BIWTA Road, and Sonadanga Bypass Road, this correspondent found almost all the roads in an awful state with dust accumulating everywhere.

"The roads are dusty, and moving vehicles cause the dust to rise and pollute the air. It becomes difficult to see and breathe. The dust also enters our homes all the time," said Tipu Kibria, a resident of Zero Point area.

Nittananda Saha, who runs a confectionary shop near Notun Rasta intersection, said his business has been adversely affected due to the dust pollution.

"Hundreds of lorries use BIDC Road to load oil from the three state-owned oil companies and cause dust pollution. Like mine, at least 200 shops on the road under Wards 6, 7, 12, and 15 are facing similar ordeals,'' he added.

The situation is particularly dire on Sonadanga Bypass Road, which is being used by around 400 long-haul buses daily.

The road is completely engulfed in dust, no longer has bitumen cover, and is riddled with numerous potholes.

"If there were sufficient waterbodies in KCC areas, that could have reduced air pollution. Also, lack of coordination among the authorities concerned further adds to the menace," said Prof Abdullah Harun Chowdhury of Environmental Science department at Khulna University.

"On some occasions, the same roads were dug several times before being left unattended, without repairs, for months," he added.

Md Anisur Rahman, KCC chief conservancy officer, said they procured two road-sweeping trucks, which will be equipped with water tanks for spraying.

"We generally do not use these machines at construction sites," he added.

Md Arefin Badal, deputy director of DoE in Khulna, said, "We need a comprehensive plan to minimise air pollution."

Sheikh Ashraf Uz Zaman, president of Greater Khulna Development Samgram Coordinating Committee, demanded immediate repair of the roads and drains.

Contacted, KCC Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque said, "Two big projects are being implemented on around 600 roads and 325 drains in 31 wards for the past two years, which deteriorated the city's air quality. Almost all works are about to be completed."

Khulna Wasa and KDA did not finish their repair work on time. The service-providing agencies must consider the sufferings of city dwellers before taking up development projects, he added.

Several fish enclosures have been set up using makeshift fences, bamboo and polythene sheets to prevent flow of water. Some pasture lands on the river bank were also dug to make more enclosures. PHOTO: **STAR**

RANGABALI UPAZILA

Fish enclosures at the expense of Darchira

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

Some local influential people in Rangabali upazila of Patuakhali have been setting up fish enclosures grabbing a section of the Darchira river.

The Darchira flows through the upazila to join the Agunmukha river along the Bay of Bengal.

About 1,000 acres of the Darchira river bank have been occupied and fenced for fish enclosures in Char Tozammel, Char Emerson, Char Halim and Char Ganga areas of the upazila, said an employee of the upazila land office, wishing anonymity.

The encroachers have been using excavators to make makeshift dams on the river mouth for restricting water flow and digging earth for constructing the fish enclosures, said locals.

Visiting the river bank areas in Bara Baishdia union recently, this correspondent saw several fish enclosures have been set up using makeshift fences to prevent water from washing away the enclosures during tide. Some pasture lands on the river bank were also seen dug to make more enclosures.

Nuruzzaman, a local resident, said several complaints have been made to the upazila administration in this connection but no step has been taken yet.

Mojibur Rahman, Bellal Gazi, and Riaz Howladar of the area, who are allegedly among those involved in grabbing the river for fish enclosures, claimed that they did so on their own land on the river bank like many others in the area.

Lincoln Bayan, Barishal divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said grabbing the river at its origin to make dams and construct fish enclosures will eventually obstruct its natural flow of water and gradually lead the river to its demise.

Such activities cannot be allowed and the river must be saved at any cost, he added.

Contacted, Rangabali upazila nirbahi officer Mizanur Rahman said several drives have already been conducted to stop the illegal activities.

"Necessary action will be taken against the culprits by identifying them, and the encroached river bank areas will be recovered," he added.

At least three people, including a child, were killed and two injured in a head-on collision between a private car and a cattle-laden truck in Kalihati upazila of Tangail yesterday.

PHOTO: **STAR**

5 killed, 2 hurt in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least five people were killed and two others injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Tangail, three people, including a child, were killed and two injured in a head-on collision between a private car and a cattle-laden truck in Kalihati upazila.

The deceased are Abdullah Al Akshar, 6, son of Abdullah Al Mamun, district cultural officer of Jamalpur, his grandmother Husneara Begum, 70, and car driver Abul Hossain, 33.

Mamun and his wife were injured.

The accident occurred around 2:30am on the Tangail-Mymensingh highway near Bangabandhu Textile Engineering College in the Baghutia area.

Police, quoting eyewitnesses, said the car, heading towards Mymensingh, collided with the truck coming from the opposite direction. After the collision, both vehicles fell into a roadside ditch.

Locals took the injured to Tangail General Hospital, where the three passengers of the car succumbed to their injuries, said Elenga Highway Police outpost in-charge Mir Sajedur Rahman.

The two injured were later transferred to a Jamalpur hospital.

The driver and employee of the truck managed to flee, he added.

No case was filed immediately.

In Jamalpur, a woman was killed in a head-on collision between a private car and a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Melandah upazila.

The accident took place on Jamalpur-Dewanganj road at Malanch, said Melandah Police Station OC Raju Ahmed.

Bonna, 31, daughter of Zainal Abedin Master from Dakpara area in Jamalpur municipality, died on the way to Jamalpur General Hospital, said the OC. Police seized the vehicles but the drivers managed to flee.

In Feni, a man was killed as a truck hit him while he was walking along Feni-Noakhali regional road in Silonia Bazar area.

Md Ferdous, 40, from Alampur village in Daganbhuiyan was declared dead at a local hospital, said police.

Meanwhile, another man was found dead at Fathepur in Feni Sadar around 2:00am.

Al Islam, 40, from Zajira in Shariatpur, used to work in Chattogram, said Mostafa Kamal, officer-in-charge of Mohipal Highway Police Station in Feni.

He was going to his village home in Shariatpur to celebrate Eid.

Police suspect that he might have been killed after being hit by a vehicle on the highway.

The OC said they are investigating the incident.

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G7 hammers China over Russia ties, 'harmful' trade

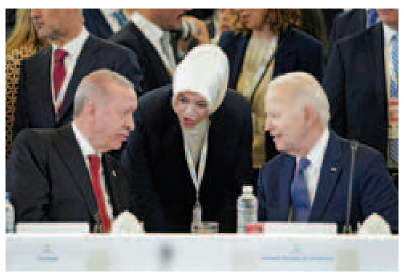
AFP, *Bari*

G7 leaders meeting in Italy yesterday hardened their tone against China, warning Beijing to stop sending weapons components to Russia and play by the rules on trade, according to a draft summit statement.

China has been a key focus of the Group of Seven talks in Puglia, amid souring trade relations between Beijing and the West and concerns that its supplies of equipment to Moscow are fuelling Russia's war in Ukraine.

"We call on China to cease the transfer of dual-use materials, including weapons components and equipment, that are inputs for Russia's defence sector," according to a draft statement seen by AFP.

The Group of Seven also took aim at what it called "dangerous" incursions by China in the contested South China Sea, where worries of a military escalation between Beijing and its neighbours are rising.



"We oppose China's militarisation, and coercive and intimidation activities in the South China Sea," the statement read.

After a first day dominated by Ukraine, US President Joe Biden and the leaders of Japan, France, Germany, Canada, Britain and host country Italy turned their focus to the world's second-largest economy, a superpower whose oversized influence on geopolitics and global trade cannot be underestimated.

"G7 countries are on the same page vis-a-vis China," a Japanese government source told AFP.

Thursday's talks, attended by Ukrainian President Volodymr Zelensky, were marked by a strong show of G7 support for Kyiv, with an agreement to use profits from frozen Russian assets to provide a new $50-billion loan to Ukraine.

A Palestinian man carries an injured child following an Israeli strike in Deir Al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. Israeli forces targeted a house in Deir el-Balah and killed at least two Palestinians. Four others, including children, were critically injured in the strike.

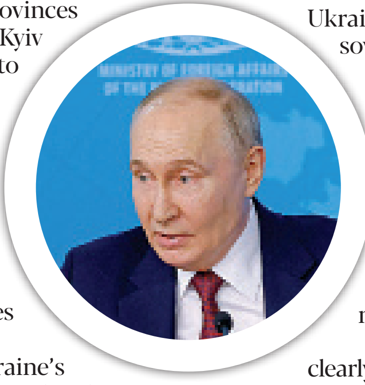
PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Putin demands more Ukraine land to end war

Kyiv, Nato swiftly reject Russian peace proposals

AGENCIES

President Vladimir Putin said yesterday Russia would end the war in Ukraine only if Kyiv agreed to drop its Nato ambitions and hand over the entirety of four provinces claimed by Moscow, demands Kyiv swiftly rejected as tantamount to surrender.



On the eve of a conference in Switzerland to which Russia has not been invited, Putin set out maximalist conditions wholly at odds with the terms demanded by Ukraine, apparently reflecting Moscow's growing confidence that its forces have the upper hand in the war.

He restated his demand for Ukraine's demilitarisation, unchanged from the day he sent in his troops on February 24, 2022, and said an end to Western sanctions must also be part of a peace deal. He also repeated his call for Ukraine's "denazification", based on what Kyiv calls an unfounded slur against its leadership.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak told Reuters that Putin's conditions were tantamount to proposing that Ukraine admit defeat and sign away its sovereignty.

There was "no possibility to find compromise" on the basis of what Putin had proposed, he said.

Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg slammed conditions set out by Putin for initiating Ukraine peace talks, calling them a proposal for "more aggression, more occupation," reports AFP.

The timing of Putin's speech was clearly intended to pre-empt the Swiss summit, billed as a "peace conference" despite Russia's exclusion, where Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky seeks a show of international support for Kyiv's terms to end the war.

Heavy rain, floods kill 6 in Sikkim

2,000 tourists stranded

REUTERS, *Guwahati*

At least six people have been killed this week and 2,000 tourists stranded in India's Himalayan state of Sikkim in landslides and floods after heavy rainfall, officials said yesterday.

Another four people have been killed in Nepal's Taplejung district, which borders Sikkim, after a landslide following rains swept away the house in which they were sleeping, officials there said.

Heavy rains triggered landslides at several locations in Mangan district in Sikkim.

S Africa's ANC brings opposition into government

REUTERS, *Cape Town*

The African National Congress and its largest rival, the white-led, pro-business Democratic Alliance, agreed yesterday to work together in South Africa's new government of national unity, a step change after 30 years of ANC rule.

Once unthinkable, the deal between two sharply antagonistic parties is the most momentous political shift in South Africa since Nelson Mandela led the ANC to victory in the 1994 election that marked the end of apartheid.

"Today, South Africa is a better country than it was yesterday. For the first time since 1994, we've embarked on a peaceful and democratic transfer of power to a new government that will be different from the previous one," DA leader John Steenhuisen said in a televised address.

"From today, the DA will co-govern the Republic of South Africa in a spirit of unity and collaboration," he said, adding that multi-party government was the "new normal".

"We will be supporting President Cyril Ramaphosa in his election for the president of the republic of South Africa," Steenhuisen said, during a pause in the opening session of South Africa's seventh parliament since the advent of post-apartheid democracy.

Earlier, Chief Justice Raymond Zondo had opened the first sitting, swearing in MPs in batches ahead of planned votes on the election of a Speaker, Deputy Speaker and the President.

MYANMAR CONFLICT

Junta orders evacuations around Sittwe

AFP, *Yangon*

Myanmar's junta has ordered thousands of people living outside a state capital threatened by ethnic rebels to leave their homes and head into the city, residents said yesterday.

Sittwe city is one of the few holdouts for junta troops in western Rakhine state, where the military has lost swathes of territory to the Arakan Army (AA) in recent weeks.

The AA, which says it is fighting for autonomy for the state's ethnic Rakhine population, has vowed to capture Sittwe, home to an India-backed deep sea port and around 200,000 people.

Residents of 15 villages around Sittwe were given five days to leave their homes and move to the state capital, a resident of one of the villages told AFP.

"The army threatened to shoot and kill if they found someone after the deadline" which expires today, she said, requesting anonymity due to fear of arrest.

'Ananda' makes them smile

FROM PAGE 12

games, art projects, and interactive sessions, offering them a rare opportunity for social interaction and physical activities.

Ananda is an initiative of "Compassionate Korail," a community palliative-care centre run by the Palliative Care Society of Bangladesh (PCSB) since 2019.

This centre, also known as "Momotamoy Korail," offers home-based palliative care, essential medicines, assistive devices, and monthly food supplies to 304 patients, including 27 children, with conditions like cerebral palsy, congenital heart defects, cancer, and Down syndrome.

Dr Noorjahan Begum, senior specialist at Evercare Hospital and team leader at Momotamoy Korail, highlighted the struggle of children with cerebral palsy and other genetic disorders.

"Without proper medical support, they often remain bedridden and suffer continuous bouts of epilepsy. Meanwhile, limited access to medication exacerbates their conditions, resulting in severe physical disabilities such as rigid limbs due to lack of therapy."

Her study on caregivers for children with cerebral palsy in Korail found that over 97 percent of the caregivers are women, with 88.6 percent being mothers and 8.6 percent grandmothers. Around 80 percent reported that other family members rarely assist in caregiving.

Prolonged caregiving to children with mobility impairments significantly reduce the quality of life for primary caregivers, leading to higher levels of stress and conflict, which in turn impacts the quality of care and family relationships.

Realising their need for assistance, Momotamoy Korail proposed bringing the children to the centre for a few hours every week to provide relief to their caregivers and also give the children a change in environment.

After multiple meetings with guardians and community volunteers, the Ananda programme started in February 2023.

Every Saturday since then, all the 27 children, four at a time, are brought to the centre.

Every child receives personalised care from PCAs and volunteers, supported by a dedicated caretaker who ensures their hygiene and provides meals, including nutritious hotchpotch and fruit snacks.

"We maintain a registry book for parents to sign when dropping off and picking up their children. Feedback has been positive so far, and participation is entirely voluntary," said Dr Noorjahan.

AH Sabbir, a physiotherapist at the centre, noted positive outcomes, stating, "Many babies who previously didn't receive physiotherapy are now actively participating as the toys, games, nursery rhymes make it more engaging for them.

"We've seen improvements in their motor development; children with weak neck control can now hold their heads up, those who were unable to sit properly can now do so, and some are even learning to walk. Additionally, their cognitive development is progressing. Initially, they would sit quietly in fear, but now they have overcome that and interact with each other with ease."

Samia's mother, Fatema Begum, was reluctant at first to send her daughter to the centre due to concerns of unfamiliarity and the constant need for assistance.

"But after I saw familiar PCAs taking care of them and dedicated individuals for cleaning, I agreed. In the beginning, I would go and check on her often out of worry. But now, I have complete trust. This allows me to get with household chores and errands.

"It's great to see my daughter enjoying herself with others and making progress with her therapies. Parents like us, who struggle to provide even the basics, could never afford such facilities for our children."

Dr Noorjahan highlighted the primary challenge -- shortages in human resource, as it requires a constant supply of dedicated volunteers.

Dr Nezamuddin Ahmed, former chairperson of the palliative medicine department at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and an advisor at PCSB, said, "Ananda might seem like a drop in the ocean, but it showcases how community initiatives can make a big difference for children with cerebral palsy, or other incurable chronic health issues, especially when government resources are limited.

"We should customise services to fit local needs rather than adopting models from wealthier nations, considering our lower per capita health expenditure."

Border killings continue despite BSF promise

FROM PAGE 12

and stronger stance against it."

ASK data show 31 people were killed in BSF shootings last year, up from 23 in 2022. In 2021, 18 were killed in BSF firings.

The latest border killing was reported on June 9 when a Bangladeshi was shot dead by BSF along Jamtala border in Cumilla's Burichang upazila. Bangladesh shares a 4,096km long border with India, the fifth-longest land border in the world. A large part of the border remains unfenced, while some border points are known for illegal entry and smuggling of various items, including drugs and cattle.

BSF often claims that its members open fire in self-defence, although this has been rejected by rights bodies and victims' families who say that is not always the case.

Kirity Roy, secretary of Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM), a rights organisation based in West Bengal, told The Daily Star that they found evidence that in several cases the BSF's self-defence claim was fictitious.

According to the MASUM's April report, a Bangladeshi youth was killed in BSF firing near Lalmonirhat border on March 25, while he was smuggling cattle into Bangladesh. BSF personnel first shot him with a shotgun and then with a rifle.

At that time, 19-year-old Liton Miya was 75m inside Indian territory. He was hit by pellets and bullets on his chest and abdomen. But in the BSF complaint, they claimed that they did not fire to kill Liton.

In its March report, the rights body mentioned another Bangladeshi Rabiul Islam alias Tuklu, 34, was killed by BSF personnel along Dahagram border of Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila on January 28.

It was reported that on his head, Rabiul was trying to smuggle a bag containing 50kg of sugar into Bangladesh. He was alone as stated by villagers. It is evident that he was not in the position to attack BSF members, MASUM said in the report.

Prices go up ahead of Eid

FROM PAGE 12

Tk 3,300-4,200 per kg, up from Tk 3,200-4,000.

Rahim Sheikh, a trader at Duaripara Bazar in the capital's Mirpur, said prices of essential commodities increased in the wholesale market, and this had an impact on the retail market.

"Consumers will see retail prices fall if wholesale prices fall first. But for that to happen, the government needs effective monitoring of the supply chain," he said.

Riaz Uddin, who was shopping at Kawran Bazar, said the high prices of essentials had forced him to cut down on monthly shopping.

He said he spent Tk 10,000 on essentials such as fish, meat, and vegetables before Eid-ul-Azha last year, but this year, he could only afford to spend Tk 8,000.

"I was forced to cut costs. Otherwise, if I had spent Tk 10,000 like last year on fish, meat, and vegetables, I would not be able to afford the rest of the essentials that I need."

Eyamin Sultana, who works at a private company in the capital and lives in Mirpur, echoed those sentiments.

"There is no product in the market that has not gone up in price. Every week, when I go to the market, I see that the price has increased. This is intolerable," she said.

"Due to increases in prices, I am buying less than necessary," she added.

"Every year, the prices of some products automatically increase before Eid. The government should investigate this matter seriously. Common people are not doing well at all," she lamented.

Sales ahead of Eid-ul-Azha this year are far lower than last year, Monwar Hossain, a retail trader of Yasin General Store at Kawran Bazar, one of the largest kitchen markets in the capital.

"Sales are down about 15 to 20 percent," the trader claimed.

"The demand for some products increases a lot ahead of Eid-ul-Azha. As a result, a supply-demand gap is created. This is why the prices of these products are increasing now," he said.

"We have not increased the prices of any commodity, including soybean oil," said Taslim Shahriar, deputy general manager at Meghna Group of Industries, one of the biggest commodity importers and processors in the country.

He blamed retailers for the increase in prices.

PRODUCTS NAME	YESTERDAY'S PRICE (PER LITRE/KG)	PRICE A WEEK AGO (PER LITRE/KG)
Fine rice	Tk 68-78	Tk 60-78
Coarse rice	Tk 57-58	Tk 54-55
Loose soybean oil	Tk 155-160	Tk 150-152
Bottled soybean oil	Tk 170	Tk 165
Local garlic	Tk 200-220	Tk 190-220
Ginger	Tk 250-300	Tk 240-280
local onions	Tk 85-90	Tk 80-85
Brown egg (four piece)	Tk 52-55	Tk 50
Bay leaves	Tk 200-300	Tk 150-200
Cardamom (Small)	Tk 3,300-4,200	Tk 3,150 - 4,000

SOURCE: TCB AND THREE KITCHEN MARKETS IN DHAKA

Pakistan out

FROM PAGE 12

World Cup largely thanks to their shock win over 2009 champions Pakistan.

The two teams will receive a point each meaning the USA will progress to the Super Eights along with Group A winners India who are due to play Canada on Saturday in what is now a dead rubber

Only the top two teams from the four groups advance to the Super Eight. The USA beat Canada in the tournament opener before stunning Pakistan in a match that went to a Super Over.

The Super Eights qualification also ensures direct qualification into the next T20 World Cup for USA. The next edition will also have 20 teams like this one, with 12 automatic qualifiers: the two co-hosts - India and Sri Lanka - as well as the other teams in the Super Eight in 2024, and the three highest-ranked teams outside of these on the ICC's T20I rankings as of June 30, 2024. The remaining eight spots will be decided through the ICC's regional qualifiers pathway.

The early exit, meanwhile, is a bitter disappointment though for Pakistan, who were beaten finalists in the tournament two years ago.

St Martin's

FROM PAGE 12

to Cox's Bazar to see a doctor 10 days ago and got stranded.

"We stayed at a hotel and had to spend a lot of money," she added.

Luna Akhter, a student of Cox's Bazar Government College, said the government should provide sea trucks for St Martin's residents as the usual route through the Naf has been abandoned.

Meanwhile, the sound of shelling in Myanmar's Rakhine state rocked Teknaf on Thursday, and the sight of a warship in the Naf caused panic in some neighbourhoods.

Teknaf Upazila Nirbahi Officer Adnan Chowdhury said the ship was in Naikhongdia, Myanmar.

Residents of St Martin's said there were three Myanmar warships close to the island.

Mohammad Hashem, a resident of Dailpara on the island, said, "I have never seen Myanmar warships so close. Troops are firing weapons from the ships and we are hearing explosions. We are very scared."

International Labour Organization

BetterWork Bangladesh

IFC International Finance Corporation WORLD BANK GROUP
Creating Markets, Creating Opportunities

From
the People of Japan

The Daily Star

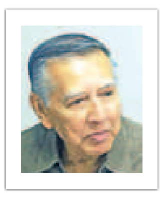
প্রথম আলো

BETTER WORK, BETTER LIVES

Elevating the RMG Industry in Bangladesh

Better Work Bangladesh Programme, a partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), in collaboration with The Daily Star and The Daily Prothom Alo, organized a roundtable titled 'Better Work, Better Lives: Elevating the RMG Industry in Bangladesh' on May 15, 2024. The event was supported by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Government of Japan. Here is a summary of the discussion.

Better Work, Better Lives:
Elevating RGM Industry in Bangladesh
15 May 2024



Mahfuz Anam, *Editor & Publisher, The Daily Star*

The goal of this roundtable, along with the Better Work Bangladesh project, is to foster a sustainable, ethical, and profitable RMG sector. Acknowledging the global significance of sustainability and the enduring importance of ethics, The Daily Star pledges to deeply engage with these principles.

We are achieving development at an impressive rate with a high degree of inclusiveness. However, the more we examine these issues, the more we realise the weaknesses in our efforts. Roundtables like this, and collaboration with institutions like the ILO, are our way of addressing these shortcomings. The ILO has had an influential impact on Bangladesh's policymaking regarding labour rights and many other fundamental issues. I assure you, this will not be a one-off event. We will follow up with our own editorial initiatives and our ongoing commitment to a sustainable Bangladesh.

Tuomo Poutiainen, *Country Director, International Labour Organization (ILO)*

Over the past decade, dedicated efforts to enhance safety, health, and human resource management system have positioned Bangladesh's garment sector as one of the most competitive and compliant industries globally. This sector now has the capacity to address social and environmental issues effectively in the future. Better Work collaborates with the government, enterprises, and industry associations like BGMEA and BKMEA to demonstrate, recommend, and endorse feasible practices at the enterprise level. These efforts are increasingly being adopted by businesses in Bangladesh.

Other industries aiming to expand into global markets should draw inspiration from the achievements of the garment industry and adopt similar methods and programmes. Bangladesh has the potential to excel in various sectors, including food and agriculture, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and furniture making, by fostering a comparable understanding of social and environmental compliance. Discussions involving industry representatives, academia, trade unions, workers, and policymakers are essential for sharing experiences and promoting the adoption of these measures across different industries.

Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem (*Keynote Speaker), Research Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)*

The garment sector has made significant strides in occupational safety and has reached new heights compared to before the Rana Plaza disaster. This is undoubtedly an achievement, but there are still areas that need improvement. Weaknesses remain in workplace safety, labour rights issues, and overall worker well-being. Additionally, new challenges are emerging, the most important being the graduation from LDC status. This transition moves the sector from a preferential competitiveness environment to a non-preferential one. Adapting to this new environment is crucial.

In this context, Better Work has served as a bridge between the desired improvements and the progress made over the last decade. It has significantly supported the RMG sector in enhancing overall occupational safety standards, fostering social dialogue, promoting worker well-being, and advancing gender equality.

The Better Work programme was launched in 2014, introducing a completely new package of elements previously unknown to Bangladesh. This joint initiative of the ILO and IFC has now completed its first decade.

Over the past decade, it has covered 470 factories, including 50 brands and 1.3 million workers, representing one-third of all RMG workers. Notably, 51% of the beneficiaries are female. This demonstrates the significant and high-quality support the programme has provided to factories.

The programme has significantly contributed to worker well-being, reduced non-compliance, and improved overall worker satisfaction and livelihood. For instance, workers in Better Work factories receive 5.4% higher base pay and are 5% more likely to be paid on time, averaging an additional BDT 450 per month.

The programme includes a mix of large, medium, and small factories, making it representative of the industry. It has also addressed various non-compliance issues effectively, such as a 22% decrease in overtime limit violations, a 20% decrease in failures to provide overtime notice, a 56% decrease in failures to provide weekends, and a 21% decrease in failures to compensate for overtime.

Well-managed factories that treat workers well report a better working environment and remuneration. Consequently, 66% of workers in Better Work factories report being satisfied or highly satisfied with their working environment.

What are the key programmes of Better Work? Firstly, it focuses on social dialogue and grievance mechanisms, encouraging dialogue and oversight. This is particularly important as dialogue is often lacking at the factory level.

One significant achievement has been the nearly 50% reduction in non-compliance rates in bipartite committees and factories between 2018 and 2022. These committees now demonstrate higher compliance.

Better Work's focus on women's representation has led to nearly a 50% increase in women's participation in committees over the last five years. However, there is still room for improvement in enhancing the effectiveness of these participation committees.

Over the last decade (2014-2022), non-compliance in this domain has decreased to 35%. These sustained improvements signify a significant reduction in non-compliance, with nearly 100% compliance in periodic emergency drills in Better Work factories, indicating the effectiveness of these measures.

Owners, employers, directors, and garment manufacturers often ask how they benefit from providing these services to workers. The advantages are clear: ensuring labour rights has led to a 55% increase in export revenue and a 50% rise in export volume for these factories.

Better Work offers special programmes like the Gender Equality Returns Programme, helping women advance into supervisory roles with increased pay.

While Better Work hasn't achieved everything, it has set a benchmark for other factories and sectors to adopt good practices. Future efforts should focus on improving occupational safety, promoting social dialogue, and enhancing grievance mechanisms. Gender equality and skill development also need more attention.

Factories engaged in these initiatives deserve better incentives from buyers and the government. Policy reforms, driven by collaboration between the government, employers, and workers, may be necessary.

In conclusion, Better Work has the potential to expand and thrive in the garment sector and beyond by continuing to promote responsible business practices and high standards for labour and social conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To adapt to LDC graduation, the RMG sector must improve competitiveness, efficiency, productivity, labor rights, and address social and environmental concerns.

A comprehensive database of workers in the RMG sector needs to be established.

Trade unions must be permitted in every garment factory to address workers' issues.

Best practices from the Better Work Programme should be implemented in other factories. A database can compile these practices and their impacts.

Further improvements are required in areas such as workplace safety, worker well-being, and gender.

Promote social dialogue to resolve disputes and find solutions at the factory level

Prioritize upskilling workers for evolving industrial technologies.

Create attractive employment opportunities to retain women in the RMG workforce.

Strengthen participation committees and grievance mechanisms, and boost women's involvement in these committees and supervisory roles.

Establishing Industry-Based Training (IBT) Centers within the industry is crucial for developing specialized skills

Ashraf Ahmed, *President, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI)*

The primary focus of Better Work Bangladesh is to enhance productivity, attract better wages, and create a more conducive business environment by improving management practices on the factory floor. These practices involve fostering an environment where employees are heard, grievances are addressed, and opportunities for improvement are embraced, reshaping the organisational mindset over time.

Treating employees with respect and addressing their concerns boosts productivity, even without wage increases. This enhances the organisation's output capacity, leading to tangible results.

The challenge is not about investment but about effectively implementing management practices and training programmes that resonate and drive awareness. Disseminating these practices across thousands of factories in various sectors requires raising awareness and providing training at the junior management and supervisor levels, tailored to the factory environment. Better Work Bangladesh should focus on a cascade model for knowledge transfer to address this challenge effectively.

Shahidullah Badal, *General Secretary, Industrial Bangladesh Council (IBC)*

There are 160 factory-level registered unions, but only 60 of these unions are functioning, which is a very low number. Forming a union at the factory level remains a significant challenge. The Better Work Programme has created opportunities for forming trade unions; therefore, more factories should be brought under this programme.

At the policy level, a database should be developed to track the various activities of factories under the Better Work Programme. This database should also analyse both participating and non-participating factories. The government should take the initiative in creating and maintaining this database. The inspection system also needs to be strengthened. It is crucial to focus on capacity building and skill development. Promoting social dialogue is essential to address disputes and find solutions. The automation-driven transformation is resulting in many workers losing their jobs. Therefore, they need to become familiar with and knowledgeable about these new technologies through skill development.

Mohammed Zahidullah, *Chief Sustainability Officer, Dulal Brothers Limited (DBL)*

DBL has established Industry-Based Training (IBT) centers, accredited by NSDA, within its spinning mill and garments factory. These centers focus on providing hands-on training on live industry problems, offering a more practical learning experience compared to traditional TVET institutions. More industries should adopt IBTs, potentially with government support.

The proportion of female employees in the RMG industry has declined over the years, from 80% to around 50-55%. To retain female workers, the RMG industry must create more attractive employment opportunities.

By 2030, we need to reduce our carbon intensity, primarily through renewable energy. Space constraints in Bangladesh limit rooftop solar expansion, so government support is crucial. The government aims for 40% renewable energy by 2041, and a public-private partnership could help achieve this. The government could provide land while the private sector handles financial investment. Meeting climate goals is essential for continued growth.

Firoz Chowdhury, *Assistant Editor, Prothom Alo*

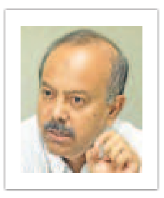
The media cannot operate in isolation; it is our responsibility to accurately cover events as they unfold. Prothom Alo diligently reports both the positive and challenging aspects of the RMG sector regularly. Over the past decade, this sector has undergone significant transformation. Following the Rana Plaza incident, there were concerns that the entire industry would suffer irreparably. However, we have since prioritized compliance, ensuring rigorous standards are met. Nonetheless, there remains a crucial need for a comprehensive data bank on the areas of progress where Better Work has intervened. Media professionals often encounter challenges due to the lack of sufficient data. As members of the media, we strive for access to accurate information to deliver authentic news.

Laetitia Weibel Roberts, *Deputy Programme Manager, ILO*

Emphasizing lifelong learning is integral to developing a skilled workforce—a perspective that underscores our vision for the sector. Promoting worker upskilling, currently lacking, must be a priority as we anticipate industry advancements. We've witnessed marked improvements in reducing noncompliance, enhancing productivity, and bolstering worker satisfaction.

Firstly, we aim to foster greater factory ownership to diminish reliance on the Better Work framework and curtail non-compliance. The second prong of our strategy involves capacity building and partnerships, aiming to reshape service delivery to industry partners. Central to this effort is extensive capacity building, encompassing training, trainer development, and course refinement. The third aspect focuses on the evolution of Better Work's business model and our future operations. To achieve this, we prioritize knowledge sharing through seminars, discussions, sharing best practices, and data dissemination.

Our focus now shifts to extrapolating the lessons learned beyond the RMG sector, marking an exciting phase of expansion and replication.



Shakil Chowdhury, *Secretary General, International Trade Union Confederation-Bangladesh Council (ITUC BC)*

Despite advancements in the RMG sector, much remains to be done. Our export volume in the RMG sector has increased by 15% in the last ten years, and revenue has risen by 55%, making us the second-largest exporter in the world. However, progress in forming labor unions and collective bargaining agreements has been insufficient.

A harmonious relationship between workers and employers is essential, and without unions, achieving better industrial relations is challenging. Addressing this issue and prioritizing policy changes, such as amending laws to facilitate trade unions, is crucial. The factory inspection mechanism also needs significant improvement. Many critical issues can be resolved at the primary stage if collective bargaining or trade unions are permitted in the RMG sector. Labor courts alone cannot address all issues; they must be resolved at the factory level, and having unions would make this possible.

Abdullah Hil Rakib, *Vice President, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)*

Initially met with skepticism, Better Work has succeeded due to the efforts of the IFC, ILO, and other partners. Factory owners have also played a key role, though more recognition and reward could further motivate improvements. The Rana Plaza incident served as a wake-up call for many of us, prompting significant improvements in fire safety and occupational health standards.

Many factories now want to join the Better Work program, inspired by its successful model. The government is urged to understand the project's benefits and collaborate to implement best practices at the industry level. Achieving a unified code of conduct—social, environmental, and governance-related—is essential. The government should support this through finance, awareness, and capacity building, while entrepreneurs need clear guidance. Engaging the entire ecosystem, from top-level to supervisory roles, is crucial for sustained progress.

Mohammad Hatem, *Executive President, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA)*

I greatly appreciate the Better Work Programme, and we're closely collaborating with them. But, factories participating in the programme are often obligated to fulfill the audit requirements of various buyers and brands as well. This becomes difficult for an entrepreneur. We support implementing all Better Work recommendations, but buyers and brands must accept them without adding extra audits or regulations. Additionally, fair and ethical pricing is an important aspect to consider alongside compliance.

Md. Abdur Rahim Khan, *Inspector General, Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE)*

Reflecting on the progress of Bangladesh's RMG sector over the last decade, it is evident that Better Work Bangladesh has been instrumental in driving significant improvements in labour rights and workplace safety. The progress encourages the industry to participate more in this approach.

It is also expected that both the government and workers will work together to ensure a better workplace and better implementation of the Bangladesh Labour Act (BLA) and Bangladesh labour rules. Given the graduation of Bangladesh from LDC status, the export-oriented industry, particularly the RMG sector, needs to increase competitiveness in the international market through ethical manufacturing practices and robust compliance standards.

Nahim Razzak, *MP, Bangladesh National Parliament*

Businesses must strive for excellence while simultaneously addressing compliance issues. The Bangladesh government is taking a strong, positive stance by consolidating labor and EPZ laws into a unified format, which has been agreed upon by all stakeholders and is nearing finalization. While the government can promote unions, it's also essential for RMG owners to support unionization. However, we must proceed cautiously with unionization efforts.

Despite being the world's second-largest RMG exporter and hosting the highest number of green factories, our industries often do not receive any extra payment for compliance. The ILO and IFC should advocate for fair treatment, and the media should spotlight this issue.

The Better Work model is replicable, but it doesn't need to be implemented in every factory. Instead, we can adopt and implement their best practices independently, learning from their successes.

Tanjim Ferdous, *In-charge of NGO and Foreign Missions, Business Development Team, The Daily Star*

Today's discussion focused on labour rights, compliance in the RMG sector, enhancement of labour standards, workplace safety, and ideal business practices. The conversation also highlighted the successes of the past decade, the development of the RMG sector, and the pivotal roles played by the Better Work Bangladesh programme. Recommendations for the next decade emphasised how to elevate our RMG sector to global competitiveness through policy, institutional, and operational changes.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

How far does the gold syndicate's reach go?

Involvement of law enforcers, public officials must be investigated

The unexplained death of Jhenaidah MP Anwarul Azim Anar has brought some shocking truths to light, including details of a brazen gold smuggling operation in his constituency. According to a recent investigation by this daily, Anar had invented a "token" system that would allow carriers transporting illegal gold a free pass from law enforcement. In return, the latter would get a "handsome" cut. This daily interviewed a carrier who said there are dozens like him who pick up consignments from various districts and deliver them to the border, where other operatives smuggle them out to India. The border smugglers earn between Tk 1 lakh and Tk 2 lakh per consignment, while carriers receive a fixed monthly salary.

According to local sources, gold smuggling has been taking place through this border area over the last four to five decades. Azim has reportedly been involved in the gold trade since he was a student in 1986, assuming a leading role for the last 10 years. The three-time MP stood accused in 21 cases between 2000 and 2008, including murder, extortion, and smuggling of arms, explosives, drugs and gold (which subsequently got dismissed during the AL regime). We cannot help but wonder how a man of his "notoriety" could hold such an important position, and whether the ruling party was truly unaware of the scale of his involvement in criminal networks.

The slain MP may have been one of the kingpins of this smuggling syndicate, but the question still remains: who else is involved in the trade, and how deep does the involvement run? Most importantly, can we expect an independent investigation into the syndicate now, or will the kingpins continue to orchestrate the show from behind the curtains, with the same impunity they have enjoyed till now?

The government should be as worried as we are about the nexus among criminals, law enforcement and political leaders, and the possibility of complicity of more people within its own ranks in sustaining such criminal networks. In order to regain public trust as well as for its own sake, the government must initiate a thorough and credible investigation into the smuggling syndicate, beginning with identifying all those within the law enforcement and administration who have been actively aiding and abetting the process. Exemplary action must be taken against them, no matter their designation. Anar's murder and subsequent investigations have caused great damage to the country's reputation, and the government must respond with urgency and full transparency.

When childhood is devoid of play

Govt must address children's lack of playtime, dwindling playgrounds

As open spaces keep turning into high-rises in this fast-paced world, our little ones are being deprived of their most basic right: the chance to play to their hearts' content. A recent report, based on opinions of those aged 3-18 years, reveals that one out of three children does not have enough time to play, one out of five has no safe playing space, and one in three children with disabilities has no playmates. This is truly a depressing statistic and does not bode well for the future generation. While this is the global scenario, the Bangladesh government must think about how it has contributed to this crisis, as dwindling playgrounds and rising educational pressure, among other issues, are greatly depriving our children of the chance to play.

Against the backdrop of the first-ever International Day of Play, observed on June 11, we must address the difficult issues facing our children. Notably, school, coaching classes and homework are snatching away the precious time to play, and we must ask: must these youngsters be burdened with so much studying at this age? We acknowledge that education is a tool to escape poverty and climb the socioeconomic ladder, but play is also of utmost importance. According to experts, it is essential to develop intelligence, language and social skills, empathy, and creativity, while ensuring physical well-being. Unfortunately, due to our cut-throat society, parents often forget about these benefits.

In the last 22 years, the number of playgrounds in Dhaka has come down from 150 to only 24. So, even if they have the time, where exactly will our children go to play? According to the report, 97 percent of the children surveyed said play is important, 57 percent said they made friends while playing, and 45 percent got to bond with their caregivers during playtime. Only by taking their thoughts seriously can we work towards their welfare, but clearly we don't. As a result, they have been condemned to spend hours in front of digital screens for daily entertainment, which pose serious health risks. This has to change. The authorities, first and foremost, must ensure adequate playgrounds and a well-structured education system, so our little ones can play freely under the open sky.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Magna Carta sealed by King John

Magna Carta—a charter of English liberties that occupies a unique place in the popular imagination as a symbol and a battle cry against oppression—was sealed on this day in 1215, under the threat of a civil war, by King John.

Biman's frustrating legacy of misadventures

A CLOSER LOOK

Tasneem Tayeb
is a columnist for The Daily Star. Her X handle is @tasneem_tayeb.

TASNEEM TAYEB

In the country's aviation landscape, Biman Bangladesh Airlines and controversy have now become synonymous. From rampant corruption in every layer of its activities to gross misgovernance permeating all levels of decision-making—with ample evidence presented in various investigative reports—Biman is fully submerged in a stinky cesspool of controversies of various forms, scales and scopes.

Biman's recent decision to proceed with procuring Airbus aircraft, with the a reconstituted evaluation committee turning projected losses into projected profits based on illogical assumptions, has added more flesh to the body of accusations against the national flag carrier over mismanaged deals.

One would remember the 2014 lease of two EgyptAir aircraft for five years, which Biman could only put into use initially for one year, due to engine defects. Not only did it have to take separate engines on lease for Tk 177 crore, it also had to count staggering losses due to keeping them sitting idle. Between 2014 and 2019, Biman had to bear a loss of Tk 1,200 crore, with the expenditure of Tk 3,529 crore surpassing the Tk 2,329 crore revenue that the two aircraft had earned.

It seems Biman is about to make another loss-making venture by procuring the Airbus aeroplanes, as the projected profits are based on unrealistic assumptions, as stated earlier. First of all, to show a 20 percent jump in revenue, the 92 percent passenger cabin factor that Biman projected for these aircraft is inflated. On an average, the passenger load factor or passenger cabin factor of an aircraft is usually around 70 percent, depending on various factors, such as expenditure. Last year, the global passenger load factor was 81 percent.

The second fallacy in Biman's logic for profit is the route suggestion. While the national carrier says that the Airbus aircraft would be profitable in two routes only—the Dhaka-New York route, three times a week, with a stopover in Istanbul; and the Dhaka-Jeddah route with daily flights—Biman has apprently lost sight of the fact that it is not authorised by the US Federal Aviation Authority to fly in the NY route due to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh's operational irregularities identified in 2006.

Moreover, setting up an Airbus fleet would require Biman to create a completely separate and new supply chain, and logistics arrangement with trained manpower, as the current one caters to a predominantly Boeing fleet. This would involve crores in additional costs.

It has been suggested that this is more of a diplomatic move by the Bangladesh government, which is trying to move away from its dependence on US-made aircraft. Airbus is European-made: France, Germany, the UK and Spain are all involved in its manufacturing value chain, with the final parts assembled in Toulouse, France.

Whatever the reason may be, Biman cannot and should not be used for any other purpose other than ensuring its healthy and sustainable growth and creating a competitive edge for the country's aviation industry in the global marketplace. Biman is not a tool for diplomacy that can be used at the government's whim.

At a time, when the global airliners are rebounding from the economic shock caused by the Covid pandemic, braving headwinds, riding on the back of the booming aviation sector growth (according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), air travel continued to bounce back in 2023, matching pre-pandemic levels) Biman keeps counting losses. Even in FY2022-23, the company chewed on a loss of Tk 25.91 crore in its main airline business.

A *Prothom Alo* report further reveals that Biman owes the "civil aviation authority huge sums of money for landing charges, boarding charges, leasing, surcharge as well as VAT and taxes on other charges." What is worrying is that it window-dressed its books to hide the losses. According to the same report, the liabilities were not shown on the past five years' financial statements, which also did not include a significant amount that Biman owes to Padma Oil Company in interest due to delayed payments. These were revealed in audit reports, and is unfortunately not a new phenomenon for Biman. Such findings have even been discussed in parliament, without making any meaningful impact on Biman or its operations. It continues to go wayward.

That Biman is a highly corrupt institution that thrives on shameless plundering of public money is no secret. It is mired in mismanagement and lacks good governance. While the officials draw hefty salaries and enjoy additional perks, their performance is mediocre at best. Even recently, Biman gave all its employees and staff members a five percent "special incentive," including for its retired officials and casual workers. Its losses are staggering, and on top of that the new expenses are expected to take a heavy toll on its books.

It is high time the government took immediate and stringent measures to address the matter of Biman's mismanagement and complete lack of accountability. The measures should ideally include a complete system overhaul, and the implementation of a well-planned Business Process Reengineering strategy to trim the fat, plug the gaps, and streamline the processes. Most importantly, Biman should be brought under a clearly defined governance framework with updated code of conduct, policies, and SOPs to ensure good governance practices. And the authorities must ensure that these policies, SOPs and code of conduct are implemented and applied to the dot.

This all depends on the intent and political will of the authorities. Do they have the willingness to introduce meaningful changes to how Biman operates, to transform it into a growing, profitable venture?

VISUAL: **TEENI AND TUNI**

RTI kept alive mainly by rural, semi-urban citizens

Dr Shamsul Bari *and* **Ruhi Naz**
are chairman and assistant director (RTI), respectively, of Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB). They can be reached at rib@citech-bd.com.

SHAMSUL BARI *and* **RUHI NAZ**

There is conflicting feedback from our readers on the operation of the Right to Information (RTI) Act in the country. Some believe that in the existing political climate, there is little scope for the success of a law that seeks to empower citizens to probe into the government's inner workings. Others consider that by building incremental gains achieved through developing a close working relationship between government officials and citizens based on low-level RTI interventions, a culture of openness can be cultivated where deeper probes may be possible.

As a result, the upper echelons of society with a better understanding of how the government works have largely avoided the law. In contrast, those at the grassroots level with little knowledge about the intricacies of governance have used the RTI law to ensure that the government fulfils its responsibilities to the people.

Today, we bring to light several real-life instances that vividly illustrate the positive outcomes and growing influence of the RTI Act at the grassroots level. These success stories demonstrate how citizens, often with NGO support, have effectively used the RTI mechanism to address issues and bring about significant change.

In Nilphamari Sadar upazila, women patients who required ultrasonogram tests often had to get them done at private clinics despite the high cost. Those who could not afford them depended on the free services at the upazila hospital. However, they found the place unsafe, with no privacy during the process and no female nurse to perform it. One of the male nurses was insensitive and made the patients feel unsafe. Frustrated, two members of an RTI group in the area, Anupha Begum and Shahida Begum of Bahalipara village, took matters into their own hands. They submitted two separate RTI requests in March 2024 to the officer-in-charge of Nilphamari General Hospital, seeking information on measures taken by the authority for the safety and privacy of the patients at the upazila hospital during the ultrasonogram process. They also asked for the names of doctors, nurses, and technicians who were supposed to run the service. Within a month, the hospital authority responded, stating that safety and privacy measures had been introduced at the upazila hospital. A positive outcome like this served as loud publicity for the power of the RTI Act and the role of citizens in bringing about change.

In the same upazila of Nilphamari, some members of the local RTI group in Ramnagar Union felt that despite repeated government assurances, the services provided by the local community clinic were poor. The medicine it provided for free included only paracetamol, antacids and the like; the more expensive medication had to be bought from the market. So, some of the members submitted individual RTI requests to the upazila health office, asking for a list of services provided at the Ramnagar Community Clinic as well as a list of medicines supplied free of cost to the public by government hospitals and clinics. Shortly, replies came listing 59 free medical services and 42 types of medicines distributed by the institutions in a given period. The disclosures caused a stir in the community as many listed services existed in name only. Armed with the information, the group decided to mobilise the local population, ensuring that they knew what to demand from the authorities concerned.

In Dinajpur Sadar upazila, a local RTI group was surprised to find that the counter to deposit money in savings accounts, pension schemes or fixed deposits was kept open only from 10am to 10:10am in the city's main post office. No transaction was accepted after that period, and the number of persons served was limited to 10 only. It caused great hardship to the people, particularly those who were illiterate. So a member of the group, Astarul Alam, decided to submit an RTI request to the postmaster of Dinajpur asking for a copy of the official decision on the deposit counter's hours of operation, and the list of transactions performed by the said counter from April 24 to May 6 this year. Upon learning about the RTI request, the head of the post office directorate in the region directed the postmaster to provide the requested information urgently, copying his mail to other important postal officials in the district for their knowledge and necessary action. In his response to the applicant, the postmaster informed that all post office activities remained open from 9am to 4pm, including deposits, and provided the number of people served within the period specified by the applicant.

These examples illustrate the point we have made in these columns time and again: it is mainly through the efforts of ordinary citizens that the RTI Act has been kept alive and kicking across Bangladesh. Their efforts are not just about demanding better services and transparency, but also about expanding the scope of democracy in the country. Though not always met with friendly responses, their actions are a powerful testament to the strength and resilience of democracy. They also help with the proper implementation of many government programmes for the needy and underprivileged.

However, while they smoothen the path, it will be the responsibility of the more knowledgeable members of the civil society to take the law to greater heights, so that more sensitive governance issues can be brought into the purview of citizens' inquiry. This collective effort of the citizens is a true embodiment of the power of democracy, making them feel the significance of their role in the governance of their country.

The full version of this article is available on our website.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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Advertisement: 01711623910
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Subscription:
01711623906

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PHOTO: **REDD F/UNSPLASH**

Allowing private universities to offer PhD programmes can help curb the brain drain by allowing homegrown PhDs to flourish.

P for Private, P for PhD

BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza
is professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has finally decided to empower private universities for PhD supervision and conferment. The decision, according to a report in this daily, came after "much debate and discussion." The Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh (APUB) has long demanded that institutions that have met certain criteria be allowed to offer PhD degrees. Only 56 public universities (according to the UGC), regardless of their research infrastructure or teaching strength, are eligible for this privilege.

Private universities began their journey in the 1990s, primarily as undergraduate teaching institutions, following the US model of four-year baccalaureate degrees. Soon, the universities felt the demand for graduate programmes in a country that perceives master's education as an automatic continuation of an undergraduate degree and a terminal degree. In phases, private universities began to apply for master's degrees for selected academic programmes. The fact that private universities are demanding approval for doctoral degrees is a sign of maturity. Then again, the reluctance to give that opportunity to a higher education sector that is operating within the law of the land is a sign that there is still public scepticism about the ability, accountability, and transparency of the private system.

As someone who has worked in both sectors, I find the proposed move not only timely, but also promising for our country's academic and professional landscape. It will harness the wealth of experience of retired public university professors and academics returning from abroad. At present, after retiring from a public university, a professor can no longer be the primary supervisor of a PhD candidate, irrespective of their international exposure, invaluable expertise, and professional networks. Many of them become full-time faculty members in the private sector. These seasoned faculty members can provide research students with exceptional mentorship, diverse perspectives, and cutting-edge knowledge that can enrich the academic environment in the country. Furthermore, the flexibility of private universities can encourage these experts to continue contributing to academia without the constraints of the public system.

However, it is essential to recognise that not all of the 100-plus private universities have the necessary infrastructure to become research-intensive institutions. Especially in the STEM sector, researchers often need access to labs and government resources. Private university researchers often lack access to some UGC funding provisions, including overseas conferences and research grants. Government policies also guide foreign donors and agencies, who prefer to collaborate with public institutions. Most private universities have not been able to establish a research culture due to systemic constraints.

The planned decision mentions that the UGC would consider the research strength and reputation of a private university before giving it the final nod. In this regard, I think a two-tier system similar to the Carnegie Classification in the US can be useful. This model would distinguish between basic teaching universities and advanced research universities, ensuring that only those with adequate facilities and resources undertake the rigorous demands of PhD programmes.

The benefits of this decision are manifold. First, it can help curb the brain drain by allowing homegrown PhDs to flourish. Many scholars who would have pursued their doctoral studies abroad can now conduct their research while staying close to their families. Moreover, research students can continue their teaching roles, similar to the teaching assistantship (TA) or research assistantship (RA) they would have held abroad, thereby gaining valuable experience and contributing to the educational ecosystem. Universities can consider reducing their teaching load in order to facilitate their research, which will ultimately help the institutions' ranking and accreditation bids.

Furthermore, this move can lead to significant economic benefits. By pursuing their PhDs locally, students can save significant amounts of foreign currency that they would otherwise spend on overseas education. The prospect of attracting foreign students to our PhD programmes is another advantage. By establishing high-quality PhD programmes, we can attract international students, enhance our global academic reputation, and foster cross-cultural academic exchanges. The competition for a PhD provision will encourage the local institutions to improve their international network and institutional infrastructure.

Until now, the top 10 private universities have focused on hiring faculty members with foreign degrees for understandable reasons. These include international exposure, quality of education and research, networking opportunities, and a global perspective. They can also enhance the institution's reputation by signalling commitment to excellence and international collaboration. However, the requirement for a local degree may deter some of our local scholars from choosing the difficult path of TOEFL/IELTS, GRE/GMAT, statement of purpose, and TAship/RAship while applying overseas.

As the custodian of both the public and private systems, UGC must ensure academic rigours as well as support local talent, creating a dynamic and enriching academic environment that benefits students, researchers, and the institution as a whole. Not everyone can afford to go abroad. Even if they do, the return on investment (ROI) for a PhD abroad has to be appealing. Suppose a PhD in an OECD country requires an investment of $30,000-$150,000 over three to seven years. We cannot expect a graduate earning a monthly salary of less than Tk 1 lakh to realise their investment. This practical reason accounts for a significant portion of the brain drain. Our neighbours in India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka have therefore created a robust homegrown PhD system. They did so by making a PhD a prerequisite for becoming a university lecturer. The decision to permit the private system will produce enough research graduates to make such a system viable.

However, there are some potential risks. Our local researchers' lack of overseas exposure and limited access to cutting-edge resources and technologies could impede the quality of their research output. A robust research culture is needed. The creation of a network of PhD degree-granting entities, similar to the M25 Consortium in the UK, can facilitate resource-sharing and collaborative research. The UGC can develop a monitoring system to guarantee the quality of local research.

The commercial interests of some private universities present another significant challenge. There is fear that some dodgy ones might start selling certificates. Unfortunately, many public universities are equally guilty. The demand for PhD is created by many officials, civil and military bureaucrats, and other non-academics who pursue PhDs to decorate their CVs or for their post-retirement career prospects. This can be checked by tightening the supervision and examination. Dhaka University has made it mandatory for international examiners to provide external oversight and uphold rigorous academic standards. At the initial stage, the UGC can provide a co-supervisor from a public or international university to help the private university ease into the system during the pilot stage. The UGC's role in this transition will be pivotal. By approving the basic structure and curriculum of PhD programmes, it can ensure consistency and quality across institutions. This regulatory oversight is crucial to maintaining high academic standards and fostering an environment conducive to advanced research.

Granting private universities the authority to supervise PhD candidates and confer doctoral degrees is a progressive step that holds immense potential for our academic landscape. With appropriate regulatory frameworks and a focus on quality, this decision can transform doctoral education in Bangladesh, retaining talent, fostering innovation, and enhancing our global academic standing.

COW RUNNING AMOK IN A MARKET

It's not a 'moo' point

OF MAGIC & MADNESS

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BADIUZZAMAN BAY

Every year, Eid-ul-Azha brings with it viral pictures or videos of human-cattle interactions that amuse some and bemuse others, but overall help to build anticipation for the more solemn occasion of cattle sacrifice. This year is no different. A video clip currently trending online features a runaway cow that—let's say for now—decided to go shopping. The clip begins with what appears to be an overturned auto-rickshaw in front of a shopping mall in Dhaka. The cow, visibly agitated, with its handlers trying to hold onto its reins, leaves them behind to chase a few onlookers before making a dash for the mall entrance. It gallops up the stairs. Once in, it runs past a row of shops, slips into one in the far corner, and briefly hides there, much to the bewilderment of the crowd.

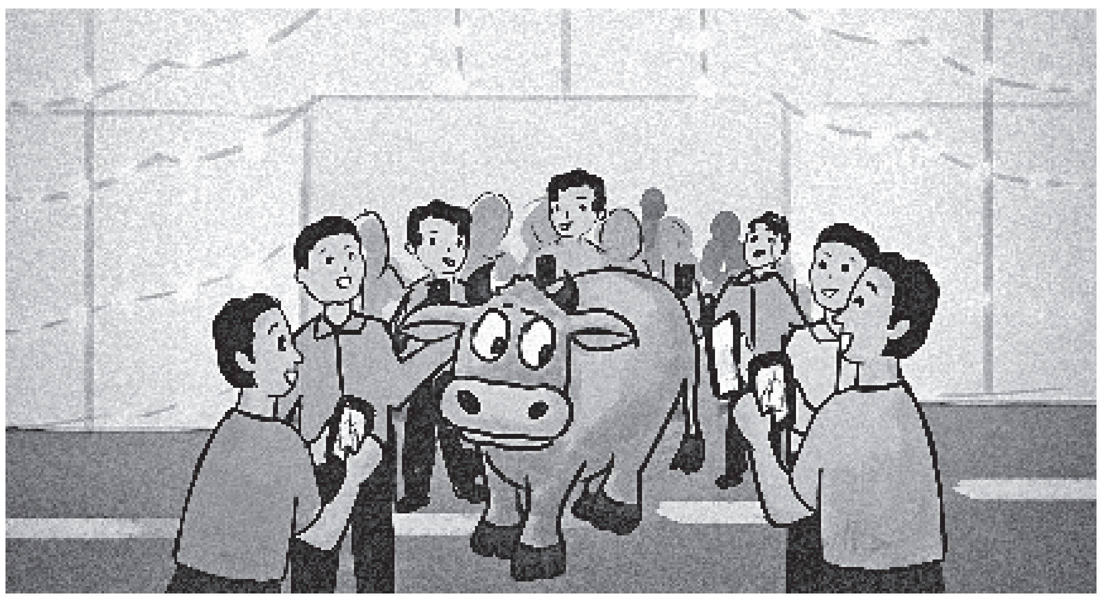


ILLUSTRATION: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

I must admit that I, like most people commenting on the video, was amused initially. After all, the short video is full of chaotic potential, with a side dish of humour served with a fitting music. Although sacrificial cows breaking loose on their way from *haat*s or lunging at perceived attackers is not an uncommon sight, it still prompts an amused reaction during every Eid-ul-Azha. Netizens, as always, had some funny ideas about why the runaway cow behaved the way it did in front of a shopping mall. Stuff of another *Gabhi Brittanto*, one quipped.

> **While we share and laugh at these viral videos of 'cute chaos' caused by cows on our streets, they also bring to light a stark reality: the fast-vanishing space for animals in Bangladesh as people continue to encroach upon their habitats and animals, in turn, increasingly find themselves in human-dominated areas, leading to such bizarre encounters.**

Interestingly, the *gabhi* (cow) in question seemed to calm down a bit toward the end, inside the shop, where it found a caring pair of hands stroking its head. Its earlier behaviour can be attributed to fear or irritation. The way sacrificial cattle are often hauled off to their eventual destinations, hemmed in by all sorts of people and vehicles, each louder than the other, can be overwhelming for the shackled animals. The poor cow probably had a similar experience, and its instinctive response was to try to flee to a safer location, away from the chaos, confusion, and beatings.

But there are bigger things at work here. While we share and laugh at these viral videos of "cute chaos" caused by cows on our streets, they also bring to light a stark reality: the fast-vanishing space for animals in Bangladesh as people continue to encroach upon their habitats and animals, in turn, increasingly find themselves in human-dominated areas, leading to such bizarre encounters. The cows—rounded up for human consumption, but often treated most inhumanely—thus serve as a metaphor for all the caged, abused, poached or displaced animals out there. Seen from their perspective, the story of animals invading human spaces (like shopping malls) is equally a story of humans invading natural spaces (like hills and forests). We only see one side of the story because it helps us sleep at night, secure in our own sense of self-worth.

But to call what's happening on the other side a "human-animal conflict" would be like, for lack of a better example, calling what's happening in Gaza an "Israel-Palestine war"—so one-sided has this so-called conflict been. From Cox's Bazar to the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) to Sylhet to Gazipur to Mymensingh to the Sundarbans, our invasion of the natural spaces has been relentless and merciless. And the animals have only been reacting to it so far, and reacting rather unconvincingly.

It is no wonder, then, that the rate of deforestation in Bangladesh, according to an article by this daily, has been almost double the global average. In Cox's Bazar, for example, forests are rapidly disappearing, replaced by various projects and settlements. Often, these forests or forestlands, which serve as the natural habitats of numerous animals including critically endangered species, are being ravaged by government agencies themselves—the very institutions that are supposed to protect them—for development or commercial purposes.

The saga of CHT districts is equally depressing. Every other month, you come across reports of how the region, with its rolling hills and rich forests, is being degraded or stripped bare to make way for various infrastructure and commercial projects without any environmental consideration. This rampant development is literally a death sentence for the natural habitats of wildlife. Also at risk is the integrity of Indigenous communities who have lived in harmony with nature for centuries. Other forest and hilly areas in the country that historically served as natural habitats for animals are more or less going through the same ordeals. When a natural space is degraded like this, it is not just the species that face the risks of displacement. Its ecological balance, too, is disrupted.

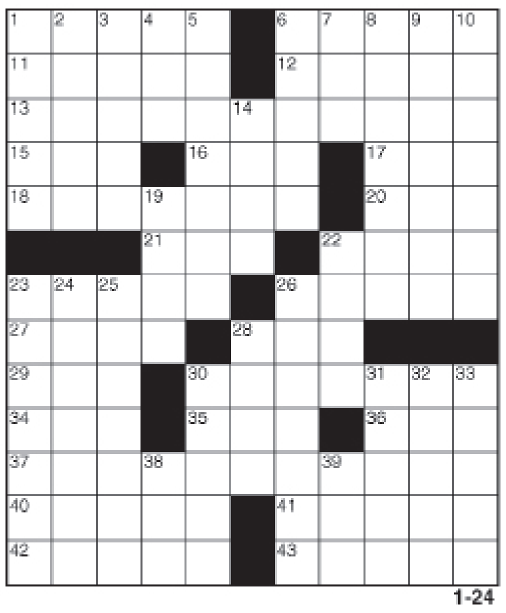
Animals are not safe from uncontrolled human expansion in cities and other urban landscapes either, as parks and open spaces are being consumed by concrete structures. The occasional sighting of a monkey, bird or squirrel is a painful reminder of their shrinking habitats. Even the abject negligence with which animals living closer to humans, like street dogs and cats, are treated speaks of the ever-widening gap between the human and animal populations.

So, yes, when a cow wanders into a shopping mall where you think it has no business to be, it is not a moot or—as Joey from the TV show *Friends* would call it—"moo" point. It is *the* point: a clear, decisive statement on the need to end human cruelties and excesses in relation to our animal neighbours.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Bring together
6 Istanbul natives
11 Network points
12 "Looks — everything"
13 Campaign leader
15 Immigrant's subj.
16 Solo of "Star Wars"
17 Kickoff aid
18 Sweet course
20 Star pitcher
21 Had supper
22 Thin board
23 Wise saying
26 Grating sounds
27 Swear
28 Actor Affleck
29 Gym unit
30 Determined
34 Dedicated verse
35 Ill. neighbor
36 Actor Mahershala
37 False friend
40 Top story
41 Fragment
42 Lab work
43 Civil wrongs

DOWN
1 Hungry, probably
2 Like Thor and Odin
3 Pop stars
4 Wallet bill
5 Art lover
6 Jeer at
7 Coffee dispenser
8 Tourists' cars
9 Patella
10 City ways
14 Quite uncommon
19 Hangs low
22 Beach cove
23 Circus sta
24 Time of delivery, perhaps
25 Facets
26 Adjust to new conditions
28 Crooked
30 Brake shapes
31 Cavalry weapon
32 Put in office
33 Grows weary
38 Young fox
39 Life story, for short



1-24

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

S	C	A	D	S		S	N	A	P	
P	A	N	I	C		T	U	L	I	P
A	N	G	E	R		A	S	A	N	A
N	I	L		A	L	I		M	E	N
S	T	E	P	P	I	N	G	O	F	F
			O	P	T		O	D	O	R
P	O	P	P	Y		F	I	E	R	Y
E	C	R	U		P	I	N			
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T	A	M		L	E	G		F	A	R
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THE THRIVING ONLINE CLOTHING THRIFT SCENE

and the youth behind it

ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM *and*
ARANYO RISHI CHOWDHURY

Up until the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, the concept of thrifting, or buying old, "pre-loved" clothes, was entirely foreign to us. Then, while doom-scrolling on Instagram, we began to come across online thrift stores selling unique pieces of surprisingly good quality. We were even more taken aback to learn that most of these businesses are run by students.

These young entrepreneurs are not only proving the do-ability of running a thriving business alongside studies but also inspiring countless other students to dip their toes into the rewarding world of entrepreneurship.

For Sunayra Subha Pushpita, the founder and co-CEO of Bangladesh Thrift, starting the business was initially a matter of earning some money after O levels. However, it turned out to mean much more. "We think running an online store can be a valuable experience for students, teaching them time management, multitasking, efficient decision-making skills, and providing them with early exposure to the world of business," she says.

PHOTOS: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

Something that sets thrift stores apart from mainstream retailers is that said retailers are seldom interested in catering to niche aesthetics. As online thrift stores are relatively small, owners can afford to invest in unique, out-there styles that appeal to only a small number of people, while still making worthy profit.

If a certain style of clothing is not available, chances are someone will take up the opportunity. "Back when I started in 2022, I noticed there were various thrift stores on Instagram selling Western clothes but not a single one selling traditional *kameez* or *kurtis*. There was a big gap in the market, and that's when I decided to be the first to open a thrift store for traditional clothes," said Adila Tasbi Labiba, a student at the Independent University of Bangladesh and the owner of Thrift Kameez.

Arshad Shawki and Sujana Kasfia, the co-founders of Mulberry, added, "We used to window-shop a lot, and oftentimes could not afford what we liked. Also, there was no exclusivity to the pieces created in bulk. When we started thrifting and transforming our wardrobes, people liked our sense of style. Naturally, the idea of opening a thrift store to sell these types of clothes made sense."

Many of these online thrift stores source their stocks from vintage markets overseas or domestic suppliers dealing in old and defective pieces. The circular nature of this practice lengthens the life cycle of the clothes, extending the time before they end up in a landfill.

The thrifting movement can thus be seen as a collective pushback against the impacts of fast fashion, catering to the growing environmentally conscious customer base in Bangladesh. Additionally, these clothes can be sold for a fraction of what they would cost brand-new, appealing to the younger customer base operating on a tight budget.

Adila speaks at length about her experience with juggling studies and a small business. "I started small and only dedicated time to Thrift Kameez during the weekends. Due to the huge response from my customers, I eventually started dropping in on alternate days," she shared.

She continued, "When it was getting difficult for me to manage it all on my own, my family helped me with packing and ironing the pieces." Thus, it can be observed that the work required to run an online thrift store is quite manageable if distributed amongst friends, family, or business partners. However, this depends on the scale of the sourcing and distribution operations, which is also quite versatile with a thrift store business.

It can be daunting to try to start a business as a student given the financial burden of it. However, Sunayra started Bangladesh Thrift with an investment of only 300 taka. Similarly, Adila's initial investment of 6,000 taka into Thrift Kameez came from Eidi she received from her relatives. The key to keeping the business running has been to reinvest profit back into the enterprise. Continuous reinvestment allows the business to grow, so it can, in turn, rake in enough profits for the entrepreneurs to remove a cut from it to pay themselves.

Due to online thrift stores requiring remarkably low initial investment, another young person, Ayela Amin, founder and owner of poptags and Janky, started out with Eid salami combined with 2000 taka loaned from her father, which amounted to a total initial capital of 7000 taka.

"With the 7000 taka, I bought 20 to 30 pieces, curated my collection, made my card, and designed and arranged packaging," shared Ayela.

When setting up a thrift store, challenges are frequent and complex. We say this not to downplay the financial issues that can come with running an online thrifting business, but to shed light on the relatively lower barriers to entry into these businesses.

Arshad, for instance, reflects, "Dhaka is an expensive place to live in, so saving up enough money to secure stocks in large enough quantities has been a struggle". However, the continued success of these ventures proves that it is not impossible to have a flourishing business. Due to the sense of individuality inherent to it, the sustainability of the practice, and the affordability, the world of thrifting is not only worth experiencing as a shopper but also as an entrepreneur.

> **"Back when I started in 2022, I noticed there were various thrift stores on Instagram selling Western clothes but not a single one selling traditional *kameez* or *kurtis*. There was a big gap in the market, and that's when I decided to be the first to open a thrift store for traditional clothes," said Adila Tasbi Labiba**

Everything in life requires practice

SUMAIYA RASHID

There's a widespread misunderstanding that some things in life require natural skills or a one-time lucky break. However, nobody tells us how many aspects of life require practice. The reality is that life is a long-running practice session in which we actively seek to improve how we live and who we are – to achieve completeness in being.

Unless they possess natural talents, the majority of the population is aware that certain activities require diligent practice. This can relate to academics, sports, the arts, etc. What people might not acknowledge, or even know, is that maintaining good interpersonal relationships require practice as well.

Making friends, for example, is more than just a casual form of socialising; it is a skill that we carefully develop. To fully comprehend the subtleties of friendship, we should be able to separate deeper relationships from those that are surface-level and superficial.

This isn't to say that surface-level friendships are inherently bad, but investing our time and energy in maintaining deeper relationships can help improve our mental health alongside our day-to-day lives. We should also not hesitate to establish appropriate boundaries and recognise when someone has not earned the right to be our friend, all of which are necessary components of creating real connections.

Moreover, being a dependable support system for people when they need it is what defines friendship, which goes beyond simple acquaintance. Our ability to empathise, show compassion, and listen intently strengthens our moral fibre and enhances our interactions with others.

Respecting moral values like loyalty, honesty, and dependability not only makes relationships stronger but also increases personal growth for each of us. However, establishing clear expectations and boundaries is necessary to instil mutual respect and reciprocity in friendships.

Practicing introspection can help us be a good person in general. But with it comes the necessity of practicing how to recognise when someone hasn't earned that privilege of being close to us. We should also learn to accept our right to be angry and, eventually, how to handle complex situations or being more forgiving.

Much of life is muscle memory, and I've come to realise there are many more areas of ourselves to flex, stretch, and strengthen than those we're taught in Biology classes. Understanding that our virtues, like muscles, require regular workouts and reinforcement, facilitates continuous personal development.

In the pursuit of our personal growth, we should learn to accept the full spectrum of human emotions and create coping skills to get through life's obstacles. As we learn, our right to experience and express emotions, including anger, is important, as is channelling them in a healthy and constructive way.

Our individual experiences are influenced by a variety of circumstances, including privilege and structural barriers. Practice and self-improvement are worthwhile goals, but not everyone has the opportunity to pursue them. Social justice and inclusivity can only be advanced by acknowledging and resolving these differences.

As friends, parents, co-workers, and members of the community, we have a choice: either we sink further into our narrow self-interests, allowing our most creative abilities to stall and eventually undergo atrophy, or we put in the effort necessary to collaborate with others to more successfully achieve justice, healing, and joyful harmony.

The latter can seem more difficult and yield more risks. However, it can also bring about great comfort as well. So, with practice, the downsides can diminish and eventually become easier to navigate.

In the end, our lives are an ongoing practice – a path of ongoing learning, development, and self-discovery. One thing we can do to facilitate our journey through life is to remain open to the unique opportunities we come across, instead of focusing just on the results. We should strive to be the best versions of ourselves rather than striving for perfection through practice.

ILLUSTRATION: **FATIMA JAHAN ENA**

City Edition

Star
SPORT
DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 15, 2024, ASHAR 1, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV & STAR SPORTS 1, 2, 3
T20 World Cup
Nepal vs SA
Live from 5:30am
New Zealand vs Uganda
Live from 6:30am
Canada vs India
Live from 8:30pm
England vs Namibia
Live from 11:00pm

SONY SPORTS 2, 5
Euro 2024
Hungary vs Switzerland
Live from 7:00pm
Spain vs Croatia
Live from 10:00pm
Italy vs Albania
Live from 01:00am (Sunday)

Tigers reap rewards of planned attack

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh have been smart in picking the right bowler for the right moment so far in the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup and on Thursday against the Netherlands, when asked to defend a score for the first time in the tournament, the bowling unit flourished once more through the precise choice of bowlers according to situations.

Chasing a challenging but not improbable 160-run target, Netherlands were at one point running away with the game, needing 61 runs from 42 deliveries with seven wickets in hand.

After Taskin Ahmed had been hit for a humongous six in the 13th over, which went for 11 runs, the game was slipping.

Shakib Al Hasan, who had been a bit expensive in his first two overs, conceded just five in the 13th. That over raised the asking run-rate to 9.33, increasing the scoreboard pressure on the Dutch who had two set batters at the crease.

Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto then handed the ball to leg-spinner Rishad Hossain for the 15th over, hoping to purchase some wickets.

Holding back Rishad's last two overs for this particular phase worked wonders for Bangladesh as the scoreboard pressure and Rishad's sharp turn broke the game open.

Rishad courageously tossed up deliveries to get purchase and Sybrand Engelbrecht only managed to top-edge the ball to point to depart for 33 off 22. Just one ball later, another flighted delivery saw Bas de Leede get stumped, beaten by the turn.

The two wickets allowed Shakib to bowl another five-run over, before Mustafizur Rahman's death bowling exhibition began.

Mustafizur, who bowled 17 dot balls in the innings, found bite on the surface with his cutters but it was his clever use of angles that really made him almost unhittable.

During the recently-concluded IPL, Mustafizur had been seen using the angle to slant deliveries across right-handers with MS Dhoni standing wide behind the stump. His pace variations and his wide angled deliveries proved too good for the Dutch batters.

Mustafizur is seemingly feeling more confident in using his variations in the death overs, as 46 percent of his deliveries in the death overs have been slower cutters since 2022.

Mustafizur has the joint second-lowest economy-rate among bowlers who have played at least three games at this T20 World Cup and picked up a minimum of four wickets.

With an economy of 3.91, he stands with OEG Baartman (South Africa) and PA van Meekeren (Netherlands) but unlike them, Mustafizur bowls at the death overs.

On Thursday, he bowled the 17th and the 19th over of the game, giving away just four runs, compared to Meekeren, who bowled the 15th and 17th over for his side, conceding 11.

The game was opened up by Rishad but defended by Mustafizur. Shakib, who said Bangladesh's score of 159-5 was challenging, but not a winning one, talked about the bowling plan.

"I think everyone is contributing here, especially the whole bowling unit," Shakib said when asked about Rishad's impact.

"Each of the bowlers are needed at different times in different situations. The way Mustafizur bowled and Taskin and Tanzim Sakib bowled with a new ball, naturally, these contributions are also needed to make another bowler bowl well," he added.

Almost hidden behind the marquee bowlers, part-time off-spinner Mahmudullah Riyad also played a crucial role for Bangladesh, removing the dangerous left-hander Vikramjit Singh in his only over of the match.

RISHAD
22
HRIDOY
77
SHANTO
99

Clear and concise, Bangladesh's bowling unit has been decisive in their plans so far, which has put the team on course for a berth in the Super Eight.

Bangladesh brace for taxing Super Eight

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are in poll position to reach the Super Eight stage of the ICC T20 World Cup after their victory over the Netherlands on Thursday and are set to be placed in Group 1 in the next phase, arguably the tougher of the two groups.

The Tigers currently have four points in three matches, having beaten Sri Lanka earlier and then losing to South Africa. A victory or a washout against Nepal in their final group-stage match on June 17 will seal their spot in Super Eight.

Even if they get stunned by Nepal, they would still qualify if Sri Lanka beat the Netherlands, or if the Lankans don't lose the match by a big margin or if the match gets washed out.

If Bangladesh get through, they will be in Group 1 alongside India, Australia and Afghanistan.

Although the group-phase is not yet over, Bangladesh's group and opponents are already fixed owing to the ICC's pre-tournament seeding of Super Eight.

The top two ranked teams in each group in the first round were allotted the first and second seeding ahead of the tournament, meaning finishing first or second in the group will not make any difference.

Bangladesh were originally not part of the pre-tournament seeding as South Africa and Sri Lanka were given the first and second spot from group D.

As Sri Lanka have been knocked out and South Africa are already through, Bangladesh are now vying for Sri Lanka's vacant D2 slot.

Because of this pre-tournament seeding system, the Tigers will have to take on two tournament favourites and a dangerous Afghanistan side in the Super Eight while in the other group, two associate sides—the USA and Scotland – are vying for spots alongside the West Indies and South Africa.

If given the choice, the Tigers would've definitely preferred to take South Africa's place in Group 1, but with that not being a possibility, they have to begin bracing themselves for the uphill challenge in Super Eight.

The matches against Australia and India are scheduled to be played at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on June 21 and 22 respectively, a venue that has produced the two lowest aggregate scoring matches so far in the competition.

England decimated Oman in Antigua, bundled them out for a mere 47 and chased the total down in 3.1 overs while Australia skittled out Namibia for 72 and chased it down inside six overs.

It will be a challenge for the Bangladesh batters to withstand the Indian and Australian attacks in Antigua if sent to bat first. However, Bangladesh can also turn the tables on them with their bowling attack if they get the first crack with the ball.

Bangladesh will then face Afghanistan in Kingstown on June 24, the same venue where they beat the Netherlands.

In the Netherlands match, the pitch had something for the faster bowlers and some variable bounce early on but run-making was not that laborious afterwards.

Taking early wickets against Afghanistan, a team dependent on the top-order, and tackling their lethal spin attack will be the key for the Tigers. The Caribbean conditions should aid Bangladesh, however, given their tough draw in the Super Eight, the path to semifinals looks treacherous for the Tigers.

Moment of truth for defending champions Italy

AFP, *Wuppertal*

Italy kick off their European Championship title defence against Albania on Saturday as a new-look team tries to rebuild the reputation of one of the world's most important football nations.

Luciano Spalletti's Italy take on Albania in Dortmund in the first of three clashes in a fiendishly difficult Group B which also contains Spain and Croatia.

And those two later fixtures make Saturday's one hugely important, as with the four best third-place finishers in the six groups reaching the knockout stages, a win over Albania would give Italy a great chance of going through.

Italy come into the tournament in quietly confident mood, with delegation chief Gianluigi Buffon insisting that the Azzurri are "an underrated team" despite being holders and four-time World Cup winners.

Italy might be reigning champions but after winning the last Euros three years ago they missed out on qualification for a second straight World Cup.

Spalletti has been entrusted to guide his nation out of another bout of deep soul searching and he has done so by casting aside the team which became national heroes by beating England in the Euro 2020 final.

"I can see that we have players in the squad who will become future greats. They have the quality," Federico Chiesa said on Thursday in an interview with UEFA.

"We want to show what we're made of at the Euros. Let's see what we can do."

Spain and Croatia set for another battle

REUTERS, *Dortmund*

Spain and Croatia begin their Euro 2024 campaigns on Saturday with a rematch of last year's nervy UEFA Nations League final as they kick off the action in Group B, which also includes European champions Italy and surprise package Albania.

With memories of a heartbreaking shootout defeat by Spain still fresh in their minds, captain Luka Modric's perennial overachievers seem ready to again challenge the pre-tournament odds in their quest to finally win a major trophy.

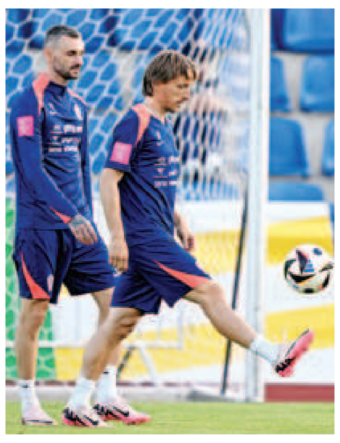
After reaching the 2018 World Cup final and making the semifinals four years later, the Nations League final loss to Spain was a tough pill to swallow.

It also raised questions of how long the country's 'golden generation' can keep on writing one of the great underdog stories in recent history.

Yet Croatia go into the tournament still relying on a midfield trio of Modric (39), Marcelo Brozovic (31) and Mateo Kovacic (30), who gave a taste of their competitive hunger on Saturday when they handed Portugal a 2-1 defeat in Lisbon.

The result did not reflect the visitors' dominance against Roberto Martinez's side, who were subdued despite being almost at full strength with Bruno Fernandes, Bernardo Silva, Vitinha and Ruben Dias in the starting 11.

The win gave Zlatko Dalic's side a boost for their Euro 2024 debut against old rivals Spain - one of the few elite teams giant-killers Croatia have regularly failed to slain.



Spain are partly to blame for Croatia's failure to hit the same World Cup highs at the European Championship in which their best result has been reaching the quarterfinals twice.

"We played them many times and we know what kind of football Spain like to play, they like possession and lulling the opposition to sleep," Croatia striker Ante Budimir told a press conference on Wednesday.

"They can be very quick and vertical at any time. As a team, they are nice to watch and easy to enjoy. (Midfielder) Rodri is very important for them. They have a lot of young players who can make a difference. A very talented and dangerous team..."

Since taking over the Spain job from Luis Enrique after the 2022 World Cup debacle, when they were knocked out in the last 16 on penalties by surprise package Morocco, manager Luis de la Fuente has been blending the country's young and ascending talent with experienced players very successfully.

Veteran defenders Dani Carvajal and Nacho, with Rodri in the middle and captain Alvaro Morata up front, provide the foundation and balance to allow Spain's skilled youngsters Lamine Yamal, Nico Williams and Pedri to create their magic.

Will that be enough to keep their winning run alive against gritty Croatia?

"We didn't come to Germany on vacation, on a tour trip, we are here to win and we'll do our best to do that," 16-year-old winger Yamal told reporters on Wednesday. "Saturday's game against Croatia is probably the most important of my career.

Resurrected England eye another win

AGENCIES

England can't afford to drop any points against Namibia in their final Group B game of the ongoing T20 World Cup on Saturday at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua if they are to keep themselves alive in the Super 8 race.

The Jos Buttler-led side thrashed Oman in their last match on Thursday and will be full of confidence in getting the job done against Namibia but they can't relax or be complacent.

Even though a defeat against ICC associates member Namibia -- nine places below fourth-placed England in T20I rankings -- looks a bit unlikely, Buttler's men will be wary of their opponents as a loss in today's game will mean an automatic exit for the defending champions.

After a no-result in their opening match against Scotland and a heavy defeat to Australia in the second game, England found themselves in a 'must-win by a big margin' situation against minnows Oman.

Fortunately for the Three Lions, Adil Rashid (4/11), Jofra Archer (3/12) and Mark Wood (3/12) stepped up in a big way, sharing the wickets to bowl their opponents out for 47 runs in only 13.2 overs before Buttler scored a quickfire 24 off eight balls to lead the side to victory in just 3.1 overs, giving their net run rate a massive boost from -1.800 to +3.081, significantly above Scotland's +2.164.

A victory this weekend for England will see them draw level on five points with the Scots, who face Australia on Sunday. As long as England don't slip against Namibia and Australia do what is expected of them -- which is to beat Scotland -- England can hope for smooth sailing to the Super Eight.

What would also come as a relief to Buttler and Co is that Australia skipper Pat Cummins ruled out Thursday the prospect of Australia underperforming against Scotland in a bid to oust rivals England from the Twenty20 World Cup, saying it would be against the "spirit of cricket."

"I don't think you can (go into a game not trying to win) -- ever," Cummins said after Josh Hazlewood caused controversy this week when he said it would be in Australia's interests for reigning champions England to be out of the competition.

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St Martin's finally gets supplies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

A month's worth of supplies were taken to St Martin's Island by tourist ship Baro Awlia yesterday to ease the food crisis, officials said.

Some 150 people who had been waiting to return home on the island for at least nine days were taken there by the ship.

Amidst armed conflict in nearby Myanmar, barely any boat had travelled to and from St Martin's since June 6, resulting in an acute shortage of essential supplies.

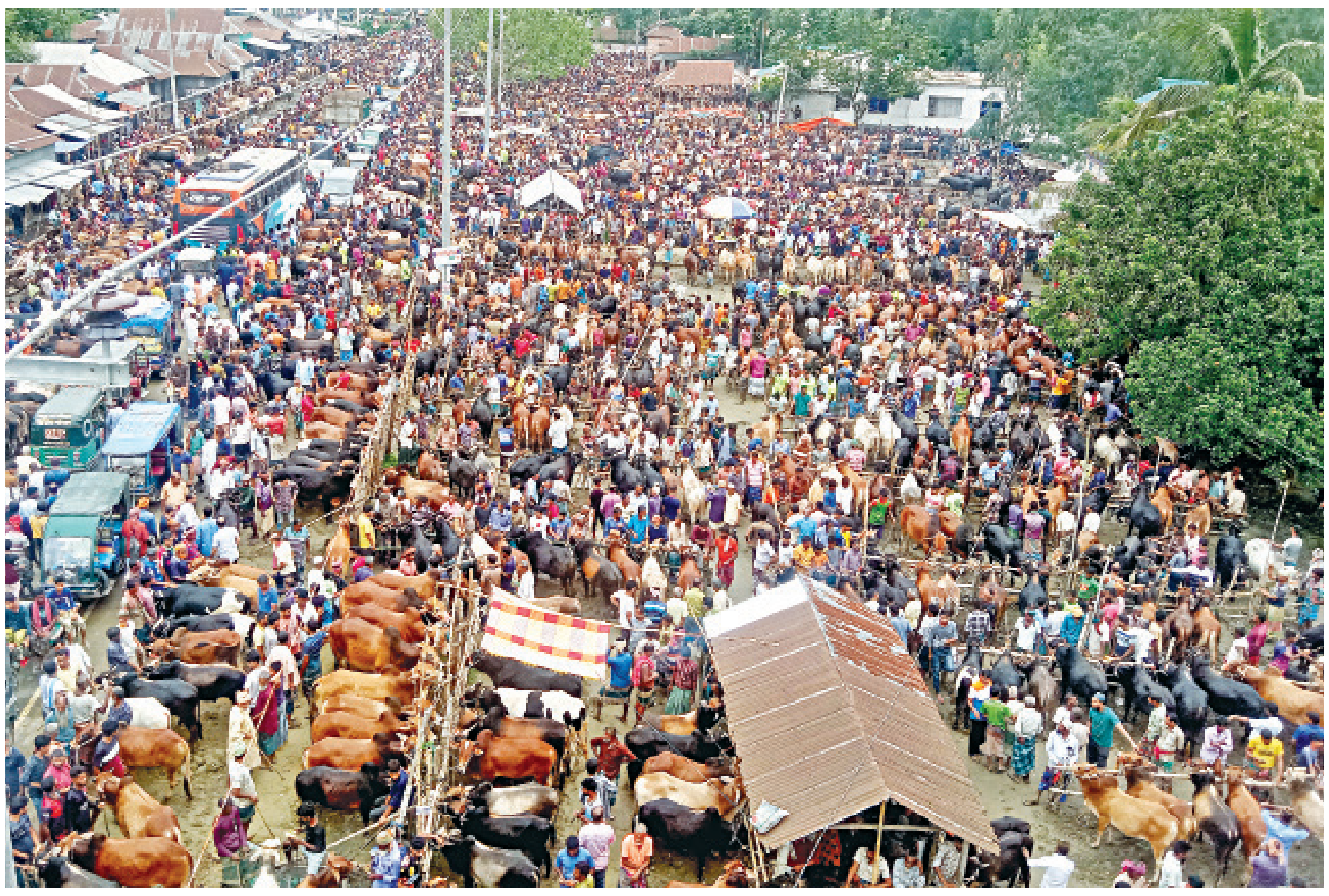
Locals said over the last few days, gunshots were fired from across the border at trawlers and speedboats on the Naf river.

Yamin Hossain, additional district magistrate, said the government sent some food items and local traders took rice, onion, potato, fruits, and other essentials on Baro Awlia.

He added that the supplies will last for a month.

Rehena Akhter, who was on board the ship, said she, her husband and their three-year-old daughter went

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



The 150-year-old Pingna cattle market spills over the Jamalpur-Tangail highway in Jamalpur's Sarishabari upazila yesterday. The market sits every Friday and with the Eid only a few days away, cattle and customers were aplenty. Vehicles, however, were stuck in tailbacks for hours.

PHOTO: **SAHIDUL ISLAM NIRAB**

Border killings continue despite BSF promise

10 Bangladeshis killed since March after BSF DG said they'd use non-lethal weapons

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Border killings continue despite India's Border Security Force's repeated assurance of bringing it down to zero.

At least 10 Bangladeshis were shot dead allegedly by BSF after its Director General Nitin Agarwal said the border force personnel are using non-lethal weapons with intent to minimise the causalities during the DG-level border conference held on March 10.

Of the deceased, four were killed in March, three in April, two in May, and another this month, according to data from the rights group, Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK).

According to ASK and media reports, 12 Bangladeshis, including a BGB member, have so far been killed by the BSF this year, raising questions about the effectiveness of the border force's measures.

"The border killings have been going on for a long time. This cannot continue, and it must be resolved immediately through discussion," ASK Executive Director Faruq Faisel told The Daily Star recently.

He said, "India also shares borders with China and Pakistan, but we don't see such killings there. This will continue unless the Bangladesh authorities take a logical

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES

Prices go up ahead of Eid

SUKANTA HALDER

As Eid-ul-Azha approaches, consumers brace for a hike in the prices of essential commodities, a trend seen all too often ahead of Eids.

In the week leading up to Eid, commodity prices have risen in the capital and elsewhere in the country, straining consumers.

The recent price increase is especially painful because Bangladesh's average inflation rate has been above 9 percent for the previous two years.

During visits to several kitchen markets in the capital yesterday, it was found that the prices of soybean oil, onions, eggs, rice, garlic, ginger, cardamom, and bay leaves, among other daily necessities, had gone up compared to a week ago.

Meanwhile, data from the state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) also showed a similar trend.

Depending on quality, fine rice was selling at Tk 68-78 per kilogramme (kg), up from Tk 60-78, according to various retailers.

On the other hand, the price of coarse rice has gone up to Tk 57-58 per kg.

On top of that, the runaway cost of cooking oil has also been hurting middle and lower-middle-income families.

Loose soybean oil was being sold at Tk 155-160 per litre, up from Tk 150, and bottled soybean oil was priced at Tk 170 per litre, up from Tk 165.

Local garlic was being sold at Tk 200-220 per kg, up from Tk 190-220, while ginger price was Tk 250-300 per kg, up from Tk 240-280.

Local onions were selling at Tk 85-90 per kg, up by about Tk 5, and four pieces of brown eggs was selling for Tk 52-54, up from Tk 50.

Bay leaves were being sold at Tk 200-300 per kg, up from Tk 150-200.

Small cardamoms (elaich) were selling at

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

'Ananda' makes them smile

For Korail slum children with cerebral palsy, Saturday is a day of laughter and joy

NILIMA JAHAN

Over the past year, 12-year-old Samia's life has undergone a significant change. In the capital's Korail slum, the child was born with cerebral palsy, a group of neurological disorders that appear in infancy or early childhood and permanently affect body movement and muscle coordination.

As a result, she spent most of her childhood bedridden, unable to sit or turn from side to side on her own.

But, now, she looks forward to every Saturday because it is the one day she gets to live the life of a regular child that she was previously deprived of.

For the past year, she wakes up early every Saturday, has her breakfast, and puts on her favourite red frock while her mother styles her hair into two ponytails.

She then waits for the dedicated volunteers to pick her up in a wheelchair and take her to "Ananda", a daycare centre that essentially serves as a respite care centre.

Along with Samia, other children arrive by 10:00am and slowly settle in. They mingle, play games, sing nursery rhymes together, and engage in various fun-filled activities. They also receive essential physiotherapy before being given snacks and lunch, all of it free of charge.

According to the latest National Survey on Persons with Disabilities-2021 by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the number of people with cerebral palsy in the country is approximately 136,800.

Around 96.34 percent of them have communication limitations; 96.64 percent lack balance; 89.32 percent have abnormal muscle stiffness or looseness; 90.97 percent have restricted hand or foot movement; 89.06 percent face behavioral issues; and 85.49 percent experience partial or full inactivity of hands or legs.

Children like Samia rely on dedicated volunteers or palliative-care assistants (PCAs) for support.

The assistants engage them in

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Each child gets specialised cared catered to their individual needs at Ananda.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Israel hits Gaza as truce talks fail to progress

34 more Palestinians killed

AFP, *Palestinian Territories*

Israeli strikes hit Gaza yesterday as truce talks with Hamas failed to progress and tensions surged on Israel's northern border with Lebanon.

Witnesses reported the strikes in various parts of the Gaza Strip in the morning, particularly the centre. At Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central city of Deir al-Balah, men gathered over the body of an 11-year-old boy who died during bombardment of nearby Bureij refugee camp.

In a black singlet, the child lay on a floor smeared with fresh blood, a white bandage covering the top half of his face, AFP images showed.

Israel's military yesterday said troops continued operations in central Gaza, where warplanes had struck a "militant cell" and "military structure" in the Zeitun area.

After projectiles were fired from northern Gaza into southern Israel on Thursday night, artillery and aircraft hit the launch sites, the army said.

At least 37,266 Palestinians have been killed and 85,102 have been injured in the offensive that began on October 7, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement yesterday. Some 34 Palestinians were killed in the previous 24 hours, the ministry added.

Fears of a broader Middle East conflict have surged again, with Lebanon-based Hezbollah fighters, who are backed by Iran, launching waves of rockets against Israeli military targets on Wednesday and Thursday.

» 2 killed as Israeli warplanes hit house in Lebanon

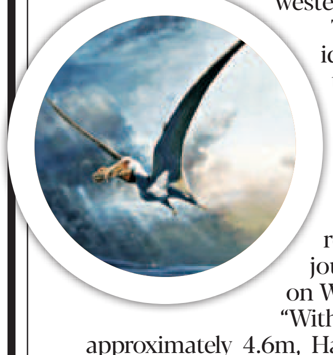
» Palestinians lament shortages of essentials ahead of Eid

New pterosaur species discovered

CNN ONLINE

An amateur paleontologist has discovered a new species of pterosaur, a flying reptile that lived alongside dinosaurs around 100 million years ago.

Kevin Petersen, an avocado farmer and curator of the Kronosaurus Korner fossil museum in northwest Queensland, Australia, unearthed a number of fossilised bones in western Queensland in 2021.



These have since been identified as belonging to Haliskia peterseni, a new genus and species of pterosaur, according to a statement from a team at Curtin University in Perth, which led the research, published in the journal Scientific Reports on Wednesday.

"With a wingspan of approximately 4.6m, Haliskia would have been a fearsome predator around 100 million years ago when much of central western Queensland was underwater, covered by a vast inland sea and globally positioned about where Victoria's southern coastline is today," study lead author Adele Pentland, a PhD candidate at Curtin's School of Earth and Planetary Sciences, said in the statement.

The giant creature was the first vertebrate to evolve the ability of flight and lived alongside dinosaurs during the Mesozoic Era, which started around 252 million years ago.

IBRAHIM
18
5

Afghanistan pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi runs for joy as Ibrahim Zadran chases him in celebration following one of his three wickets against Papua New Guinea in their Twenty20 World Cup Group C fixture at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy Stadium in Tarouba, Trinidad and Tobago yesterday. The three wickets helped Farooki to 12 scalps in three matches while leading the Afghans to a place in the Super Eight stage with a seven-wicket victory.

PHOTO: **ICC**

Pakistan out as USA seal Super 8s spot

AGENCIES

The USA advanced to the Super Eights stage of the T20 World Cup on Friday when their match against Ireland was abandoned, an outcome which meant former champions Pakistan were eliminated.

Ground staff spent hours working to dry the wet outfield at Lauderhill but shortly after the umpires had inspected conditions a huge downpour ended any hope with the field quickly under water once again.

South Florida has suffered heavy rain and flooding and the game on Tuesday at Lauderhill between Sri Lanka and Nepal was also abandoned.

There were heavy showers earlier on Friday morning which added to the workload which all proved to be in vain.

Fans who had waited patiently inside the Central Broward Stadium were instructed to stay in the facility and in shelter due to thunder and lightning which accompanied the torrential rain.

The USA reach the last eight in their debut appearance in the T20

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

The forgotten female footballers of Khulna

After being attacked, they had to stop playing due to social stigma, financial crisis

> **The dream we had when we started playing football is no longer possible. How can I play if I can't practice properly? We want a playground and training from our coach.**
>
> **Sadia Nasreen**

> **Even though club activities had resumed after July, everything stopped since last November. We were forced to abandon football, but we still want to play and practice on the field.**
>
> **Mongoli Bakchi**

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

Wearing shorts and playing football -- these reasons were enough for some locals to attack under-17 female footballers of Super Queen Football Academy at Tentultala village in Khulna in July last year.

Instead of dribbling past opponents and scoring goals, some of them had tossed and turned in hospital beds for days to heal the injuries sustained from the attack.

The incident caused nationwide outrage, with one of the culprits swiftly detained. The rest were arrested nearly a month later after they threatened to burn the girls with acid for filing a case against them.

A wave of support followed. Voices from across the country rose in their defense, civil society rallied behind them and promises of funding poured in.

But like many issues in Bangladesh, this too became a victim of the news cycle's relentless churn. As new stories grabbed headlines, the plight of the Khulna Super Queen Academy girls faded from public memory.

"Deceived" by the initial support, these girls dreamt of returning to the pitch, one day wearing the red and green of the national team.

However, upon returning to the field, they found themselves abandoned.

The promises turned out to be empty, funding dried up, leaving them with no means to continue training.

Although those who claimed to support the girls forgot them, the ones who opposed their freedom never forgot.

Their ridicule continued. At least four girls were married off by their family to "save face before it's too late".

The others face a harsh reality. Some toil as domestic helpers, others labour in croplands for meagre wages, and one even drives an auto-rickshaw to make ends meet.

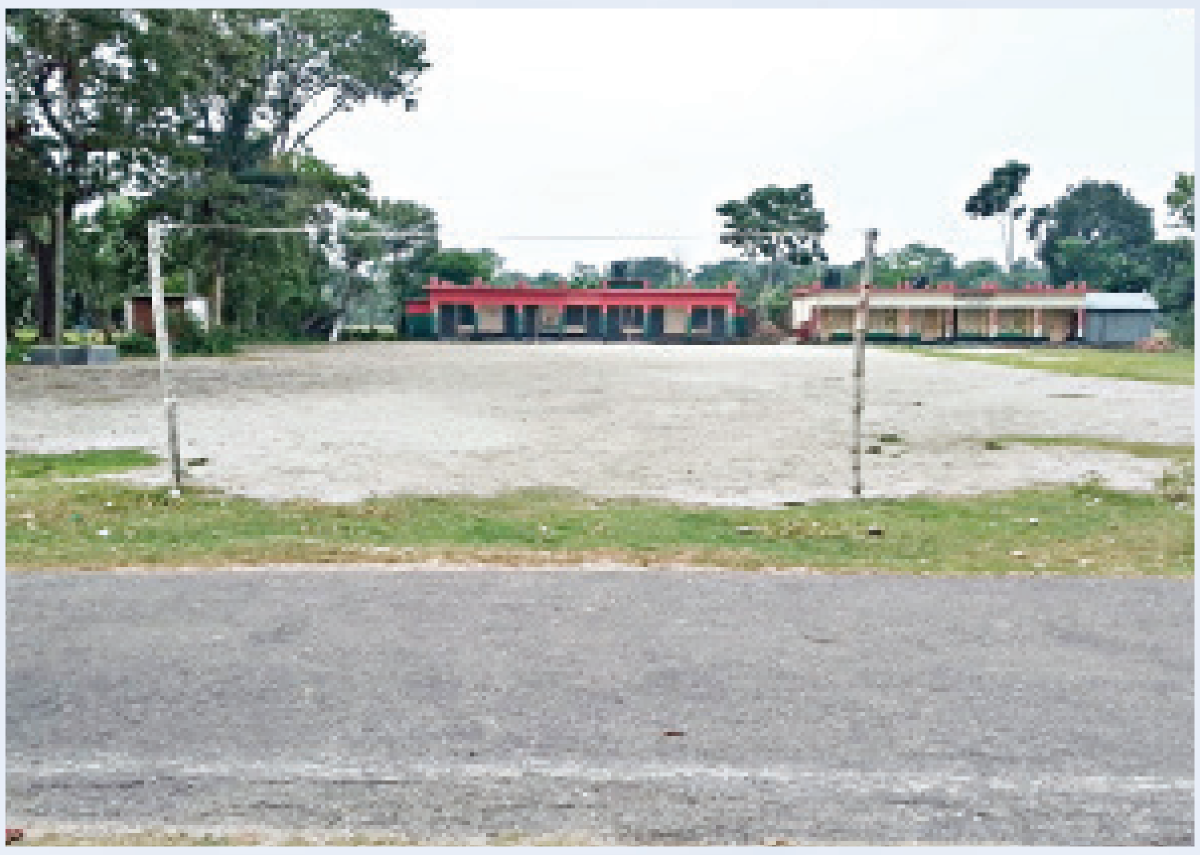
Football, their passion, their escape is now a distant memory.

The dreams they nurtured, the life they envisioned, are now just a faint echo, a cruel reminder of what could have been.

The activity of the football academy they trained in has completely halted.

Mongoli Bakchi, a stalwart of the academy, spent most days in the hospital bed among the injured. Her head, which she used to score numerous goals with powerful headers, was mercilessly targeted by the attackers.

"Even though club activities had resumed after July, everything stopped since last November," she told The Daily Star recently.



The current state of the field at Super Queen Football Academy. Due to a lack of maintenance, the once green field has become almost barren. Hardly any matches are held here. PHOTO: **COURTESY**

"We were forced to abandon football, but we still want to play and practice on the field," she added.

"Due to financial and social stigma, our football journey ended even before it could properly start. We were promised many things, including a mini stadium and special training, but now no one comes to check on us," she said.

Mongoli, who played in Khulna divisional team from 2018 to 2023, is experiencing a physical and mental breakdown after being off the field for the last seven months.

Her mother, Suchitra Bakchi, said, "I sent my daughter to play football with a dream, but now she spends idle time at home."

"To this day, the naysayers ridicule her. How can I shelter her from constant bullying?" she asked.

Sadia Nasreen, Jyoti, Ritu, Swarna, Puja, Devi, Sima, and Priti of the Super Queen football team were all regular players of the U19 divisional team, but have now left the game and are busy with other activities.

Sadia was assaulted along with Mongoli last year.

"The dream we had when we started playing football is no longer possible," Sadia said. "How can I play if I can't practice properly? We want a playground and training from our coach," she added.

Sadia is now trying to get admitted to other academies but that too seems quite impossible due to financial constraints.

Puja Roy, another promising player, refused to be locked away at home despite leaving football. She defied social stigma and took up the challenge of driving a battery-powered easy bike to support her family.

But fate seemed determined to crush these girls' spirits. Just last Friday, Puja's easy bike was stolen from Kadamtala intersection in Khulna city.

Her father, Arbindu Roy said, "I don't see any future for my daughter in sports. Seeing no alternative, Puja is now helping our family. But even that source of income has been snatched away."

Asharaful Alam Khan, former upazila chairman, used to fund the football academy. He even helped some of the players after the attack. However, he didn't want any of the players to join other teams, or even play at the divisional level, some of the players said, seeking anonymity.

Additionally, he didn't like the widespread attention the issue received after the attack and was concerned about the negative impact his support for girls' football could have on a portion of his vote bank. So he stopped funding, the sources said.

Asharaful could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts.

Debashish Mondal, along with local sports organisers, established the Tetultala Super Queen football academy to provide training and opportunities for 30-40 girls who regularly practice football. He told The Daily Star that the club's practice is halted due to financial crises, and without collective support, the club cannot resume operation.

Coach Md Mostakuzzaman said it is painful to keep such promising players off the field. "The club was closed due to organisational weakness and financial crisis. Despite the need to get the girls back to the field, no progress is being made," he added.

Contacted, Advocate Saiful Islam, president of the Khulna District Football Association, said he will take all necessary measures to resume the club's activities soon.

ALL ACCUSED OUT ON BAIL

On July 30 last year, a day after the incident, Sadia Nasrin filed an attempted murder case with Batiaghata Police Station, naming four individuals.

However, the process to seek justice was not entirely smooth.

Sadia alleged discrepancies between her initial account and the police record of the case.

"I had told the police that we were attacked with sharp weapons, but the case record only mentioned physical assault. I applied for a correction. It was corrected only after media reports. Initially, the police did not want to take the case and even tried to file a robbery case against us on behalf of the accused," Sadia recounted.

At that time, the officer-in-charge of Batiaghata Police Station told The Daily Star that the "female players were attacked because they were being unruly".

The Daily Star published a report on this.

While the main accused, Nur Khan, was arrested, his wife Rangi Begum, son Salauddin Khan, and daughter Nupur Khatun were granted interim bail by the court until August 21 last year. Out on bail, they continued intimidating the girls with threats of acid attack.

Fearing for her life, Sadia filed a general diary on August 1.

The three were held for violating conditions of the bail following court order.

However, all four of the accused are now out on bail following a High Court order.

The trial is ongoing.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad's Khulna district legal advisor, Advocate Jahanara Parveen, is currently representing the girls.

She told The Daily Star that charges against the accused have been framed, and the next hearing is scheduled for June 25 this year.

Wishing anonymity, a senior police officer at the district level said, "We provided long-term protection to ensure that the female players were not subjected to any further attack or harassment. Two police vehicles always accompanied them when they went to and from the field. Additionally, we stationed a vehicle at the house where they stayed and practiced at night for several months to ensure their safety."

"Since they are not practicing anymore and are not facing any threats, we are not providing security anymore," he added.

At least four girls were married off by their family to "save face before it's too late". The others face a harsh reality. Some toil as domestic helpers, others labour in croplands for meagre wages, and one even drives an auto-rickshaw to make ends meet.

Just a year ago, these footballers used to practise here regularly. However, faced with social stigma and financial constraints, they are now unable to follow their passion. The activities at the Super Queen Football Academy at Tentultala village in Khulna, where they practised and dreamt of glory, has now completely halted. But these girls still want to return to the pitch and wear the red and green of the national team. PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

FICTION

AFTER THE RAIN

DESIGN: **MAISHA SYEDA**

I lost interest in everything I did in the following weeks. Those untrimmed eyebrows, slightly dimpled cheeks, the sheen on her forehead—all made me sleepless.

MIR ARIF

Again, I wasn't a poet, but words and sentences jumbled up seeing that small face, light make-up enhancing her beauty. A loose strand of hair cascaded down her cheek, framing her face. I had seen many of my female co-stars closely but found her face most beautiful. I was never accustomed to seeing such a thing. As I took the pen from her hand, I was shivering. God knows why, I didn't know what to write. I was so dazzled that I fiddled with the pen without signing anything. Perhaps she thought I was waiting to learn her name, perhaps I simply forgot how to write my own name. Hell, what would a person know who simply indulged in the privileges bestowed upon him? "I want an auto—" She gulped and couldn't finish the word, being nervous. For some moment I thought she was going to depart, leaving me as baffled as she was. Finally, she told me her name and her voice echoed off the walls and went straight into the deepest vault of my consciousness. It was like listening to a sonata, embodying love and pining in one great session. I took extra time to write the name on the snow-white tissue. Instead of leaving at that instant, she leaned forward, and the language of silence dictated us. I kissed her or she kissed me, or it was an effort from both. I can't be fully sure. Beads of sweat formed around her lips, shining like stars. I was so taken aback that I forgot to say anything out of courtesy.

Sweats, a little whiff of some cologne, varnished rail, her rattling fleet, a bangle on the wrist, black hair, the flashing light, the oncoming storm—is all I remember. I stood unmoved for a long time in that semi-darkness after she walked out into the rain. The last glimpse of her I had was through the glass window as I saw her friend pressing her arm in earnest, simultaneously rebuking her to know why she was so late. She told her nothing and the friend held out an umbrella, checking the time on her wristwatch. And the girl I kissed—and whose name I forgot—showed the friend something inside her purse that was enough to suppress the curiosity. I wondered if she told her about the silent kiss we both shared, the musical feelings we created. A brown Toyota Corona stopped in front of them. A white-capped driver rushed out, opened the door, and sped away. I stood alone, a wailing note in my heart, watching it pour outside, the trees dancing in the wind. One of the waiters eventually noticed me and showed me in, apologising for not knowing that I was to visit the club. He said something about phone calls and readying a table, but all I could hear was some noise. The music of that silent kiss was still so strong that I suppressed any other details in my mind.

I lost interest in everything I did in the following weeks. Those untrimmed eyebrows, slightly dimpled cheeks, the sheen on her forehead—all made me sleepless. I had no direction whatsoever in my life. Even in my dreams, I had a strong feeling for her when I saw the back of her. She was walking away in the rain or sometimes lying down on a bed with a book hiding her face. Oh, those frustrating dreams. I could never see her fully, her face never appeared once. It was always some limbs, legs or hands or lips or shoulders, but never her face. Even when I tried to forcefully imagine the face, I could only picture some outlines, more geometric in nature than a person's face. I gave up and turned to music, blasting symphonies in the evenings, then English, Bangla, and Hindi songs, whatever I fancied. S D Burman, Jagjit Singh, The Righteous Brothers, you name it. The songs and symphonies didn't improve my heart or feelings, only worsened them. I was racked with a desire to be loved, that I too, my small, insignificant self, could love someone back, was lovable. Yes, you are lovable. Pure nonsense—the hell I knew about love, raised in a loveless family, seeing parents fight and my father seldom coming home. I saw life only like a running track, a series of progresses and occasional rewards that it offered, only if one won. Falling in love with a girl whose face and name I couldn't remember was like going back to my adolescent years, that forever pining for things so pretty that inspired a child to love everything around him, wish good things for the world, bask in utopia, in other words.

I delayed my shootings; directors stopped by and were annoyed to reschedule. I even ignored the opportunity to work in a blockbuster melodrama where a blind genius tells his fawning lover how cruel fate befell him, how he couldn't achieve the greatest things in life due to an accident, which unbeknownst to him, was caused by the fawning heroine. Obviously, they picked their second choice, Razzak, for that role. I didn't care. I smoked cigarette after cigarette. I was frazzled, cheeks and eyes looking depressed. I had seen many beautiful girls throughout my career. Then I didn't see them anymore. I couldn't see anybody. It was as if the whole concept of love ended in one single individual, as if all my chases, contrary to my earlier belief, were to be doomed like this. Life was so unbearable without the presence of my beloved that I thought of harming myself, proving to myself how much I loved her. That absolute after-the-rain feeling never came back to me. That effect that I only experienced once in life was gone forever. I called the club for help, but without any name or facial description they failed to provide me with any leads, so one day I decided to do something desperate. I ran an anonymous advertisement on paper that read: *To the girl I no longer know the name of. You were wearing a blue saree with a brocade blouse. You were two. I don't remember your face. One waiting out in the rain. Please drop a line to this address if you see this. I'm dying out of my breath for you.*

I received no response from anybody. But several days later someone wrote a piece on the advertisement, calling me the city's new Romeo. It was so embarrassing, although the anonymous nature of the advertisement helped protect my reputation. The incident started to have some bearing on the public, with people sending me letters daily. So much so that my caretaker had to bundle them after sorting them by date, which I read carefully. It seemed that people claiming they were *normal* had a crazy side. One girl said she wasn't the girl I desired but she would take me to Paris, London, Bombay or any big cities in the world if we went on a date. Another offered a brand-new car and blue-collar job at her father's brokering house. A woman wanted to leave a loveless marriage to find happiness with someone like me even if she had to live out in the open or under a banyan tree for the rest of her life. The funniest was a poem with the same title the newspaper gave me where a girl told me how desperately she was in love with me, wearing a locket with my initials. Just imagine how crazy those people were. How would she even know my initials when I left no clues about my name? Anyway, one girl replied in a manner that I suspected might be the one I was in love with. After exchanging letters, I decided to meet her at the national museum. I asked my make-up artist to improve my appearance, to hide dark circles and puffiness around my eyes that gathered in months. I drove my Impala with the same excitement of the first day, thinking of the girl I was to meet and our secret kiss, a grafted memory, the beginning of my madness. I was at a loss as to what we could possibly talk about when we met. From my acting career, I realised it was easier to parrot dialogues in romantic scenes than to go on a date and tell a girl in an ordinary way the simple feelings of your heart. I knew the phases of our lives through the scripts and scenes I was challenged to embody—from a pining heart to a dying, ageing man, waiting for death. I saw it all, starring in many films in the past eight years, but in that car, thinking of my beloved, I forgot what I'd known. There would be no pretence, no acting as life itself called me for the first time in my wretched existence, to act with absolute honesty. And all I had to say was how much I loved her.

Undoubtedly, I was nervous. As I reached and saw the blue dot of beauty standing by the museum entrance—where we both agreed to meet—I was somewhat relieved to see the face of someone else—a completely different girl with a radiant face. I watched her carefully in case it was some stupid mistake on my end: lips slightly jutted out with a secret pout; sculpted cheeks and long black hair added an aura to her beauty. She even wore a blue saree and a blouse with a lace overlay, following the hints in my advertisement. She could have been the perfect girl for any man, except she wasn't the girl I sought. I turned back and drove back home without revealing myself, somewhat happy that I didn't have to express my feelings to a false person.

This is part two of the short story "After the Rain", to be serialised here at Star Literature.

Mir Arif *is a Bangladeshi author living in Ohio. He is working on his novel,* The Second Interpretation*, while awaiting the publication of his story collection,* Adrift. *Find him @mirarif.*

ESSAY

'Gayatri Sandhya' is a document of the broken dreams of our people

NASRIN JABIN

Selina Hossain is a celebrated novelist in the realm of Bangla literature. In the creative embrace of her work, all manner of deprivations, class discrimination, oppression, struggles, and achievements from the colonial era to the modern times have found a space. The subject matter of Selina Hossain's writings are multidimensional. The Language Movement, Liberation War, middle class struggle, the history as well as stories of women achieving the unachievable have not only bloomed thoroughly through her work, but have also reached a different level. Throughout an illustrious life of 76 years, her numerous works have made Bangla literature richer. She is a beacon of honesty in the pursuit of literature. She has always been vocal against all sorts of oppression and exploitation in society. The middle class lifestyle has been the central focus of her work, as has contemporary thinking, and analytical self reflection. Selina Hossain has foraged from life and nature the human struggle of establishing oneself. The necessities of time have forced her to examine Partition, the Language Movement, the mass uprising, and the Liberation War. The cultural significance of contemporary Bengali politics, social policy, and mass movement has been expressed through her novels time and again.

Selina Hossain's *Gayatri Sandhya* is a novel in three parts. It is a political novel about the period between 1947 and 1971. The novel was written about the history of dreams dreamt and dreams broken for a people who were vocally aware of their political rights. In 1994-95, she was awarded a scholarship from the Ford Foundation for *Gayatri Sandhya*, as well as the "Rabindra Memorial" award from the Indian Institute of Planning and Management. On September 27, 2019, she spoke about her perceptive feelings of *Gayatri Sandhya* in an event organised by Ekushey Academy Australia Inc., and captivated the audience. She was given the "Ekushey Academy Australia Honours 2019" on that day.

In *Gayatri Sandhya*, Selina Hossain painted on a large canvas, in minute and descriptive detail, the history of the years between 1947 and 1971. The family of Ali Ahamad had to leave their residence after Partition and settle in the Rajshahi area of modern day Bangladesh. The hearts of every member of the family bled. Where was the ever familiar, beloved land of their birth, asks the author. Hossain sheds light on how bifurcated their spiritual existence was after being forced to make a new home in Rajshahi. In *Gayatri Sandhya*, the writer tracks the course of history, using different characters as her guide on the path to a final conclusion. Selina Hossain once said, "I have written *Gayatri Sandhya* based on the socio-economic and political background of this country. In three parts, the novel starts from 1947. It ends with the context for the murder of Bangabandhu in 1975. The basic idea of this novel is the identity crisis we faced in the new nation called Pakistan after 1947. The protagonist of my novel was chased away from his country during partition simply because he was a Musalman. But then, in 1971, he was killed for being a Bangalee. The larger canvas of this novel is this socio-economic and political background, and I think this novel has various materials that will help the reader to think a bit differently."

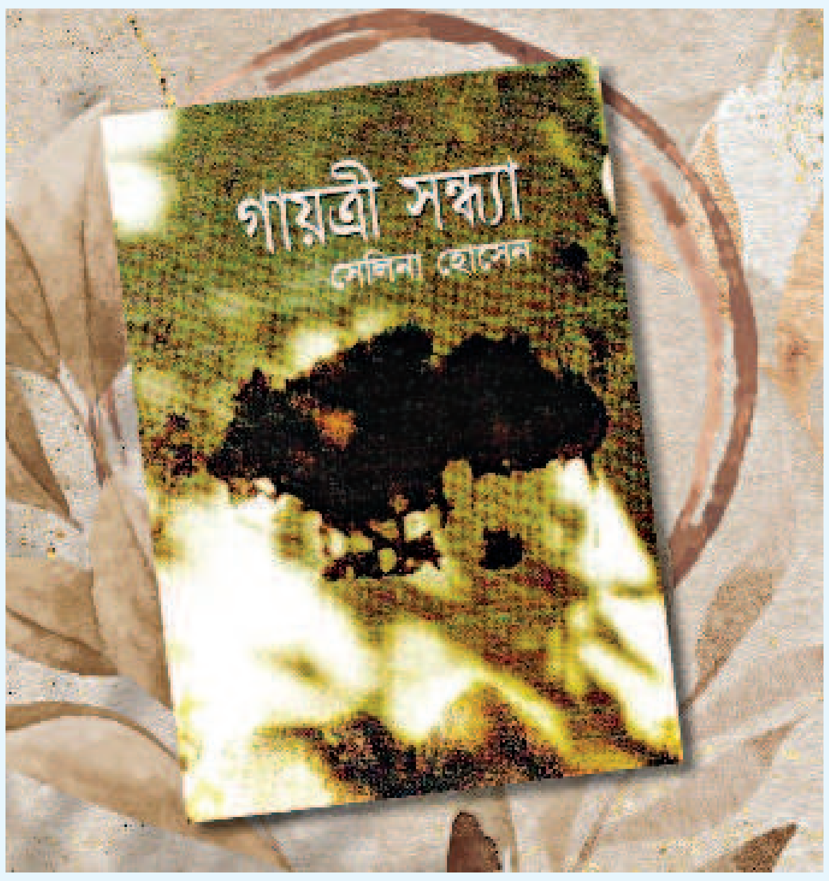


ILLUSTRATION: **AMREETA LETHE**

Selina Hossain's Gayatri Sandhya is a novel in three parts. It is a political novel about the period between 1947 and 1971. The novel was written about the history of dreams dreamt and dreams broken for a people who were vocally aware of their political rights.

This is an excerpt. Find the full article on *The Daily Star* and Star Literature's websites. The article has been translated from Bangla by Azmin Azran. The original article appeared in *Jugantor*.

Dr Nasrin Jabin *is an assistant professor of Bangla at North South University. She is the author of several novels and essays and has also been published in research journals and newspapers. She has recently won the Dineshchandra Sen Memorial Gold Award in India.*

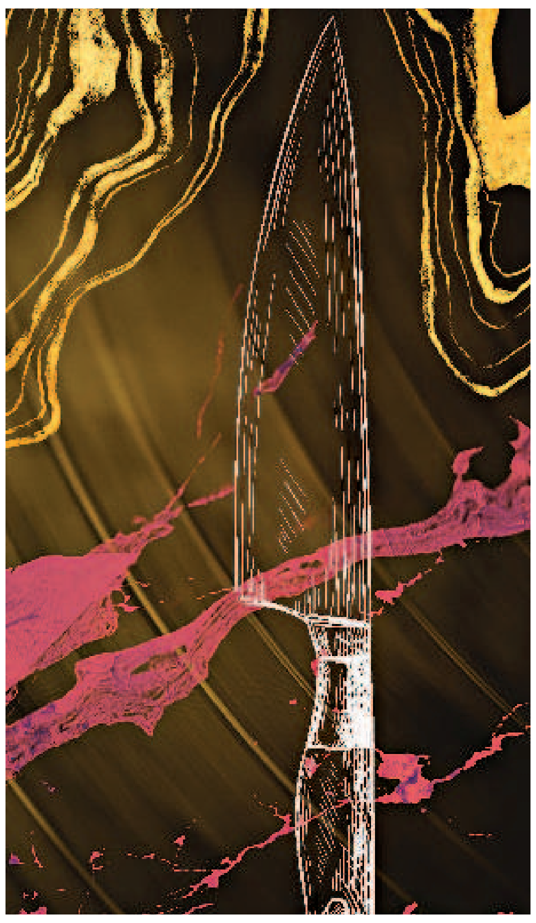


ILLUSTRATION: **MAISHA SYEDA**

POETRY

VIOLENCE

On my birthday,
Bitan genially offers
Rushdie's *Knife*.
He indites:
Not all daggers kill.
We were scared;
stabbing of the author
made to newsflashes
and debates. Probing
unveiled a layered context.
Do all casualties stir the air?
At home or work, sufferers
seldom show signs of injury
when cutters flaunt the edges
of sucrose crystals.

Kiriti Sengupta, *the 2018 Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize recipient, has poems published in* The Common, The Florida Review Online, Headway Quarterly, *and elsewhere.He has authored 14 books of poetry and prose, two books of translation, and edited nine anthologies. Sengupta is the chief editor of* Ethos Literary Journal.

‘TOOFANI’ NABILA

She earned immense popularity after portraying Hridi in the much-acclaimed film *Aynabaji*, in 2016. Masuma Rahman Nabila is now set to grace the screens after a long time, with Raihan Rafi's film Toofan. For the first time, the actress has paired up with Shakib Khan. She also shared the screen with Chanchal Chowdhury in this project, who was her debut film co-actor.

SHARMIN JOYA

Her career began with the television show ***Ebong Class Er Baire*** which earned her popularity as an anchor in 2006. She has since been seen in several television and OTT projects.

"The amount of love people poured into ***Aynabaji*** boosted my confidence. At that time, I thought I would take up more big-screen projects soon. Although I was getting offers for films, it always made me wonder if I could beat my previous performance. I even discussed with Amitabh Reza about a few of such offered projects, and he suggested that I should continue working because this is the only way to remain in the minds of the audience."

In the middle she got married in 2018. Besides anchoring, and acting in small screen projects, Nabila was away from the silver screen. During the pandemic, she became a mother. "Sometimes I feel the break was quite long, I shouldn't have been too selective! Now that I am returning with ***Toofan***, I feel great, I am hopeful for the project."

Nabila shared that getting affiliated with the project took place very casually. "After the announcement of ***Toofan***, there was a programme, where I was invited, and during that event, I met Rafi, and he invited me to his office. I was getting the vibe that he might talk about this project. The next day I went to his office, and I was impressed with the script, and this is how it all happened," she affirmed.

For 18 years, Nabila has been consistently hosting different programmes, and acting occasionally. When asked which persona does she prefer the most? She remarked, "I love to remain in front of the camera, be it through hosting or acting."

Anchors who turn to acting face some challenges, according to Nabila. "During the shoot, Rafi remarked that there is a common concept that anchors, being very 'prim and proper,' are not flexible enough in acting. I agreed because if I look back at my first film, I find myself stiff and I can see the persona of an anchor in that character too. However, with time, everyone improves and some notable examples prove anchors can be good actors as well!"

Working with the industry's superstar Shakib Khan, Nabila conveyed that her experience was amazing. "I never wanted to take the pressure of working with a 'megastar' or a 'superstar', because that would hamper my performance. As a co-actor, Shakib Khan is brilliant and very cooperative, and he definitely has an aura that can attract anybody. Additionally, he is quite friendly and has a great sense of humour."

Apart from releasing film in Eid, Nabila is already making preparations for the festival. "I am a very homely person, and I like to cook. I will be doing the promotions of the film, alongside spending the day with my family, and making delicious food for everyone. I hope the audience will enjoy our film this festival with their friends and family."

MAKEOVER PARTNER: RED BEAUTY STUDIO & SALON

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Hitman

Glen Powell
Adria Arjona
HITMAN
NETFLIX
JUNE 7

Amazon Prime
The Boys S04

Hulu
Pirates: Behind the Legends

Disney+ Hotstar
Not Dead Yet S02

Hoichoi
Golam Mamun

ZIAUL FARUQ APURBA
গোলাম মামুন
13
JUN

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA

Aquatic by Sumon Barman
June 16 | 4pm-8pm
Kala Kendra, Lalmatia

Mime Art
মূকনাট্য
লাইফ ইজ বিউটিফুল

Solo Mime of Life is Beautiful
June 23 | 7:15pm
Studio Theatre, Bangladesh
Shilpakala Academy

ANIMECON 2024 PRESENTS
ANIME QUIZ
PRELIMINARY 21 JUNE
Embrace the magic of anime
FINAL 28 JUNE
LIVE AT ANIMECON

AnimeCon 2024
June 28 | 2pm-5pm
Mirpur Cultural Convention Hall

1-MINUTE REVIEW

THE FALL GUY

A romantic comedic approach to celebrating unsung heroes

Director David Leitch's rendezvous with the action-comedy genre of his latest release, ***The Fall Guy***, following his famed turns with ***Deadpool***, ***Atomic Blonde,*** and ***Bullet Train***, is an ode to times that catered more to star power and less to narratives.

Starring Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt, the film explores the romantic dynamics between director Jody Moreno (Blunt) and stuntman Colt Seavers (Gosling), both balancing life on and off film sets.

After a serious fall sidelines Colt for 18 months, he considers leaving his girlfriend Jody and the industry. However, when Jody's producer invites Colt to double for the renowned actor Tom Ryder (Aaron Taylor-Johnson) in Jody's directorial debut, he agrees.

Featuring actors Winston Duke, Teresa Palmer, and others, Drew Pearce's script shifts to mystery and more action when Ryder goes missing.

The film's key theme highlights the risks stunt performers take, often narrowly avoiding injury.

WHAT'S PLAYING

Welcome Home, Son

Radical Face's ***Welcome Home, Son*** was featured in a Nikon commercial that replicates a montage of sentimental and memorable videos that define people and who they are. The track was released in 2007 as part of their debut album, ***Ghost***, which is based on the idea of houses retaining stories of what has happened in them.

Lending emotive vocals, Ben Cooper's poetic phrasing leaves the precise meaning open to interpretation, allowing listeners to find personal connections in the evocative yet ambiguous lyrics. The crescendo building to the bold piano melody in the chorus is a standout moment, filled with passion.

This sense of universality is part of the song's appeal. ***Welcome Home, Son*** is a powerful track that deftly taps into shared experiences and the longing for home.

WHAT'S ON THE GRAM

SIDHARTH MALHOTRA

With his swooning smile and gleaming eyes, Sidharth Malhotra already knows how to draw audiences' hearts. His fantastic fashion sense and naturally good looks only add more to his charm.

Recently, the Bollywood actor posted a picture on Instagram wearing an all-black ensemble paired with brow bar sunglasses.

The customised black sequined suit and loose-fitting trousers, designed for a possibly glitzy night out, make him look extra charming and have put him on our radar.

FLY HIGH

How helicopters took Dhaka's denizens to the skies

SUKANTA HALDER

AK Azad, chairman and chief executive officer of Ha-Meem Group and a member of parliament from Faridpur-3 constituency, used to visit his factories in his car once or twice a month around a year ago.

However, he now travels chartering a helicopter, enabling him to visit up to five factories in a single day.

"Due to traffic congestion and poor road conditions, I can only visit one factory a day if I travel by car. But with a helicopter, I can visit five factories a day. So, I use the helicopter more frequently now," he said.

Azad begins his journey from Dhaka at 8:30am, first visiting his factory in Kaliganj, then to a Maona factory, followed by a factory in Mirzapur. Afterwards, he travels to Ashulia, and finally to a factory in Tongi.

The entrepreneur started his business in 1984 with a small factory in Dhaka's Motijheel, equipped with 57 machines, after graduating from the University of Dhaka.

Now, Ha-Meem Group, one of the top textile and garment manufacturers in Bangladesh, has 39 business concerns in various sectors, mainly textile, garment, media and tea.

Azad said the head office staff often undermine those who work at the factory level, creating a gap between the two. He believes that factory visits allow for quick problem-solving.

"Sometimes there are issues in maintenance and production, and by visiting the factory, I can easily identify the problem and solve it," he said.

"Many times, I can make immediate decisions to solve basic problems at the factory level," he said.

Industry insiders say that investors and businesspeople from different countries who come to do business in Bangladesh often have to deal with traffic congestion.

> **Due to traffic congestion and poor road conditions, I can only visit one factory a day if I travel by car. But with a helicopter, I can visit five factories a day. So, I use the helicopter more frequently now.**
>
> **AK AZAD**
> Chairman and CEO of Ha-Meem Group

Due to this, many exporters are now choosing helicopters as a means of transportation out of Dhaka.

Businesspeople are now regularly using helicopters to visit factories in cities such as Rangpur, Rajshahi, Chattogram and Sylhet, which are far from Dhaka, as well as in Narayanganj, Gazipur, Tongi, or Mymensingh, which are near Dhaka.

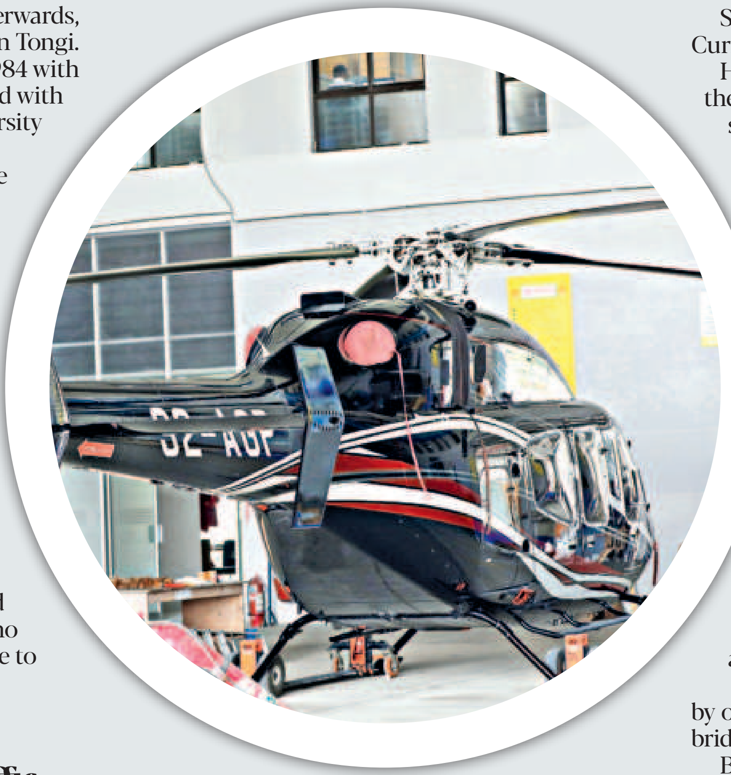
Many local businesses are availing these services from companies offering transportation through helicopters in the country.

Apart from this, many expatriates use helicopters to travel from Dhaka to their homes around the country, some for weddings, while others use them for pleasure trips.

Additionally, helicopters are rented out to political leaders for visits to different areas. Due to these reasons, the demand for travelling by helicopter in the country is increasing.

In 1999, South Asian Airlines launched the first commercial helicopter service in the country.

Due to increased demand, over 10 companies now have 36 helicopters, with most engaged in the private helicopter rental business employing about 400 people.



The companies are South Asian Airlines, Meghna Aviation, Beximco Aviation, Impress Aviation, Square Air, R&R Aviation, Bangla International Airlines, BCL Aviation, Bashundhara Airways and BRB Air.

Retired air force officers mainly work as helicopter pilots, according to the industry people.

According to the helicopter service providers, it costs Tk 70,000 to Tk 2.5 lakh per hour to fly by helicopter to anywhere in the country, with an additional 30 percent supplementary duty and a 15 percent value added tax.

Meghna Aviation, an enterprise of the Meghna Group of Industries, was established in 2011 and commenced its operations in 2012 to transport its customers to Meghna's manufacturing hubs.

Later, the company decided to expand the service by introducing modern helicopters for emergency services like emergency medical evacuation flights and chartered air transportation from remote areas in Bangladesh.

They have a total of six helicopters, including a brand-new double-engine Bell-429, a single-engine Bell-407GX, and Robinson-66 helicopters. Their investment is Tk 200 crore.

Md Monjur Alam, manager for Operation and Customer Service at Meghna Aviation, said when their company opened, it operated 20 to 24 flights a month. It has now increased to 70 to 80 flights a month.

He said garment company owners mostly use their service to transport foreign buyers to factories while many political figures also book helicopter rides.

Apart from this, many people hire helicopters for various urgent needs. It costs Tk 70,000 to Tk 2.30 lakh per hour to fly by helicopter to anywhere in the country, he said.

South Asian Airlines was formed in 1999. Currently, they have a total of nine helicopters.

Humayun Nasir, head of Flight Operations of the company, said various corporate groups avail services from them.

When their company opened, it operated 1 to 2 flights a month and there were no flights in some months. Now on an average, they operate 7 to 8 flights a day, he added.

Probashir Helicopter, a concern of Probash Time, registered with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms in 2023.

Rony Reja, chairman of Probashir Helicopter, said they are currently operating flights with three helicopters on lease, with expats being the main customers and preferring their service most of the time.

When he started the business, he operated 8 to 10 flights a month. Now it has increased to 50.

It costs Tk 70,000 to Tk 2.80 lakh per hour to fly by helicopter to anywhere in the country, according to Reja.

"We are getting great response from customers by offering various trips like Dhaka city tour, Padma bridge tour and marriage trip," he said.

Beximco Aviation started its journey in 2022 to provide air transport support to Beximco Group, obtaining an air operator certificate on December 1, 2022 from the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh with an R-66 and a Bell-430 helicopter.

Gulger Hossain, chief executive officer of Beximco Aviation, said their two helicopters are used only for their own needs. One helicopter is always engaged every working day.

Three to five flights are operated through it for visits to their industrial sites by top management and foreign buyers, he said.

On the other hand, some companies have been forced to shutter their helicopter businesses as they could not keep up with the high cost of operation, according to industry people.

In 2000, Aero Technologies launched helicopter services commercially but shut down in 2008 after failing to attract customers.

In addition, Best Air started to offer helicopter services in 2002 and stopped a few months later. Nitol Aviation Service, a subsidiary of Nitol Group, has also been launched but currently it is inactive.

Meanwhile, Partex Aviation stopped their operations prior to the pandemic.

A helicopter of Meghna Aviation is seen at a ramp in the general aviation area of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Demand for air ambulances on the rise

SUKANTA HALDER

The demand for air ambulances has grown steadily in Bangladesh in recent years due to rising affordability and entry of a number of operators.

Service providers have observed an increase in the use of helicopters to carry patients from far-flung districts such as Dinajpur, Cox's Bazar and Rangpur to Dhaka.

Before the latest spike, these areas used to see one or two flights per month. Now it has gone up to six or seven.

Helicopters began to be used to carry patients after chopper services were introduced in Bangladesh around the turn of the millennium, with demand slowly starting to increase from 2002 onwards.

Currently, six local companies provide domestic helicopter services, namely Meghna Aviation, Impress Aviation, Square Air, R&R Aviation, Bangla International Airlines Ltd (BIAL), and South Asian Airlines.

A customer has to pay Tk 1 lakh for a flight to the capital from nearby areas such as Faridpur. For flights to Dhaka from Dinajpur, Cox's Bazar or Rangpur, the fare can be as high as Tk 3.5 lakh.

Sometimes, the fare even surges to Tk 5 lakh as service providers can charge as they please, allege passengers.

PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

> **Service providers have observed an increase in the use of helicopters to carry patients from far-flung districts such as Dinajpur, Cox's Bazar and Rangpur to Dhaka.**

Monjur Alam, manager of operations and customer service at Meghna Aviation, said there were two or three medical flights per month in 2018 but the number has now grown to 15 to 20.

An enterprise of the Meghna Group of Industries, the company initially purchased helicopters for its own commercial use.

It began renting them out in 2016 to recover costs. It has been offering air ambulance services since 2018 and has invested Tk 145 crore.

It has three helicopters specifically to provide air ambulance service.

Additionally, Meghna Aviation also has a modern ground ambulance equipped with all necessary life-saving equipment to provide medical services to patients, according to Alam.

The ambulance is staffed by two trained and licensed paramedics. The company also employs two medical professionals who have evacuated more than 500 patients over the past five years.

Impress Aviation, which was set up in 2013, provides services to the patients using a solitary helicopter, which is busy almost every day.

It currently operates 22 to 25 flights per month, 70 percent of which are for medical purposes, an official said.

It has invested around Tk 30 crore and employs 30 people, the official added.

Bangla International Airlines, a partnership between Union Group and PHP Family, offers charter helicopter services with two helicopters.

Shafiqul Alam, director for flight operations, said the company began operations in 2013 to meet its internal demand.

It later introduced the air ambulance service to offset costs.

Initially, it operated two to three flights for medical purposes per month, but now it has gone up to five or six, he said.

After the opening of the Padma Bridge in June 2022, the demand for air ambulances in districts adjacent to Dhaka has fallen as travel times to the capital have declined drastically.

"It is hurting the business," he said.

Another factor that may affect business are allegations from users that companies sometimes overcharge.

Mohammad Shariful Islam, a businessman in Thakurgaon sadar upazila, said people turn to air ambulances during emergencies.

But although they expect such services to be costly, service providers are charging fares without following any rules and, in some cases, preying on desperation, he claimed.

He recalled that when his wife became seriously ill due to heart and kidney diseases in January 2023, she was taken to a hospital in the northern district. Her condition worsened and the doctor advised them to admit her to a hospital in Dhaka immediately.

Frantically, Islam began searching for an air ambulance. He contacted a company, who quoted the fare at Tk 2.25 lakh, according to Islam.

He agreed and the helicopter was supposed to come the next morning to take the patient to Dhaka. The helicopter arrived, albeit later than expected, turning up at 2:00pm.

But at the last moment, company officials said the fare would not be less than Tk 5 lakh due to bad weather and other complications.

"I was forced to hire an air ambulance for Tk 5 lakh," Islam lamented.

So, the government should pay attention to fare-related issues, he added.

While data on the market size of the air ambulance business in Bangladesh is not readily available, industry insiders estimate that 10 companies operate around 36 helicopters.

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The Daily Star
DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 16, 2024
REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 147 | ASHAR 2, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | ZILHAJJ 9, 1445 HIJRI | 16 PAGES : TK 15.00

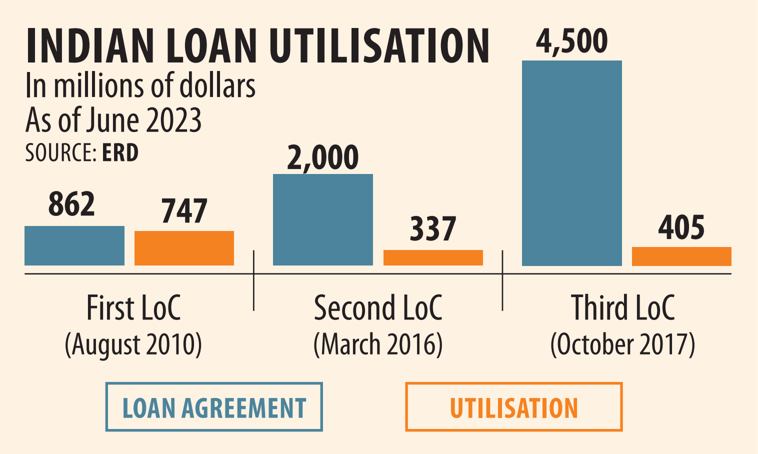
KSRM
শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

PM'S INDIA VISIT

Dhaka eyes fresh loans from Delhi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India may offer Bangladesh fresh loans under a new framework, as implementation of the projects under the existing loan programme is proving difficult due to some strict loan conditions.



The issue will be discussed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's official visit to India next week, a top finance ministry official said yesterday.

Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi will have a one-on-one meeting followed by delegation-level talks on June 22 at the Hyderabad House, a state guest house, in New Delhi.

However, signing of any new loan agreement is unlikely during Hasina's visit, although an announcement to this effect may come in a joint communique, the official added requesting anonymity citing diplomatic confidentiality.

Over the last few months, Dhaka and New Delhi have been discussing a new loan framework and its amount and conditionalities, official sources say.

The discussion comes as Bangladesh faces challenges to utilise the existing conditional loans from India.

Since 2010, India committed $7.36 billion in loan to Bangladesh. Of this, Bangladesh has been able to utilise only $1.73 billion, or 23 percent of the commitment, till April this year.

The conditions of the existing Indian Line of Credit (LoC) are very strict. For example, around 65-75 percent of goods or services for each project must be procured from India, causing delay in project implementation, according to officials.

Appointment of Indian contractors along with bureaucratic red-tape on both sides also limits the project's progress.

Though Bangladesh signs project-based loan agreements with other development partners, in case of India, credit deals have been inked for a cluster of programmes under a framework.

This means, once a loan deal is signed, implementation period of all projects under that deal gets started. Also, as per the loan conditions, the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Pilgrims pray at dawn on Saudi Arabia's Mount Arafat during the climax of the Hajj pilgrimage yesterday. Over 1.5 million Muslims prayed there in soaring temperatures.

PHOTO: **AFP**

EID
MUBARAK
The Daily Star
wishes its valued readers, patrons, advertisers and well-wishers a happy Eid

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Daily Star offices will remain closed for 3 days from today on account of Eid-ul-Azha. There will be no issue of the newspaper from June 17 to 19. However, we will be available online 24/7 during the holiday.

Benazir wrote to Boat Club from abroad

Confirm its two executive members

DIPAN NANDY

Former police chief Benazir Ahmed has recently written to Dhaka Boat Club, stating that he is out of the country and cannot serve as its president during his "temporary absence".

He sent an email on June 13 after a month of speculation that the former inspector general of police had left the country while the Anti-Corruption Commission

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Major shakeup in BNP, 'seniors kept in dark'

Tarique moves to take 'full control' of the party; 39 leaders given new positions

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

BNP reshuffled its central executive committee yesterday, a day after dissolving some city units over their failure to make the anti-government movement a success.

A total of 39 party leaders got new positions.

This sudden reshuffle has caused commotion within the party as acting chairman Tarique Rahman is restructuring the committees, keeping the senior leaders in the dark, BNP insiders said.

They said the issue was not discussed at the meetings of the standing committee, the party's highest policymaking body.

According to the party charter, the acting chairperson will discharge all the duties of the chairperson in the absence of the latter.

And Tarique is now invoking that provision, said party sources.

The BNP charter gives the chairperson the authority to scrap any committee anytime, and the decision would be approved at the subsequent council.

The reshuffle brought younger leaders to important positions, while those with strong organisational abilities have been made advisers to the chairperson, BNP insiders said.

Some leaders who were selected for advisory roles believe they were assigned these positions as a form of punishment.

Apart from the executive body, BNP's

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

'Plot afoot to isolate govt from people'

BSS, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said a vested quarter is still hatching conspiracies against the government to isolate it from the people.

Recalling the artificial famine in 1974, Hasina said Bangladesh had a bitter experience that year when

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Aching to go home to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with friends and family, several hundred people were waiting for a train at Dhaka Airport Railway Station yesterday morning.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

EID JOURNEY HOME

Northbound people suffer

Others have hassle-free trip

SAJJAD HOSSAIN *and*
TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Tens of thousands left Dhaka to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with their families, with those heading north complaining of a dearth of transport, overcharging by bus operators and long tailbacks.

However, those who were headed to the eastern, northeastern and southern parts of the country had a relatively hassle-free journey as no traffic congestion was reported from major highways linked to those areas.

Bus passengers yesterday said they had to pay Tk 100 to Tk 400 above the fare set by the government.

For instance, the bus fare from Dhaka to Dinajpur is usually Tk 800. But Sarower Hossain had to pay Tk 1,100 yesterday for a ticket on the Shah Fateh Ali Paribahan from Mohakhali bus terminal.

"When I asked why the price was higher, the bus staffer did not answer," Sarower said.

Similar scenes were seen at Sayedabad and Gabtoli bus terminals.

Mujibar Rahman shelled out Tk 1,000 to buy a ticket of Meghna Travels to go to Betagi of Barguna -- Tk 350 more than normal. "I have no choice but to purchase this ticket as I have to go home for Eid," he said.

When the correspondent asked Mohammad Mintu, a staff of Meghna Travel at Sayedabad Bus Terminal, about overcharging, he said: "The bus will return to Dhaka empty, so we have to factor this in. That's why the extra fare is being charged."

Similarly, Rashed Rahman, a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

KASHMIR SPEECH

Arundhati to face trial under anti-terror law

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

India's authorities have sanctioned the prosecution of award-winning author-activist Arundhati Roy and former professor at the Central University of Kashmir Showkat Hossain under a stringent anti-terror law for allegedly making provocative speeches at an event in New Delhi in 2010.

The sanction to try Roy, the author best known for her novel "The God of Small Things" which won the Booker Prize in 1997, and Hossain under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) was granted by Delhi's Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Friday, officials in his office said.

Last October, Saxena had granted sanction to prosecute Roy and Hossain in the same case under section 196 of CrPC for commission of offences punishable under a milder law of Indian Penal Code:

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
In the Name of Allah,
The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

1st Death Anniversary of
Arshad Waliur Rahman
October 2, 1965 - June 16, 2023

It has been a year since you have passed away, and your sudden departure left us in deep grief. We hold you close in our thoughts and hearts, dearly missing your presence. We take solace in the beautiful memories you have left behind.

To everyone, you were known as Arshad Waliur Rahman, but to us, you were our beloved Reaz. Although you are no longer with us, yet your essence resides eternally within our hearts.

To all who have stood by us, we thank you for your love and support. Please keep our beloved Arshad Waliur Rahman in your prayers. May Allah (SWT) grant him the highest place in Jannatul Firdaus.

Shahnaz Rahman & Family

MY DHAKA

Gulshan-2

Mohammadpur

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Civic duties during Eid-ul-Azha

RBR

The sacrifice of animals on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha commemorates a sacrifice, which symbolises utmost loyalty and complete submission to the Almighty -- this is the first part of the Eid rituals.

The second is to remember the important principle in Islam that "cleanliness is half of faith". However, the aftermath of Eid-ul-Azha is a messy affair.

I am afraid this is the truth.

This is an act which defies Islamic doctrines on cleanliness. These religious teachings benefit both society and us. It is up to Muslims to be aware of this guidance and learn and apply it anywhere and everywhere. Let us for once keep our environment clean and maintain proper hygiene.

For reasons only known to Dhakaites, they forget their civic sense. Our lack of civic sense baffles me hence my laments. The importance of a prompt clean-up after slaughtering animals is something we should not forget.

There is also an unspoken race to flaunt affluence. The street in front of luxury apartments becomes personal cattle grounds, where a minimum of 10 bulls are stationed. One can imagine the powerful stench of manure and urine produced.

Come Eid day, they are laid down on the very same street for the slaughter; the untidy, chaotic mess we tend to make on the open streets is beyond comprehension.

Patuatuli in Old Dhaka

Kudos to our mayors and city corporations that for the last few years they undertook prompt action to clean up after the rituals were completed. The city corporations have taken elaborate measures to make the city clean within hours of the slaughter. We do have slaughterhouses but they are ill-equipped to handle the Eid pressure and thus citizens take up the streets as their own.

The deployment of thousands of sanitation workers, along with the distribution of eco-friendly biodegradable polythene bags, bleaching powder, jute bags, and disinfectants show their commitment to maintaining cleanliness. Requisitions have been made for extra dump trucks, water tanks, and garbage trucks.

However, we as citizens must cooperate and dispose of our qurbani waste responsibly. It is also up to us to clean up the streets, garages, staircases and lifts with cleaning agents.

Eid-ul-Azha is very important if you consider the economic side of it. The cattle farms, and villagers target this festival while rearing the cows and goats. Cattle rearing is an expensive affair. I know a person working as a driver in this city, who takes cattle rearing as a side business. He buys cattle and lets his father at the village take care of it. Young green grass with grass hay, straw, silage, compressed and pelleted feeds, oils and mixed rations, and sprouted grains and legumes are fed to the animals. These villagers and farmers are struggling yet they target this festival to cover the cost.

Then this is the time when tanneries get to buy, in bulk, precious cowhide in the natural, unbleached form. There are other economic implications and business turnovers of this festival that cannot be ignored.

So, do not litter your streets and garages; treat your cattle well and help the business in one of the biggest Muslim festivals of the year.

Lightning strikes claim four lives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*

At least four people were killed in separate lightning strike incidents in Rangamati's Langadu upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Rina Begum, 35, Bacchu Miah, 30, Ziaul Haque Shamshu, 40, and Obaidul, 30, confirmed Harun-or-Rashid, officer-in-charge of Langadu Police Station.

Locals said Bacchu, Ziaul, and Obaidul died on the spot after a lightning bolt struck their boat on the Kaptai Lake. They were travelling to Minabazar from Mainimukh Bazar around 5:00pm. They were residents of Bhasanaydam area.

Meanwhile, Akkas, who was also on the same boat, fell into the water and went missing during the lightning strike incident.

Earlier in the afternoon, Rina, wife of Atarakchara UP Chairman Tilar Ibrahim, died after a thunderbolt struck her in the yard of her house in Karalyachhari village, confirmed Atarakchara UP Secretary Al-Amin.

5 cops suspended over extortion allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five policemen from Narayanganj were suspended yesterday after a report broadcasted on a private TV channel accused them of extorting money from trucks transporting sacrificial animals for Eid.

They are Sub-Inspector Sheikh Nazrul Islam of Rupganj Police Station; and SI Md Asaduzzaman, and Constables Nazir Sheikh, Jugal Mondal, and Tanvir Hossain Akash of Narayanganj Police Lines.

In a press release, Enamul Haque Sagor, assistant inspector general (media) of police headquarters, said IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun reiterated that no members of the Bangladesh Police would be spared if found involved in criminal activities. The force maintains a policy of "zero tolerance" towards such misconduct.

A probe committee has been formed, led by Narayanganj district's additional police superintendent (crime), to investigate the matter. The committee will recommend departmental actions based on its findings.

The statement said stringent measures would be taken if allegations of bribery at livestock markets during Eid or any form of harassment were found to be true.

Immediate actions will be taken against wrongdoers, it added.

Major shakeup in BNP

FROM PAGE 1

international affairs committee has also been restructured. Party sources said the move was made because of the previous committee's failure to maintain close ties with the western countries, China and India.

BNP standing committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan has been made the chief of the committee to strengthen the relationship with those nations.

Soon after the January 7 national election, Tarique started working on restructuring the party's executive committee. There will be significant changes in the full committee in phases, with the introduction of new members, said a BNP leader familiar with the issue.

"Young leaders loyal to Tarique Rahman will be given important positions," said a senior BNP leader wishing not to be named.

A number of mid-ranking influential BNP leaders said Tarique is in fact building his own circle by restructuring the committees to establish his absolute control over the party.

"He is doing this to make sure nobody challenges his decisions in future," said a BNP leader.

Many committees have already expired since the party held its last national council in 2017.

The BNP constitution stipulates that a council should be held every three years. However, restructuring of its committees are being announced through press releases.

"The issue of reorganising was discussed at the party forum, but we were not informed when and how it would happen," a senior leader told The Daily Star yesterday wishing anonymity.

Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, a standing committee member, said the decision on revamping the party was made earlier and is now being put into action.

On Thursday night, BNP dissolved the convening committees of its Dhaka south and north city units. It also announced dissolution of the convening committees of its Chattogram and Barishal city units.

The central committee of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, led by President Sultan Salahuddin Tuku and General Secretary Abdul Monayem Munna, has also been dissolved.

Some BNP leaders, including Zahir Uddin Swapan, Mahbub Uddin Khokon, Mujibur Rahman Sarwar, Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal, and Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu, have been made adviser to the party chairperson.

Some party leaders said Swapan, Khokon, Sarwar and Alal have been punished through these appointments.

Syed Emran Saleh Prince and Shahiduddin Chowdhury Annie have been promoted to joint secretaries general from organising secretaries.

Meanwhile, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, BNP's student front, announced its full-fledged 260-member committee yesterday, about three and a half months after the formation of its partial committee.

Rakibul Islam Rakib and Nasir Uddin Nasir have been made president and general secretary of the new committee respectively.

As many as 41 leaders have been given the posts of vice president, one has been made senior joint general secretary, and 111 have been named as joint general secretaries.

Northbound people suffer

FROM PAGE 1

private service provider, had to pay Tk 490 more for his ticket to Bogura on a Rozina Enterprise bus.

When the correspondent asked Kausar Hossain, a staff of the Rozina Enterprise counter at Gabtoli bus terminal, about the higher fare than the previous day, he said: "It's Eid time. So, we have no other option."

Despite paying higher fares, the journey home was not smooth and swift for northbound passengers by road.

In the early hours of yesterday, the Dhaka-Tangail—Rangpur Highway witnessed a 13-kilometre-long tailback due to the increased number of northbound vehicles and suspension of toll collection on the Bangabandhu bridge multiple times since Friday night.

The toll collection had to be stopped several times as several vehicles broke down on the bridge, said Ahsanul Kabir Pavel, executive engineer of the site office of Bangabandhu Bridge.

At 9:00am, there was a seven-km-long tailback on the Dhaka-Tangail—Rangpur Highway, Sajedur Rahman, the in-charge of Elenga Highway Police, told our Tangail correspondent.

"This is very normal during Eid rush," he added.

However, the traffic situation on the highway improved afterwards, with no tailback observed as of 6:00pm yesterday.

The Dhaka-Nabinagar-Chandra Road that connects with the Dhaka-Tangail-Rangpur Highway at Chandra intersection had gridlock from 4:00pm yesterday after the closure of garments factories in the area, reported our Gazipur correspondent.

The huge number of vehicles caused traffic congestion in Nabinagar, Baipail and Ashulia areas, Ayub Ali, the officer in charge of Savar Highway Police Station, told our Savar Correspondent at 7:00pm.

Many people were seen desperately looking for vehicles as the number of passengers outnumbered the vehicles in the areas.

The traffic congestion on the Dhaka-Tangail-Rangpur Highway held up the buses, said Subhankar Ghosh Rakesh, joint secretary of the Bangladesh Bus Truck Owners Association.

"So, the bus schedule was delayed by two to three hours on the route," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

However, no major traffic congestion was reported from the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway, Dhaka-Chattogram and Dhaka-Sylhet Highways, he said.

Those who caught the train, however, had a smoother journey home as almost all trains left the capital on time.

"Eid rush via railway reached its peak today. More people are coming to the station in the evening and it would be a big challenge for us to maintain a schedule at night," Shah Alam Kiron Shishir, divisional commercial officer (Dhaka division) of Bangladesh Railway, told The Daily Star at 6:30pm yesterday.

Over at the Sadarghat launch terminal, a huge crowd was seen in the evening after the garment factories broke for Eid yesterday afternoon.

As of 7:00 pm, 80 launches left the terminal.

Meanwhile, the mobile courts of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority fined six launches a total of Tk 27,000 for various violations, including the absence of railings on stairs, illegal anchoring and overloading of passengers.

Among them, five launches were fined Tk 16,000 for lacking railings on stairs and Tk 1,000 for illegal anchoring at the capital's Sadarghat.

Additionally, one launch was fined Tk 10,000 for passenger overloading at Chandpur's Maju Chowdhury Hat launch terminal.

Eid will be celebrated on Monday in Bangladesh.

Benazir wrote to Boat Club from abroad

FROM PAGE 1

was investigating him, his wife and two daughters.

He did not mention which country he is currently in.

Benazir wrote to Bakhtiar Ahmed Khan, member (administration) of the club, saying, "Please be advised that I'm now out of the country along with my family for some urgent family needs. This incapacitates me to run the day-to-day business of the club which may prolonged [sic] for an indefinite period."

He requested Rubel Aziz, an adviser to the club, to be the acting president "until my return and resumption of the duties of the club president".

When contacted by this correspondent, Bakhtiar said, "Benazir Ahmed emailed me. He has asked Rubel Aziz to perform the duties of the [club's] president as he is staying outside the country."

The development was also confirmed by Prof Nizamul Haque Bhuiyan, an executive committee member of the club. The Daily Star has a copy of the letter.

Rubel, the person Benazir recommended to be the acting president, is a former president of the club. He is also the managing director of Partex Group.

The ACC on April 18 launched an investigation into allegations that Benazir and his family members amassed huge wealth through corruption.

Citing immigration police sources, The Daily Star earlier reported that Benazir and his family members flew to Singapore on May 4 night on a flight of Singapore Airlines.

The government authorities, including several ministers, had said they did not know about Benazir's whereabouts.

'Plot afoot to isolate govt from people'

FROM PAGE 1

food grains purchased with cash were blocked from entering the country.

"An artificial famine was created at that time to isolate Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the people. When they failed to do so, they made the August 15, 1975 incident to occur," she said.

The PM's comments came at a programme marking the inauguration of the three-month tree plantation programme of Bangladesh Krishak League at the Gono Bhaban.

Hasina, who is also the president of Awami League, said her party has been carrying out tree plantation programmes since 1985 following the footsteps of Bangabandhu to save Bangladesh from the adverse impacts of climate change.

She said BNP founder Ziaur Rahman had cut trees in the name of so-called development and his wife did the same thing in the name of anti-government movement in 2013.

She went on to urge the people to make a "Green Bangladesh" by planting trees in large numbers.

The premier reiterated her call for the people to grow more food by bringing every inch of land under cultivation.

She said her government had been able to acquire self-sufficiency in food production after assuming power in 1996.

"We have achieved success in food production due to extensive research in this sector."

Stressing the need for planned industrialisation, she said her government is building 100 economic zones across the country to protect arable land from unplanned industrialisation.

The PM said the government wants to bring irrigation completely under the solar power system.

"Initially, it might require some investment. But it would cut the overall cost in the long run."

At the function, the premier awarded several Krishak League leaders for their contribution to pursuing the nationwide tree plantation campaign.

Hasina planted three saplings at the Gono Bhaban on the occasion of the programme.

She said she has planted over 2,000 trees at the Gono Bhaban since assuming power.

Krishak League President Samir Chanda and acting general secretary Bishwanath Sarker Bitu also spoke at the programme.

This year, Krishak League has set a target of planting 52 lakh saplings across the country during its three-month programme.

Dhaka eyes fresh loans

FROM PAGE 1

loan repayment period for all projects under the deal starts on the day the first tranche of the loan for a single project is released, according to official sources.

"It makes things difficult for Bangladesh," said one of the finance ministry officials.

Under the new framework, India will give an overall loan commitment and the two sides will sign project-based loan deals. It is expected to solve the problems around the loan repayment.

China has promised Bangladesh a $20 billion loan, but all the loan deals signed so far are project-based.

Finance ministry officials said that other conditions of the Indian loan will also be relaxed to make project implementation easier.

The existing interest rate of the Indian loan is 1 percent and the repayment period is 15 years, including five years of grace period.

The first Indian LoC of $862 million for 15 projects was signed in 2010 while the second loan agreement was signed in 2016 for $2 billion for 12 projects. The third credit deal was signed for $4.5 billion for a cluster of 15 projects.

There are 42 projects under the three LoCs. Of that, 14 projects have been completed involving $410 million or around 6 percent of the overall commitment in the first two credit deals. As per the deal, all project-related materials were procured from India.

The rest of the projects are construction-related, so they are taking time. Many projects have yet to start.

Eight construction projects worth around $2.73 billion are underway. Three projects have started the process of hiring consultants while seven projects are looking for contractors.

The delay has already pushed up the project cost. Many projects under the existing LoCs that are not in implementation phase will be transferred to the new framework, officials said.

No respite for Gazans

FROM PAGE 12

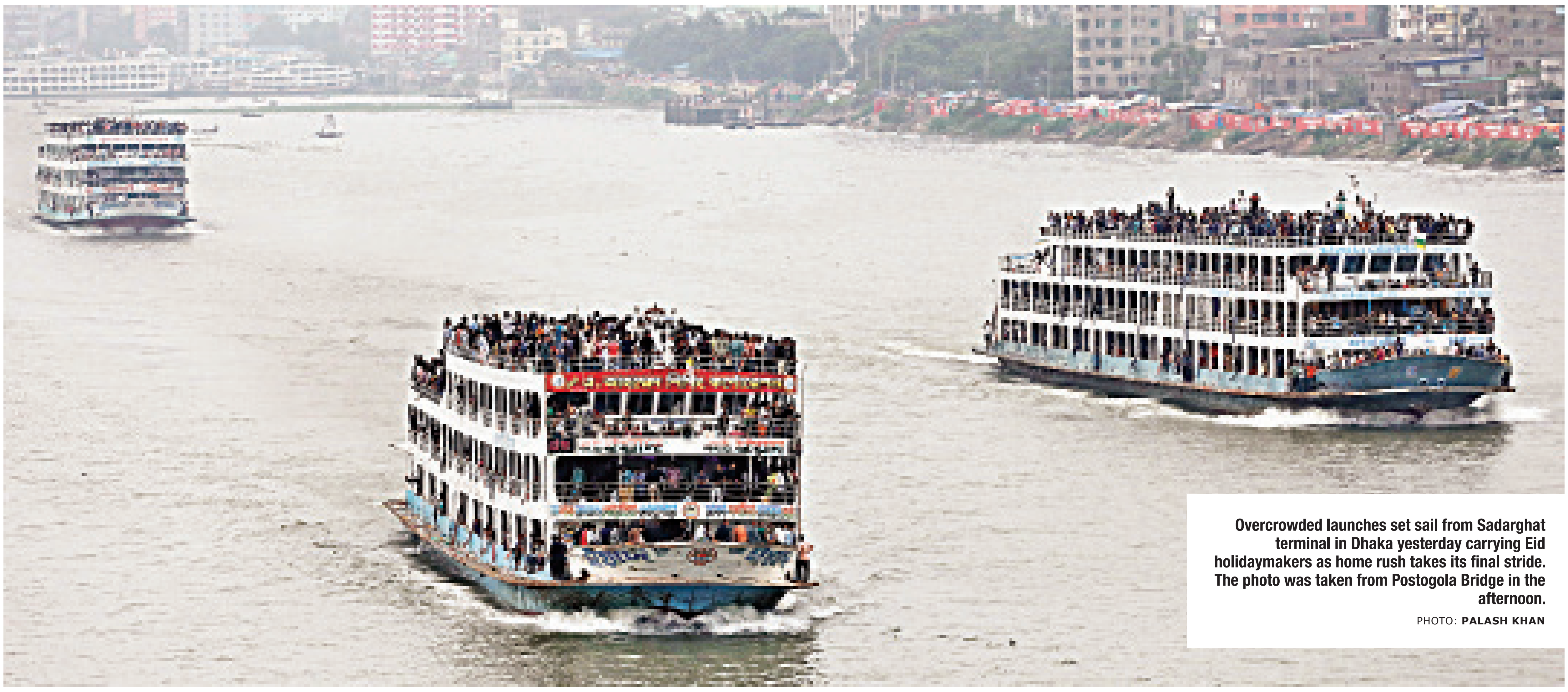
backed by Iran and allied with Hamas, launching waves of rockets and drones against Israeli military targets.

Hezbollah said intense strikes since Wednesday were retaliation for Israel's killing of one of its commanders.

Israeli forces responded with shelling, the military said, also announcing air strikes on Hezbollah infrastructure across the border.

Two women were killed in a strike on Jannata in southern Lebanon, village official Hassan Shur said, the latest deaths in near-daily exchanges of fire between Hezbollah and the Israeli military since the Gaza war began.

On Friday plumes of smoke still billowed over the village.



Overcrowded launches set sail from Sadarghat terminal in Dhaka yesterday carrying Eid holidaymakers as home rush takes its final stride. The photo was taken from Postogola Bridge in the afternoon.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

CRISIS IN ST MARTIN'S ISLAND

We are ready. We won't attack [first]. But we will not spare anyone if attacked. We have no antagonism with Myanmar. The door of discussion is open.

OBAIDUL QUADER
AL General Secretary

◆

There is a food crisis in Saint Martin's Island. The government does not seem to care about this. Can't we even say anything to a country like Myanmar?

MIRZA FAKHRUL
BNP Secretary General

◆

They are trying to come into our land. But we are not seeing any roles of the armed forces in this regard.

GM QUADER
Leader of Opposition

Cattle prices STILL HIGH

HELEMUL ALAM *and* **SHAHEEN MOLLAH**

Though the price of sacrificial animals has dropped slightly due to a lack of customers, it remains high compared to the same time last year.

With only a day left before Eid-ul-Azha, the number of buyers was still low, despite a large supply of bulls.

High inflationary pressure on the middle- and lower-middle classes is believed to be behind the poor turnout at different cattle markets in Dhaka.

In the fiscal year 2022-2023, the average inflation rate was 9.02 percent. However, many traders remain hopeful for a surge in customers on Saturday night and Sunday, the last days before Eid-ul-Azha.

"I have purchased a bull for Tk 92,000, which is still high as sellers are not willing to reduce the price," said Nafiur Rahman Asif, a resident of Wari.

Md Sakib Hossain, a resident of Malibagh, said, "I bought three bulls for Tk 9.5 lakh, which is high compared to last year."

Traders are unhappy as they were forced to reduce prices because of less customers. They said cost of rearing cattle was significantly high due to soaring fodder costs.

"I have already faced losses by selling six of my 28 big bulls as I am not getting satisfactory customers," said Abul Kashem Sheikh, who came to Kamalapur cattle market from Natore.

Rashid Mollah, a trader at Gabtoli who brought 24 bulls from Manikganj, said he sold six of his bulls for between Tk 1 lakh and 1.50 lakh, facing some loss.

"I am sensing more loss on the last day if I do not sell, so I have started selling without thinking about the profit," he told this correspondent.

Many residents are not sacrificing bulls this year. Ruhul Amin, a private job holder in Ibrahimpur, purchased beef from a meat trader instead.

"I will not sacrifice animals this year as the Tk 30,000 bonus I received is not enough due to the increase in my daily expenses," Ruhul Amin said.

Amzad Hossain, another trader at Gabtoli who brought two camels and five dumbas (sheeps) from Pakistan, managed to sell one camel for Tk 23 lakh and two dumbas for Tk 2 lakh each.

"I am asking Tk 26 lakh for each camel. I have two dumbas priced at Tk 2 lakh each, along with a big one for Tk 4 lakh," he said.

He also claimed to have spent Tk 30 lakh to bring the animals from Pakistan by aeroplane.

Meanwhile at Gabtoli cattle market, a bull weighing 38 maunds was priced at Tk 16 lakh.

"There is an expenditure of Tk 7 lakh, and I am considering selling it with a minimum profit due to poor customer turnout," said the owner.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

ANIMAL WASTE

Cities plan quick disposal

STAR REPORT

The authorities of Chattogram, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet and Khulna city corporations are gearing up for prompt disposal of all wastes from sacrificial animals on Eid-ul-Azha.

The Eid-ul-Azha will be observed across the country on Monday.

CHATTOGRAM

The Chattogram City Corporation will deploy 4,500 conservancy workers and 322 vehicles to clean up a total of around 5,000 tonnes of wastes from 8:00am to 5:00pm on Eid day from six city zones, each led by a ward councillor, said Mobarak Hossain, chairman of CCC's Standing Committee on Waste Management.

A central monitoring cell led by CCC mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury has been formed to this end.

CCC panel mayor Gias Uddin said 20 tonnes of bleaching powder and 55,000 polythene bags have been allocated to 41 wards of CCC for distribution among people.

RANGPUR

Rangpur City Corporation has planned to clean sacrificial animal wastes within 12 hours.

A total of 66 slaughtering spots have been designated to the 33 wards under three zones of RCC, said mayor Mostafizar Rahman Mostafa.

Also, 42 waste-carrying trucks and 550 workers will be engaged in removal of wastes.

MYMENSINGH

In Mymensingh, 650 conservancy workers, 24 dump trucks and seven water vehicles will be engaged in cleaning wastes from a total 508 designated slaughtering spots in 33 wards from 2:00pm.

Residents have been distributed eco-friendly biodegradable bags, bleaching powder and disinfectants for cleaning wastes from the spots, said Mohabbat Ali, conservation inspector of MCC.

Their plan is to remove wastes within 12 hours, he added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

'Why fix prices if you can't enforce it'

Decry customers as govt fails to curb rising cost of essentials

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

FOOD PRODUCTS	FIXED PRICE (TK)	MARKET PRICE (TK)
Chili pepper	60.2	150
Garlic	120.8	220
Ginger	180.2	300
Cabbage	28.3	40
Onion	65.4	80
Beef	664.39	780
Potato	29	60

The government efforts to control rising commodity prices by setting fixed rates are failing, as essential items are being sold at much higher prices in Dhaka's major kitchen markets.

Despite the Department of Agriculture Marketing (DAM) setting fair prices for 29 products on March 15, consumers are still paying exorbitant prices for daily essentials. With Eid-ul-Azha approaching, prices have soared further.

During recent visits to Karwan Bazar, Kathalbagan, and Malibagh markets, traders were found openly flouting government-mandated rates.

Take the case of potato for example. Although the production cost of this vegetable is Tk 14 per kg and the retail price set by the government is Tk 29 per kg, potatoes were selling for Tk 60 per kg at Karwan Bazar.

Hamidul Islam, a private employee, managed to bargain the price down to Tk 55 per kg but still paid almost double the fixed price.

"Four days ago, I purchased potatoes at Tk 48-49 per kg. Prices have only soared since," Hamidul said.

Traders blamed higher wholesale costs and lack of supply. They said selling at government fixed rates would incur losses.

The price disparities are even more noticeable for other essential items.

Local garlic is being sold at Tk 220 per kg, 82.2 percent higher than the fixed rate of Tk 120.80. Ginger sells for Tk 300 per kg instead of Tk 180.20 (66.5 percent increase), chilli for Tk 150 against Tk 60.20 (149.2 percent increase), and cabbage for Tk 40 compared to Tk 28.30 (41.3 percent increase).

Other items like beef, lentil, chicken, and onions have also witnessed double-digit price hikes.

Although the government fixed the production cost of beef at Tk 588 per kg with a Tk 664 retail ceiling, it sells for Tk 780 at Karwan Bazar, nearly 18 percent higher.

"It's been three months since they fixed rates, but we see no intent to actually implement the directives on the ground," rued Shanaj Begum, a homemaker. "If they won't enforce the prices, why fix them at all? We are ultimately suffering for their failure and indecision."

Ghulam Rahman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh, criticised the government's strategy, saying, "Commodity prices depend on market dynamics like production costs and the demand-supply chain. Fixed rates alone cannot control these unless by effective monitoring."

Masud Karim, director general of DAM, said, "Our directives are not fully implemented on the ground. Sellers don't follow them. We try to ensure they don't collect excess profits. We don't want to destabilise markets by any unwarranted intervention."

PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

Customers feel the heat as spice prices spike

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

With consumers already feeling the pinch from soaring spice prices, the costs of many items have gone up further just before Eid-ul-Azha.

Over the past week, the price of coriander has surged from Tk 100 to Tk 360 per kilogramme at the capital's Karwan Bazar wholesale market.

Last year, coriander was sold at Tk 160 per kg ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, according to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

The price of cardamom, a must have item for cooking meat during the festival, has shot up to Tk 4,000 from Tk 3,800 per kilogramme.

The price of cinnamon has increased by 1.70 percent to an average of Tk 600 per kilo while

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Rise in 'extreme rainfall' behind flash floods in Sylhet

Study points to climate change

DWOHA CHOWDHURY

A recent research paper has identified single-day extreme rainfall events as the primary cause of recurring flash floods and waterlogging in the Sylhet region. The study found that climate change has significantly increased the frequency of these heavy monsoon rains in Bangladesh and northeast India.

Officials from the Bangladesh Meteorological Department and Bangladesh Water Development Board have observed this pattern in recent years. For example, on June 17, 2022, a flash flood submerged almost all of Sylhet and Sunamganj districts, triggered by a record rainfall in Cherrapunji, India, which is located just uphill from Sylhet.

On May 29, 634mm of rain in Cherrapunji caused another flash flood, submerging five upazilas in Sylhet the next day. More recently, a flash flood was triggered on Friday after 349mm of rain fell in Cherrapunji over 24 hours.

In Sylhet city, two recent waterlogging incidents were caused by extreme rainfall over a short period. On June 9, 220mm of rain fell within three hours, causing severe waterlogging. On June 13, 186mm of rainfall in six hours submerged many parts of the city.

The research, conducted by scientists from NASA Goddard Space Flight Centre, North Carolina State University, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, and Jahangirnagar University, was published in the Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society in February.

The study analysed extreme rainfall events, defined as 150mm or more in a day, from 1950 to 2021.

It found that while overall monsoon rainfall is decreasing, single-day extreme rainfall is increasing. These extreme rain events have become four times more common due to climate change.

Dipak Ranjan Das, executive engineer of BWDB in Sylhet, said, "Single-day extreme rainfall in Meghalaya, located right uphill from the region, is responsible for the recurring flash flood situation. The river system here cannot handle that much water in a short period."

A flood hazard mapping of the Surma River basin in Sylhet city by researchers from Shahjalal University of Science and Technology calculated the maximum peak discharge through the Surma river at Sylhet city as 321.35 cubic metres per second, indicating the river's limited capacity to manage excessive rainwater.

Prof AKM Saiful Islam of the Institute of Water and Flood Management at Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology said, "Haors (wetlands) and rivers are crucial for holding and discharging rainwater from upstream. However, ongoing development projects like road construction are disrupting these haors, prolonging the flood situation."

"Waterbodies and canals in city areas are being filled up, causing waterlogging due to excessive rainfall. Hillock cutting and tree felling are major reasons behind the filled-up waterbodies and canals," he added.

"As single-day rainfall events are increasing, we must act now to protect waterbodies. Otherwise, we will suffer more intensely in the future," he warned.

PHOTO: STAR

Tailback as far as eyes can see on and beneath Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover yesterday afternoon. With Eid only a day away, many buses were seen entering and leaving the capital. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

DNC seizes 7,250 yaba tablets from courier service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) yesterday seized 7,250 yaba tablets from a courier service office in Dhaka's Kakrail.

DNC officials discovered the pills inside a parcel around 2:15pm, said DNC Assistant Director (Dhaka Metro-North) Rahul Sen.

The drive was conducted on information that a yaba consignment from Teknaf arrived at Kakrail via courier service in four containers, he said.

Rahul said the contraband drugs were hidden in different layers of flour, wheat, and rice powder inside the containers.

He further said the courier service company was supposed to send the package to Panchagarh via Dhaka.

No one was available at the phone number mentioned in the parcel, said the DNC official.

The authorities are investigating to identify those responsible for sending the yaba from Cox's Bazar. A general diary was filed with Paltan Police Station.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 16

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Customers feel

FROM PAGE 3

clove prices have soared by 13.68 percent to Tk 2,000 per kilogramme, as shown in TCB's daily market report.

Within a week, the price of both local and imported garlic has risen by Tk 10-20 per kilogramme.

Local garlic was sold at Tk 230 per kilogramme, and imported garlic at Tk 250 per kilogramme yesterday.

Ginger prices have also increased by Tk 40-60 per kilogramme, with imported ginger being sold at Tk 280-320 per kilogramme.

Talking to The Daily Star, wholesale traders said that the rise in spice prices is due to higher global market prices and an increase in the value of the dollar. As the dollar's value has risen, so have import costs.

Shamima Begum, a homemaker from Dhanmondi, said, "I am furious about the soaring prices of essential spices. It's becoming impossible to manage our household budget. "How are we supposed to cook for our families during festivals when prices are this high?"

Farida Begum, a private company employee, said she was frustrated by the high prices of garlic, ginger, and coriander. "These are basic ingredients for everyday cooking, and now they're almost unaffordable ahead of Eid."

Rahman Ali, a private job employee, said prices increase around Eid every year. "But no one seems to understand our pain," he added.

Md Enayet Ullah, president of Bangladesh Wholesale Hot Spice Traders Association, said, "Due to reduced cardamom production in India and Guatemala, the price of the product has increased in those countries. The rise in the dollar's value is also the reason for higher cardamom prices in the domestic market."

Cities plan quick

FROM PAGE 3

KHULNA

The Khulna City Corporation has planned to complete the waste disposal within eight hours on Eid day, starting from 2:00pm.

A total of 850 workers, 76 trucks and other waste-carrying vehicles will be deployed to clean up wastes from 141 designated slaughtering spots in 31 wards under KCC, said Md Anisur Rahman, chief conservancy officer of KCC.

SYLHET

The Sylhet City Corporation, facing an uphill task of cleaning animal wastes amid waterlogging in different areas following the recent flash flood, has not declared any pre-planned time frame but expects to clean and dispose of all wastes by the next morning after Eid.

"A total of 1,200 regular cleaners and 400 contractual cleaners will be engaged in waste clean-up. Residents have been distributed 40,000 bio-degradable bags for waste collection," said Lt Col (retd) Mohammad Aklem Abden, chief waste management officer of SCC.

Man held for killing wife

STAR REPORT

Rab has arrested a man on charges of killing his wife in Gazipur's Sreepur.

Abdul Samad, 50, was arrested by a Rab-1 team on Friday night from Dwaibari area of Sreepur, said Rab-1 Assistant Director Mahfuzur Rahman yesterday.

He said Abdul hit Farida Yasmin, 42, on the back of her head with a bamboo during a dispute at home.

She was declared dead at Sreepur Upazila Health Complex.

Farida's father Abdul Gani filed a case accusing Abdul with Sreepur Police Station that night.

During primary interrogation, Samad confessed to the crime.

The Rab official said Abdul was handed over to Sreepur Police Station in Gazipur.

Risky but still

FROM PAGE 5

government wants to stop the launch business, we have nothing to say. We want to modernise our launches, but authorities are not permitting design modifications. We hope the government will support us."

Babu Lal Baidya, deputy director (Marine Safety and Traffic) of BIWTA's Narayanganj River Port, said, "Owners have applied for an extension of approval for these launches beyond June 30. If not extended, these launches will cease operations, and the route may close."

Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS)
67, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

BCPS No. 355/2024/29458 Date: 11-06-2024

Schedule for FCPS Part-I, FCPS (Final), Preliminary FCPS, FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS written examinations to be held in July, 2024.

FCPS (Final), Preliminary FCPS and MCPS Examinations.

Subject	Paper	Date & Day	Time	Venue
All Subjects	Paper – I	01.07.2024 (Monday)	9.00 A.M. to 12.00 Noon	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
	Paper – II	02.07.2024 (Tuesday)		

FCPS Mid-Term Examination

Subject	Paper	Date & Day	Time	Venue
1. Anaesthesiology 2. Conservative Dentistry & Endodontics 3. Dermatology & Venereology 4. Haematology 5. Medicine & Allied 6. Obstetrics & Gynaecology & Allied 7. Ophthalmology & Allied 8. Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery 9. Orthodontics & Dentofacial Orthopaedics 10. Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery 11. Paediatrics & Allied 12. Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation 13. Prosthodontics 14. Psychiatry & Allied 15. Radiology & Imaging 16. Radiotherapy 17. Surgery & Allied	Paper – I	01.07.2024 (Monday)	9.00 A.M. to 10.40 A.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
	Paper – II	02.07.2024 (Tuesday)	9.00 A.M. to 12.00 Noon	

FCPS Part-I Examination

Subject	Date & Day	Time	Venue
Medicine & Allied	03.07.2024 (Wednesday)	9.00 A.M. to 01.00 P.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
1. Anaesthesiology 2. Anatomy 3. Biochemistry 4. Dental Surgery (Conservative Dentistry & Endodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics & Dentofacial Orthopaedics and Prosthodontics) 5. Family Medicine 6. Forensic Medicine 7. Microbiology 8. Obstetrics & Gynaecology & Allied 9. Ophthalmology & Allied 10. Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery 11. Pharmacology 12. Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation 13. Physiology 14. Psychiatry & Allied	04.07.2024 (Thursday)	9.00 A.M. to 01.00 P.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212
1. Community Medicine 2. Dermatology & Venereology 3. Haematology 4. Paediatrics & Allied 5. Pathology 6. Radiology & Imaging 7. Radiotherapy 8. Surgery & Allied 9. Transfusion Medicine	06.07.2024 (Saturday)	9.00 A.M. to 01.00 P.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

Program for OSCE, IOE, Oral, Clinical & Practical examinations for FCPS (Final), Preliminary FCPS, FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS examinations will be notified on the notice board and website of BCPS well in advance.

The list of the examinees and the name of the venue of the OSCE, IOE, Oral, Clinical & Practical examinations will be notified on the notice board and website of BCPS on the day before examination (after 8.30pm).

The Admit Card for FCPS (Final), Preliminary FCPS, FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS examinations will be available through online only from 20 June 2024 to 02 July 2024 **(till completion of the written examination)** and for the FCPS Part-I examination will be available through online from 20 June 2024 to 06 July 2024 **(till completion of the FCPS Part-I examination)**. Please visit BCPS website (exams.bcps.edu.bd) and login password protected profile and print admit card. Please contact examination department by 27 June, 2024 if there is any problem related to download of the admit card. ***Admit Card of July 2024 session is a prerequisite for entering the examination hall.***

- ***No Admit Card will be issued after the deadline.***
- ***No Admit Card will be printed and distributed from BCPS campus.***

Instructions for Examinees

- Examinees are requested to report no later than 30 minutes before the scheduled time.
- Carrying mobile phones/laptops/tabs/wrist watch/calculator/other electronic devices/bags/packets/water bottles/beverage cans/lighter/coins/metal objects other than keys by the examinees is prohibited. Carrying such materials shall be subject to expulsion from the examination.
- Examinees are not allowed to write anything on the admit card/instruction sheet or keep any other papers. These may lead to the cancellation of the paper.
- FCPS (Final) written qualified examinees have to submit an "Information Update Form" immediately after publication of the written result through a link (https://sds.bcps.edu.bd/bcps-erp/exam-info-update). It is mandatory to submit the form. If found, incorrect information and an incomplete form, the examination will be held up/legal action will be taken against the candidate.

Professor Md. Billal Alam
Controller of Examination

GD- 1011

SUNKEN-DECK LAUNCHES

Risky but still used on busy river routes

TANJIL HASAN, *Munshiganj*

On March 20, 2022, the Munshiganj-bound sunken-deck launch ML Afsar Uddin capsized after being hit by the Rupsi-9 cargo ship in Shitalakkhya River, resulting in 10 deaths.

The next day, the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority suspended all 70 sunken-deck launches operating on six routes from Narayanganj. However, on April 24, 18 of these launches were permitted to resume operations, while 52 remained banned.

A sunken-deck launch is a type of boat with a lower deck where passengers sit, but this deck doesn't have compartments that can keep water out if the boat starts sinking.

This makes it risky because if there's an accident, it's harder to evacuate passengers, said Dr Mir Tareque Ali, a professor in Buet's navigation and mechanical engineering department.

"According to route permits, these launches should operate on calm rivers. Their current routes are not calm, making them unfit and unsafe," he added.

The accident in March 2022 was not an isolated incident. On April 4, 2021, the ML Sabit Al Hasan sank in the same area, causing 34 fatalities.

Despite this, at least 34 sunken-deck launches, including 31 old ones, continue to operate on busy routes, such as Munshiganj-Narayanganj.

According to BIWTA sources, the owners were given permission to operate till June 30 this year on the condition that they convert the launches from sunken-deck to high-deck within a year, a condition that has not yet been met.

ML Afsar Uddin, which capsized in 2022, is still in operation. While it typically carries over 100 passengers, it only has 11 buoys for passenger safety.

"After these old launches were banned, we hoped for modern launches, but that did not happen," said Mithun, a Narayanganj-bound passenger.

Previously, 5,000-6,000 passengers traveled these routes daily, but the number has significantly decreased. "Currently, six launches are running on the Munshiganj-Narayanganj route, down from 24. Due to fewer passengers, all launches will eventually stop operations," said Dil Mohammad, owner of the ML Afsar Uddin.

Badiuzzaman Badal, president of the Bangladesh Inland Navigation Passenger Transport Agency, Narayanganj Zone, said, "At least 80 percent of launches in Bangladesh have sunken decks. If the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

A sunken-deck launch is a type of boat with a lower deck where passengers sit, but this deck doesn't have compartments that can keep water out if the boat starts sinking. This makes it risky because if there's an accident, it's harder to evacuate passengers. Despite multiple accidents, at least 34 sunken-deck launches, including 31 old ones, continue to operate on busy river routes. PHOTO: **STAR**

The photo was taken in Cumilla's Suagazi after the accident yesterday morning. PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

Hit by bus, biker dies in Dhaka

4 more killed in two districts

STAR REPORT

A motorcyclist was killed after being run over by a passenger bus in Dhaka's Banani area yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Akkas Ali, 55, from Bogura.

A bus of Binimoy Paribahan hit the motorbike of Akkas when he was taking a U-turn from Banani's Road No-27 on his way to Uttara, said Kazi Shahan Haque, officer-in-charge of Banani Police Station.

Akkas went under the wheels of the bus and was dragged for a while, said police, adding that he died on the spot.

"We have seized the bus and detained its driver. Legal action will be taken soon," the OC added.

Meanwhile, four people were killed and seven others injured in two separate accidents in Mymensingh and Cumilla yesterday.

In Mymensingh, two people were killed and five injured after a Dhaka-bound truck collided head-on with a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Bhaluka upazila around 5:00am, said Bhoraduba Highway Police Station OC Md Shafiqul Islam.

Abdul Halim Mondol, 40, from Dhanikhola in Trishal upazila, the driver of the three-wheeler, died on the spot. The other deceased, a man aged around 45, could not be identified immediately.

In Cumilla, two people were killed and two injured after a litchi-laden truck rear ended a parked covered-van on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Suagazi upazila around 8:15am, said Mainamati Highway Police Station OC Ikbal Bahar Mazumder.

Their identities could not be known immediately. The injured -- the driver and helper of the covered-van -- were undergoing treatment at Cumilla Medical College Hospital.

Jobs abroad see 20pc drop in first 4 months

JAMIL MAHMUD

Foreign jobs dropped by about 20 percent in the first four months of this year compared to the same period last year mainly due to sharp decline in major markets of Malaysia and Oman.

Between January and April this year, workers' migration to other major destinations like Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Singapore also saw decline whereas Saudi Arabia and Qatar saw an increase.

These seven countries together hired 93.58 percent of the total 13.05 lakh Bangladeshi workers who migrated to various destinations last year.

> **Over 3.22 lakh workers migrated abroad from January to April this year compared to 4.01 lakh workers a year ago, a decline by 79,606 workers.**

According to Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training data, over 3.22 lakh workers migrated abroad from January to April this year compared to 4.01 lakh workers a year ago, a decline by 79,606 workers.

Malaysia hired 1.01 lakh workers but the outflow dropped by 56 percent to 44,727.

Before closing its door indefinitely for Bangladesh and 13 other source countries from June, Malaysia recruited about 30,000 more workers in the previous month.

Pointing on Malaysia's intaking of workers from Bangladesh since 2022, State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Shofiqur Rahman Choudhury recently said as of May 31 this year, of about 493,642 workers cleared by BMET, 476,672 could leave for Malaysia by the deadline.

Since the market's reopening, about 4.46 lakh workers have migrated to Malaysia.

On the other hand, Oman announced a temporary visa suspension in all categories for Bangladesh in October last year as an "increasing number of laid-off workers were illegally working there" without the full legal protection of their rights.

Affected by the suspension, the Middle East country saw only 302 workers entering there from Bangladesh this year.

In the first four months of last year, Oman recruited 56,184 workers from Bangladesh.

Although Oman recently lifted visa restrictions on several categories for Bangladeshi nationals, it was yet to lift the ban on work visas.

In a note, the Oman embassy said both authorities concerned in Oman and Bangladesh were working towards lifting the ban on work visas, which was in progress.

Among other major destinations, 1.69 lakh workers migrated to Saudi Arabia till April this year compared to 1.57 lakh workers during the same period last year.

The number of workers migrating to the UAE dropped from 29,069 last year to 26,192 this year, Kuwait from 9,222 to 9,121, and Singapore from 16,247 workers last year to 14,964 workers this year.

However, the number of workers migrating to Qatar saw a significant jump from last year's 8,291 to 24,936 this year.

On February 27, the state minister told parliament that the government has a work plan to send 60 lakh workers abroad in the next five years.

He said Bangladesh is sending workers to around 176 countries and a total of 99.9 lakh Bangladeshi people have been employed abroad in the last 15 years.

RAWHIDE TRADE

DMP chief for stern actions against extortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Stern actions will be taken against extortion and undue influence in the rawhide trade during Eid-ul-Azha, said Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Habibur Rahman yesterday.

The DMP will oversee the entire process of rawhide collection, storage, and marketing, said Habibur Rahman at a coordination meeting at its headquarters.

The meeting focused on strategies for securing vehicles transporting rawhides, ensuring smooth traffic flow, and preventing illegal activities.

The commissioner assured that measures will be taken to prevent the formation of any syndicates within the leather trade. The sale of rawhides on bridges or roads in areas such as Jatrabari, Hazaribagh, New Market, and Gabtoli will be prohibited, he added.

Additionally, intelligence surveillance will be in place to monitor and control salt prices, he said.

The DMP chief mentioned that checkpoints will be set up and patrolling will be intensified on all exit routes from Dhaka to prevent rawhide smuggling.

Rawhide-laden vehicles will be allowed to travel to Hemayetpur via Gabtoli, he said, emphasising that the hides must not leave their respective districts as directed by the inspector general of police.

Regarding security for city dwellers during Eid, the commissioner said safety measures, including checkpoints, patrols, foot patrols, and intelligence surveillance, will be implemented.

Coordination with local security guards will also be part of the strategy, he said.

People cast their nets to catch fish in a lowland in Sylhet's Jaintapur upazila yesterday. With incessant rain and consequent flooding, many areas in Sylhet remained inundated lately. PHOTO: **SHEIKH NASIR**

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Samrat with his father, Nayak Raj Razzak.

Chanchal Chowdhury with his father.

Apurba with his father.

FATHER'S DAY SPECIAL

'If I could embrace him one more time'

Fathers play a great role in a child's life. They are the shadow, guide, and often the most reliable friend one can have. Commemorating International Father's Day today, stars who have lost their father have expressed feelings that remain untold, and what they would say if they got another chance.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

I would share all my good news with him: Apurba

Not just for any special occasion, I remember him every day. Whenever I receive good news, I wish that I could share it with him, but he is far away. My father was a simple man, and I have always said that he is my hero!

I was quite close to him, and we used to talk a lot about so many things. He left us so early, and there are so many things I want to share with him every day. Only a child who lost their father can understand the void.

I wish I could say 'baba' one more time: Chanchal Chowdhury

Whenever I went to my hometown, I used to hear *baba's* voice. Now that he is gone, I can't hear his voice, neither I can say the word *baba*. Without, him the house is empty.

My father was a teacher, and all of my siblings and I were his students. I have always tried to live with my father's ideals, and want to keep them until my last breath.

I have lots of things to share with my father, and it hurts that I cannot share anything with him now. A father sacrifices a lot for his children, and I pray for all the fathers in the world on this Father's Day, and wish that they always remain happy.

Aruna Biswas with her family

My father was my friend: Samrat

I miss him all the time. Baba was my friend and confidant. He had all the solutions to all of my problems. Baba was a family-oriented person and loved his family. He would spend quality time with us. After he retired from the film industry, all of his time was for the family.

Whenever we gather for a family programme, we deeply feel his absence. Even today, some of his friends come over to meet us, and at that time, we miss him more. If he were alive today, I would hug him and say 'I miss you all the time baba'.

I can still feel his presence: Aruna Biswas

I never want to forget my baba. He will always be in my thoughts. I can still almost feel how he smelled, walked, and talked and drank tea. Baba was a teacher and an actor. I took the initial acting lessons from him, as did many renowned actors in the country. He was known as 'Jatra Samrat' Amalendu Biswas. He was a freedom fighter, and sacrificed a lot for the country.

My father was a bookworm and he used to read all night and go for a walk early in the morning. After that, he would have a cup of tea and take rest. During that time, I used to wake up from sleep and run to his bed and lying on the bed with him and taking his smell was one of my favourite things to do.

Minar lends voice to Tollywood film 'Babli'

Minar Rahman, who made us fall in love with his melodious voice, will be lending his voice to Raj Chakrabarty's upcoming film, ***Babli***.

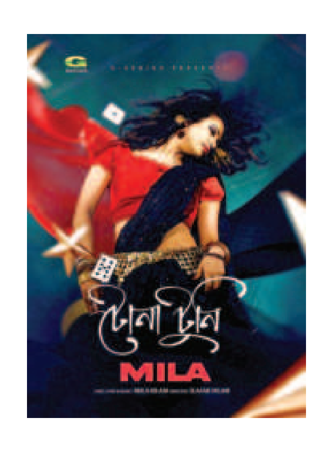
The film is based on a novel by Buddhadeb Guha. For the first time, popular actor Abir Chatterjee and actress Subhashree Ganguly are set to star together in a film.

The first song from the movie, ***Dube Achi***, was released yesterday. The song has been composed by Indraadip Dasgupta and written by Subrata Barishwala.

Mila drops another item song

From ***Bapuram Sapure*** to ***Chera Pal,*** Mila's songs have made us groove to her peppy songs and upbeat rhythms. For a long time, she was missing from the music scene but now she has made a roaring comeback with her second item song.

This Eid-ul-Azha, as part of G-Series' Eid surprise, Mila surprised her fans with special new song which was released, yesterday. Mila made her comeback with the song ***Tona Tuni.*** Not only did she sing, but she also wrote the lyrics and composed the music for the song. Maruf Chowdhury stars alongside her in the music video, which was directed by Ilzar Islam.



"***Rupban*** was my first item song. I haven't been seen in a song of that genre since. Many a time, my fans have expressed interest in seeing me perform another item song, but no one could provide lyrics that resonated with me. Finally, I decided to write the lyrics myself and arranged the tune and music in my style," revealed the singer.

NEWS

Rain likely on Eid day

FROM PAGE 12

warned of "short-term" flooding in the country's northern and northeastern regions due to heavy rainfall.

The northern, northeastern, and adjoining upstream parts of the country are expected to experience heavy to very heavy rainfall over the next 24 to 72 hours. As a result, the Surma-Kushiyara, Sarigowain, Someswari, Jadukata, and Jhalukhali rivers in the northeastern region may rise rapidly and cross the danger level at some places, according to the FFWC bulletin issued at 9:00am.

In that case, the low-lying areas of Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Moulvibazar may experience short-term flooding, it added.

At the same time, Teesta, Dharla, and Dudhkumar rivers in the northern region may also rise rapidly and cross the danger level at some places, resulting in short-term floods in the adjoining low-lying areas, the bulletin also said.

The major rivers in the northeastern region are already on a rising trend and may continue to rise in the next 72 hours, it added.

The water level of the Brahmaputra and the Jamuna rivers may also rise in the next 72 hours, according to the FFWC bulletin.

Meanwhile, the Teesta's water level is already rising quickly, and thousands of people who live along its banks and in its char areas fear that flooding may occur at any moment.

On Friday, authorities concerned opened all 44 sluice gates of the Teesta Barrage at Dalia Point in Nilphamari as the river was swelling due to incessant rain and the onrush of water from upstream India.

"It is alarming how fast the Teesta has been swelling since Friday evening! If this situation continues, flooding will occur in our area at any moment and damage our homes and cropland," said Aftab Ali, a resident of Charganai village in Rangpur's Kaunia upazila.

[Our Dinajpur correspondent contributed to this report.]

Mangoes from 4 continents in one single orchard

FROM PAGE 12

Africa, Australia and America]."

He established the Matri Bagan, including a nursery on a three-bigha land, with 150 mango plants.

A marketing graduate, Shibli aspires to develop his career as an agro entrepreneur with focus on fruit varieties, especially mangoes, from across the globe.

"Twenty-six mango varieties are already giving great output. The remaining 16 have been planted and will soon start bearing fruits.

"Whenever I learn about a new variety of mango from anywhere in the country, I rush there to get it! My dream is to turn my orchard into the only one in the country that grows the most variety of mangoes from around the world!"

Visiting Matri Bagan recently, this correspondent saw mangoes of different shapes and colours swinging from tree branches. Many were covered in fruit bags to ensure pests and birds do not affect them.

A lot of research also goes into the work to determine conducive atmospheres for each variety.

"The mangoes from different countries have different characteristics. But since we're growing them all in the same orchard, we're taking special care. We use the fruit bags also to ensure they get their proper shape and colour," Shibli added.

In his Matri Bagan, each tree -- mostly two to two and half years old -- bears at least 20-40kgs of mangoes.

"Though my orchard is new and the trees are young, we're satisfied with the production from each of them ... We'll get more yield from each tree as they get older."

Shibli gets orders from different supershops for mango supplies, "But I am not going for commercial sales yet. Maybe next year, if production increases. However, if someone separately wants to buy mangoes from me, I sell the foreign varieties at Tk 500-1,000 per kg."

Shibli also produces seedlings of various fruits by grafting the mother trees in his nursery. Including the 42 varieties of mangoes, there are 200 varieties of fruits growing in his nursery.

Grafting or graftage is a horticultural technique whereby tissues of plants are joined so as to continue their growth together.

Many fruit and plant lovers also buy saplings of different fruit varieties from Matri Bagan.

"When I began the nursery five years ago, I earned around Tk 70,000-80,000 a year from selling saplings. Now, with my varieties widened, I get Tk 40-50 lakh a year.

"Along with growing my agro business, I want to help people with job opportunities in my area through my orchard."

Speaking to The Daily Star, Sheikh Mehedi Hasan, a resident of Shahapar village in the upazila, said he often goes to Shibli's orchard to observe the beautiful mangoes from different countries.

"It's not possible for us to go to all these countries, but Shibli has at least made it possible for us to get the taste of mangoes from there! It's rare to get so many varieties in one single orchard."

A gold medalist farmer from the upazila, Md Sajahan Ali Badsha said, "It's not easy to grow fruits or crops from different countries on one single field, but Shibli has shown how to make it possible.

"Many farmers try to cultivate foreign varieties together but, in most cases, they don't succeed. What Shibli is doing will revolutionise the agro business."

Mita Sarker, agriculture officer of Ishwardi upazila, said, "Shibli is inspiring all those around him with this work. He is successful in grafting trees and also growing the fruits from so many countries. With time, all those varieties will be able to tolerate our weather and we can get more production."

Crisis eases

FROM PAGE 12

has not received daily supplies since June 6.

Yamin Hossain, additional district magistrate, said, "Residents of St Martin's Island will not face any shortage of food as they have just received a month's worth of food supplies."

He also mentioned that special arrangements would be made to reach the mainland in the event of a medical emergency.

Meanwhile, as of last morning, there had been no sound of gunshots or explosions from the Myanmar side.

Political feud

FROM PAGE 12

Aktaruzzaman by demanding a bigger cut from their gold smuggling racket, they said.

Amanullah, the main hitman hired by Aktaruzzaman, is a leader of Purbo Banglar Communist Party. In his confessional statement made on June 5, Amanullah said his party decided to kill him 26 years ago because of his involvement in smuggling and land grabbing.

Investigators said they are verifying the claims.

Tanvir Bhuiyan, who assisted the killing under Amanullah's command, mentioned in his confession that the lawmaker travelled to Kolkata after he was told that the business conflicts would be solved there.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan recently said, "We never said Azim was killed over gold smuggling. We have always been saying that the MP's constituency is a crime-prone area. We must know what happened there. We are investigating, we will tell you everything after the probe is done."

Intelligence officials say the puzzle can only be solved after Aktaruzzaman, believed to be in the US, is caught.

Bangladesh's National Central Bureau of the Police Headquarters sent a letter requesting Interpol to issue a red notice for Aktaruzzaman, said its Assistant Inspector General Ali Haider Chowdhury.

"Interpol has yet to respond. Considering the importance of the matter, we are trying again and again," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Investigators hope that India can bring the key suspect back by using its extradition treaty with the US. The probe will be incomplete otherwise, they said.

Habibur Rahman, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, yesterday said, "There is no interference in the investigation. We are investigating independently."

Tigers' chance to seal

FROM PAGE 12

beaten South Africa in this format.

However, a comprehensive 25-run win against the Netherlands in their penultimate group-stage match has given Chandika Hathurusingha's men breathing space ahead of their game against Nepal, an opposition they beat by eight wickets in Chattogram in the only encounter between the two teams during the 2014 T20 World Cup.

Nepal, though, have come a long way since their maiden appearance in Bangladesh, having finished second behind Oman in the Asia Qualifiers ahead of the ongoing edition. The associate nation may not have registered a victory in their first three matches, but they showed they can create a lot of problems for any side on their day as they pushed South Africa to the brink on Friday but eventually succumbed to a heartbreaking one-run defeat.

Nepal skipper Rohit Paudel said he did not want to go home empty-handed and wanted to give their fans something to cheer about with a win against Bangladesh.

"We will play for pride. We wanted to beat a Test playing country. It didn't happen today, so we want to do that in the next game. The confidence that we got today, we want to carry that," Paudel said at the post-match press conference following the defeat against South Africa in Kingstown.

But Bangladesh would feel that they have passed the more difficult hurdles and would want to seize the golden opportunity of securing qualification.

Veteran all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who played a match-winning knock of 64 not out against the Dutch following a lengthy lean patch with the bat, certainly felt that way.

"Obviously, the match against Nepal is very important for us. If we win, we will go to the second round which will be a big achievement for us.," Shakib had said after the Netherlands victory.

Arundhati to face trial

FROM PAGE 1

153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony), 153B (imputations, assertions prejudicial to national-integration) and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief).

Under Indian Penal Code sections 153A, 153B and 505, a maximum sentence of up to three years is provided, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

However, section 13 of UAPA relates to unlawful activities for advocating, abetting or inciting any unlawful activity and is punishable with imprisonment of up to seven years.

It was alleged in the 2010 FIR that the accused had strongly propagated that Kashmir was never part of India and was forcibly occupied by the Indian armed forces and every possible effort should be made for the independence of the state of Jammu and Kashmir from the State of India.

The FIR was registered on a complaint by social activist Sushil Pandit on October 28, 2010, following the orders of the Court of Metropolitan Magistrate, New Delhi, they added.

It accused Roy and Hossain of delivering the "provocative" speeches at a conference organised under the banner of 'Azadi-The Only Way' on October 21, 2010, at the Little Theatre Group (LTG) Auditorium on Copernicus Marg in central Delhi.

Besides Roy and Hossain, those who delivered speeches at the conference in 2010 included Kashmiri separatist Syed Ali Shah Geelani, S A R Geelani (anchor of the Conference and prime accused in the Parliament attack case), and pro-Maoist cultural activist Varavara Rao.

However, the decision to try Arundhati Roy and Hossain under the tough anti-terror law has triggered a war of words between the opposition parties and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party yesterday.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) condemned the move and claimed that the move "defies logic except the fascist kind".

Senior Congress leader B K Hariprasad said, "Fascism thrives on crushing dissent, particularly from intellectuals, artists, writers, poets & activists. BJP manufacture crises daily to distract and overwhelm dissenters enabling them to divert attention from their failures. This assault on free expression & democratic values is unacceptable," Hariprasad posted on X.

Palestinian children play on the site of a destroyed building in the Nuseirat refugee camp, in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. As Muslims worldwide prepare to mark Eid-ul-Azha starting today, Gazans lamented the shortages of essential goods and the lack of an Eid spirit amid Israeli bombardment. PHOTO: **AFP**

N Korea building roads, walls inside DMZ: report

AFP, *Seoul*

North Korea's (DPRK's) military has been building roads and walls inside the Demilitarized Zone that separates it from South Korea (ROK), the Yonhap news agency reported yesterday.

The construction activities are taking place north of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) that runs through the middle of the DMZ, the South Korean agency said, citing an military source.

The report follows an incident last week when South Korean forces fired warning shots after North Korean soldiers briefly crossed the MDL.

South Korean authorities said it was likely accidental, and Yonhap quoted a military spokesman as saying some of the North Koreans were carrying work tools.

"Recently, the North Korean military has been erecting walls, digging the ground and constructing roads in some areas between the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) and the Northern Limit Line in the DMZ," the military source said, according to Yonhap yesterday. It was not clear what they were building, the source told Yonhap.

When asked about the report, the South Korean military said in a statement that it was "closely tracking and monitoring the activities of the North Korean military", and that "further analysis is required".

South Korea's spy agency told AFP this week that it had detected signs that North Korea was demolishing sections of a railway line connecting the two countries.

UKRAINE-RUSSIA WAR

World leaders join Swiss peace summit for Ukraine

US VP announces $1.5b Ukraine aid; Sweden accuses Russia of airspace violation

AGENCIES

World leaders were joining Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Switzerland yesterday for a summit on peace in his country, but with Russia staying away it is seen as the first step in a long process.

The Swiss hosts have sought to temper expectations at the two-day gathering, with an agenda laying the groundwork for a path to peace, with future summits envisioned, eventually involving Moscow.

The conference, convening exactly 100 countries and global institutions, comes at a perilous moment for exhausted Ukrainians and outgunned soldiers, more than two years since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

More than 50 heads of state and government figure among the attendees, including all of the G7 leaders who have been meeting in Italy, with the exception of Biden.

The leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan are attending, as is the European Union chief and the leaders of Colombia, Chile, Finland, Ghana, Kenya and Poland.

Argentinian President Javier Milei and the presidents of Ecuador and Fiji were among the early arrivals.

Russia's BRICS allies Brazil and South Africa are meanwhile only sending an envoy, and India will be represented at the ministerial level.

China is absent, insisting it will not take part without Moscow's presence.

The summit aims to find paths towards a lasting peace for Ukraine based on international law and the United Nations Charter; a possible framework to achieve this goal; and a roadmap as to how both parties could come together in a future peace process.

US Vice President Kamala Harris shakes hands with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky during a meeting on the sideline of the Summit on peace in Ukraine in Stansstad yesterday.

US Vice President Kamala Harris announced more than $1.5 billion in aid in part for Ukraine's energy sector and its humanitarian situation as a result of Russia's 27-month invasion of Ukraine.

The $1.5 billion includes $500 million in new funding for energy assistance and the redirecting of $324 million in previously announced funds toward emergency energy infrastructure repair and other needs in Ukraine, the vice president's office said.

She also announced more than $379 million in humanitarian assistance from the State Department and the US Agency for International Development to help refugees and other people impacted by the war.

Harris, who will spend less than 24 hours at the gathering in Lucerne, Switzerland, will be standing in for President Biden at the event.

Elsewhere, a Russian SU-24 bomber violated Swedish airspace near the strategic Baltic Sea island of Gotland, leaving only after Sweden scrambled two JAS-39 fighter jets, Sweden's military said yesterday.

The incident on Friday occurred three months after the Scandinavian country became a full member of NATO, dropping two centuries of military non-alliance.

"The Russian actions are not acceptable and demonstrate a lack of respect for our territorial integrity," the head of Sweden's air force, Jonas Wikman, said.

China-Aussie ties 'back on track'

Says China PM Li

REUTERS, *Sydney*

Chinese Premier Li Qiang arrived in Australia yesterday, saying relations were "back on track" as he started the first visit by a Chinese premier to the major trading partner in seven years.

Australia is "uniquely positioned to connect the West and the East" and stands as "an important force of economic globalization and world multipolarity", Li said at Adelaide's airport, according to a statement from the Chinese embassy.

Bilateral relations are "back on track after a period of twists and turns", Li said.

During his four-day visit, Li will also visit the capital Canberra and mining states in Western Australia.

"A more mature, stable and fruitful comprehensive strategic partnership will be a treasure shared by the people of both countries," Li said.

The ebb in bilateral ties resulted in the suspension of A$20 billion ($13 billion) in Australian agriculture and mineral exports to China through last year.

Li arrived from New Zealand, where he highlighted Chinese demand for New Zealand's agricultural products.

S AFRICA ELECTIONS

Ramaphosa re-elected after coalition deal

REUTERS, *Cape Town*

The African National Congress and its largest rival, the controversial white-led Democratic Alliance, agreed on Friday to work together in South Africa's new government of national unity, a step change after 30 years of ANC rule.

Once unthinkable, the accord allowed President Cyril Ramaphosa to win a second term in office. He was re-elected by lawmakers with 283 votes.

The deal between two sharply antagonistic parties is the most momentous political shift in South Africa since Nelson Mandela led the ANC to victory in the 1994 election that marked the end of apartheid.

The ANC lost its majority for the first time in an election on May 29 and spent two weeks in talks with other parties.

The National Assembly had earlier elected a DA lawmaker as deputy speaker, after choosing an ANC politician as speaker, the first concrete instance of power sharing between the two parties.

The DA wants to scrap some of the ANC's Black empowerment programmes, saying they have not worked and have mostly benefited a politically-connected elite. It says good governance and a strong economy would benefit all South Africans.

Ramaphosa first came to power in 2018 after his predecessor Zuma was forced out under the cloud of corruption allegations.

Under his watch South Africa suffered from record power cuts, the economy languished and crime remained rife. Unemployment is at almost 33 percent.

SOUTH CHINA SEA ROW

New China rules allow detention of foreigners

AGENCIES

New Chinese coast guard rules took effect yesterday, under which it can detain foreigners for trespassing in the disputed South China Sea, where neighbours and the G7 have accused Beijing of intimidation and coercion.

Beijing claims almost the entirety of the South China Sea, brushing aside competing claims from several Southeast Asian nations including the Philippines and an international ruling that its stance has no legal basis.

From yesterday, China's coast guard can detain foreigners "suspected of violating management of border entry and exit", according to the new regulations published online. Detention is allowed up to 60 days in "complicated cases", they say.

Meanwhile, the Philippines filed a claim with the UN yesterday to an extended continental shelf (ECS) in the South China Sea, a waterway where it has had increasingly confrontational maritime disputes with China.

The Philippines sought to register its entitlement to an extended continental shelf in the West Palawan Region facing the South China Sea. The submission, cleared by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, follows a comprehensive technical and scientific study of continental shelf in the West Philippine Sea, the foreign ministry said.

Earlier, the Group of Seven bloc on Friday criticised what it called "dangerous" incursions by China in the waterway. "We oppose China's militarisation, and coercive and intimidation activities in the South China Sea," read a G7 statement at the end of a summit on Friday.

30 Juin
7 Juillet

Demonstrators, including one with a placard, take part in an anti-far-right rally, after French President Emmanuel Macron called legislative elections following far-right parties' significant gains in European Parliament elections, in Strasbourg, eastern France, yesterday. PHOTO: **AFP**

Singapore oil slick closes beaches on resort island

REUTERS, *Singapore*

Beaches on Singapore's Sentosa island were closed yesterday after an oil spill spread from a nearby shipping terminal to the tourist haven south of the city-state.

The oil spill had spread from Pasir Panjang Terminal, less than 10 km from the island popular with tourists and locals, after a Netherlands-flagged dredger struck a stationary Singapore-flagged bunker vessel on Friday afternoon.

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore said patches of oil were observed off Pasir Panjang Terminal and along Tanjong, Palawan, and Siloso beaches. It said it has deployed 16 oil spill response craft to contain the oil spill.

"There is no impact on navigational traffic. Berthing operations at Pasir Panjang Terminal remain unaffected," the authority said.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Let this Eid be one to remember

We wish our readers and patrons a safe, happy Eid!

As we prepare to celebrate this year's Eid-ul-Azha, it is crucial to reflect on the deeper meanings behind its rituals: sacrifice, sharing, and unity. We cannot overstate the significance of these values at a time when our nation is going through multiple challenges ranging from economic turmoil and rising inflation to democratic decline and environmental degradation.

Firstly, the spirit of sacrifice is more relevant than ever. Our nation has faced significant trials recently. Many of our fellow citizens have been severely affected by the rising prices of essentials, making it difficult for them to afford basic necessities. Reportedly, prices have gone further up in the week leading up to Eid—which is not unusual during festivals—but for a people seeing the average inflation rate hover above 9 percent for the past two years, it means more painful adjustments. Moreover, many in the coastal regions are yet to recover from the devastating effects of Cyclone Remal and recent floods. In such times, it is crucial to extend our hands to those in need—a burden shared is really a burden halved. This is, however, not to take away from the responsibilities of the government which must roll out special measures to help the most vulnerable.

Speaking of sharing, it is also vital to remember our workforce, particularly those in the garment and textile industries, where the issue of unpaid wages and bonuses continues to be persistent. Reportedly, many factories have not properly fulfilled their financial obligations to workers. Ensuring that workers receive their rightful earnings not only upholds justice but also allows them to celebrate Eid with their families.

The movement of home-bound people across the country also demands continued monitoring. With millions traveling to their home districts, it is essential to ensure their safety on the roads. We have seen too many tragic incidents mar the festivities in previous years. Already, we have had reports of some accidents and also of a surge in bus fares, which speaks to the lack of regulations in transport sector. Many have also suffered on major highways and at exit points in the capital due to traffic congestions. Therefore, the authorities must take all necessary measures to manage traffic, ensure compliance of traffic/transport rules, and prevent accidents throughout the holiday period.

We also feel obligated to highlight the importance of cleanliness and hygiene, especially considering the risks of dengue as rainfall events become more frequent. Both citizens and the municipal/local authorities must ensure prompt and proper disposal of animal waste following the sacrificial rites. We also urge on-duty law enforcement officials to ensure that the festive atmosphere is not marred by any untoward incidents. Together, through sharing and caring, we can all make this Eid an enriching experience for everyone.

Khulna's brave girl footballers need help

Govt and society must ensure their dreams are not crushed

We are disturbed to know that a group of under-17 female footballers of the Super Queen Football Academy in Khulna have stopped playing the game they are so passionate about, as per a report by this daily. Last year, these girls were viciously attacked by locals who considered the idea of girls playing football to be against the traditional norms of society. They sustained serious injuries, and there was widespread media coverage and outrage at the time. But although many promises were made then, these inspiring women were later forgotten. They are now facing financial hardship and social stigmatisation. Consequently, their practicing days have been rudely cut short, and their dreams of playing for the national team someday are all but over.

Reportedly, four of the footballers had to be married off in order for their families to save face, while the others had to make ends meet by working in croplands or as domestic workers; one of them used to drive an easy bike which was stolen.

In a society still plagued by the misogyny of certain groups, for girls to play any outdoor sport is difficult enough. But withstanding these challenges, these footballers managed to join the academy to become professional footballers. For that, the Tentultala Super Queen Football Academy deserves our praise and support for providing opportunities to around 30 to 40 girls. That they have had to suspend training because of financial constraints should prompt the government, members of the society, and corporations to come forward and provide all-out support for this academy. The authorities should also provide financial assistance to the girls who come from underprivileged backgrounds.

That said, it is disturbing to know that those accused of the vicious attack are out on bail now. Some of them are even threatening the girls with acid attacks. The police, too, have stopped providing them with protection with the excuse that since the girls have stopped practicing, they don't need security anymore.

The government must make sure that the accused are punished, that the police provide necessary protection to the girls, and that the latter can continue practicing their favourite sport without intimidation or humiliation. We have a collective responsibility to encourage women in sports and nurture these budding sportswomen, who are willing to fight all odds just to play. The accolades won by our women cricketers and footballers both at home and abroad are evidence of the positive results of such collective support.

Disinformation is a destabilising force for the capital market

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MOHAMMAD JAHIDUR RAHMAN

Disinformation can be defined as proven false information that is created and disseminated with the intent to deceive, while misinformation is inaccurate information given without malice. Distorted information, whether misinformation or disinformation, is a pivotal factor in today's financial landscape.

An article on an Indian news platform boldly stated on May 14 that hackers from their own country were likely responsible for the hacking of billions of dollars from the Bangladesh Bank reserves this month. The report claimed to be a follow-up on the investigation of the incident, stating that security agencies of both Bangladesh and India were investigating the massive digital theft.

The heading and the report were written in a way that struck the relevant financial stakeholders in Bangladesh like a thunderbolt. This happened at a time when the country's stock market was already in a volatile position due to several issues, including an increase in the central bank policy rate, the introduction of a six-month moving average rate of the treasury bill to make the interest rate of lending competitive, the introduction of a crawling peg in determining the exchange rate of foreign currency, and the probable withdrawal of the waiver in capital gain taxes.

The increase in the central bank policy rate makes borrowing from the central bank costlier for commercial banks by raising the cost of funds. Simultaneously, making the lending rate of commercial banks competitive forces lending to brokerage houses and merchant banks to become more expensive.

A significant number of foreign investors quit the Bangladesh stock market after the dollar price started to increase in early 2022. Typically, an increase in the dollar price encourages foreign investors to bring more investments, as it allows them to convert their home currency into a larger volume of local currency, enabling them to purchase a larger volume of stocks. However, in this case, the fear of further devaluation of the local currency caused them to wait. At the same time, existing foreign investors were losing money when they tried to repatriate their investments, as the local currency's depreciation reduced the amount of foreign cash they had originally invested.

On May 8 this year, the central bank introduced a Crawling Peg Exchange Rate System for spot purchases and sales of US dollars, setting a Crawling Peg Mid-Rate (CPMR) at Tk 117 per US dollar. Scheduled banks may purchase and sell US dollars freely around the CPMR with their customers and in interbank deals. The jump in the dollar rate from Tk 110 to Tk 117 caused panic among local investors in the stock market, fearing more disinvestment by foreign investors as experienced before.

To mitigate the longstanding foreign exchange crisis, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) extended their loan support on the condition of complying with some reform strategies in the financial sector, one of which is the withdrawal of concessions on income tax, VAT, and tariff. A Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) dated July 1, 2015, granted individual investors an exemption from paying capital gains tax on listed stocks, mutual funds, bonds, and debentures. To comply with the conditions given by the IMF, there was a buzz in the market that the National Board of Revenue (NBR) was planning to withdraw the exemption of the capital gain tax facility from the next fiscal year, which has already been proposed in the national budget of FY 24-25.

DISINFORMATION
DISINFORMATION
DISINFORMATION
DISINFORMATION

VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

All these factors contributed to the decline of the stock market index. Following this, the disinformation about the central bank reserve heist emerged with malicious intent to further deteriorate the market condition, forcing marginal investors to sell their portfolios at a lower price.

The news was published on a low-profile Indian news portal which was registered on November 26, 2022—a registration that is set to expire on November 26, 2024. The portal, with only 6.3k followers, clearly lacks the credibility to be making such sensitive financial claims.

Any reduction in forex reserves pushes the dollar price up. In the context of the current deteriorating situation in the stock market, this disinformation about the reserve heist acted like the addition of fuel to a fire.

Misinformation or disinformation have been found to increase abnormal stock trading activity and stock price volatility by more than 50 percent and 40 percent respectively in the United States, according to research published in 2019. Research from 2020 suggests that they can also be used to promote specific stocks, resulting in speculative trading campaigns. There has yet to be a study for the Bangladesh market determining the volatility rate caused by different forms of misinformation or disinformation. A survey in 2012 found that 15.79 percent of respondents believed that price fluctuations in the Bangladesh stock market were due to the spreading of fake news. This report, however, does not include the quantitative outcome of volatility caused by misinformation or disinformation. A 2023 study revealed that stock prices of targeted firms respond to fake news even if its informational content is non-existent. Negative false news items have significant short-term negative effects on returns in the US and European markets.

Misinformation and disinformation pose significant risks to the financial sector. Key risks include market volatility, stock price fluctuations, panic selling, poor investment choices, erosion of trust, economic slowdown, operational risk, reputation damage, compliance complexity, policy missteps, increased scrutiny, and higher costs. Addressing these risks requires a coordinated approach involving fact-checking and verification processes, enhancing media literacy, regulatory measures, public education, and technological collaboration.

FATHER'S DAY

Understanding the person and the parent

Sumaya Mashrufa
is sub-editor at The Daily Star.

SUMAYA MASHRUFA

In a culture where parents are often put on a pedestal, it seems redundant to have designated days to remind ourselves of the people who made us. We are constantly reminded of that regardless. In recent times, Mother's Day has gained momentum here and become more of a mainstream idea.

Here, even if people know of these days, they are still more of an idea than something one actually celebrates. And in a country where there are so many woes and hardships, one perhaps cannot but cynically look at it. However, there can be a scope for localisation that isn't sponsored by a neoliberal profit-making scheme.

Father's Day can be a chance to look at fathers to see what's really going on with them. This is also an attempt to articulate how it feels to seek reconciliation when fathers are no longer with us.

Growing up, for the longest time, I didn't identify my father as a man. He was just my father, and then there was this world of men—men who, in my opinion as a teen, were mucking up my every plan to be gloriously sixteen, seventeen. While I was frowning trying to figure out why a girl is the worst enemy these men can have, and why my laughter and joy was the bane of their existence, my father ceased to exist. And he remained just that, my father, for a ridiculously long time.

And then, it hit me—my father was a man.

I don't think parents realise how powerful they are. It truly boggles my mind how people remain so nonchalant and do not see that if there is anything miraculous left, it is that they can just decide to bring another human being into this world. That is a power akin to that of being able to say, "Let there be light." So, no wonder it doesn't register easily that these people you call *Amma* and *Abba* are people too, that they are human beings whom some other folks once decided to bring into this world, that one's father is just a man, made in this culture with language that wouldn't let him be a full human being.

I'm sure it is somewhat true for every culture, but living in a country such as ours, the relationship between a father and a daughter is a very strange one. The majority consensus for the daughters of Bangladesh is that beware of men. Newspaper articles, TV screens and cinemas all come as precautionary messages of what can happen to you as a girl. Here, fathers have a very panic-inducing job to do.

They are the representative of the clan of men. They have a working knowledge of what array of members their clan consists of. They fear the members they don't know well. While I was growing up, I thought women feared men. I had no idea how much men fear men, too.

While I was diagnosing myself and the society out there, I saw my father. A man who had me when he was at my age. He had seventeen years to talk to me. I'm sure he thought he had time. There's no need to even mention that I thought we had time. Time was still a concept that proposed infiniteness.

It is a little harder, though not impossible, to reach reconciliation with fathers who are no longer here. Especially if one loses their father at an early age, one becomes quite a detective. It's like their life is spread in front of you and the last entry on the diary has been made. Now make what you want to make out of it. You cannot interrogate, you cannot interview, and no one is going to talk back. You just have to take versions of events from eyewitnesses and examine the existing entries and reach a point.

Reconciliation is needed because the rapture of life tears us apart and bars us from seeing the stage where there is forgiveness and compassion.

Because I couldn't reach my father, quite subconsciously, I developed this habit of looking at as many fathers as I could. It was a hobby, like collecting stamps; I would collect memories of my female friends with their fathers.

I've seen some wonderful fathers in my lifetime, and I saw some truly horrible ones too. I have no unrealistic romanticisation of fatherhood. In my brain, they are not kept on pedestals. I also understand that being a good father does not equal being a good husband. And I have reached that point where I see fathers as men who were taught to put on a brave face and stride, who tried to be the fathers we deserved, and when they failed, couldn't cry.

So, there was this daughter in Washington, Sonora Smart Dodd. At age 27, she had the idea for Father's Day. Her father was a Civil War veteran who raised her and her five siblings alone after their mother died in childbirth. The first Father's Day was celebrated on June 19, 1910, the month of her father's birthday.

Though I don't buy into this very Americanised way of celebration and all that it entails, I do like this story. I try to imagine Sonora's father as well. He always comes in the image of Jo March's father in *The Little Women*. And I want to give them a hug, from our house to theirs.

In the hurry to hide true emotion in humour, I digress. I should crack a joke right about now! I want to say Happy Father's Day to Darth Vader. I want to say the most famous son is Jesus Christ. And while my brain seeks denial of grief in humour, I see my father laughing. I see him talking to my older brother, my brother reading Kahlil Gibran's poem "On Children" in a very intentional way—

"You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth."

I see my father hiding shadows of sadness in his eyes, I see him smile.

And even after knowing how it would make us both cringe, to my beautiful, brilliant father, I say, "Happy Father's Day, Abbu!" You tried your best, you can put your armour down now, and be the joyful little boy you always wanted to be.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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Subscription:
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Benazir's corruption: The crisis of accountability

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KALLOL MUSTAFA

The year was 2018. On August 30, the results of Transparency International Bangladesh's (TIB) "Corruption in Service Sectors: National Household Survey 2017" were released. According to the survey, the country's law enforcement agencies (LEAs) ranked in the highest position in terms of the experience of corruption by surveyed households. Of the households that received services from them, 72.5 percent were victims of different forms of corruption.

The Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA) rejected the TIB survey results in a statement issued on September 11, 2018. The statement, sent by the additional deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, also the office secretary of the Police Service Association, alleged that the TIB's survey report "identified the police as a corrupt institution based on preconceived notions." It was also claimed that, "In case of any unlawful behaviour of the police, proper legal action is taken after investigation."

The story of identifying the LEAs as the "most corrupt sector" in the TIB survey and subsequent rejection by the BPSA came to my mind in the wake of the recent allegations of massive corruption against former police and Rab chief Benazir Ahmed. Documents from the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) show that Benazir and his family bought at least 204.5 acres of land between 2009 and 2023. Of these, 112 acres were purchased during his tenure as inspector general of police (IGP) and Rab chief.

Was Benazir Ahmed's purchase of such a vast amount of land while he was head of police and Rab consistent with the legitimate income he was earning? Is it not an illegal act to force people to sell land by intimidation? Where was the process of "legal action" claimed by the BPSA when Benazir was engaging in such unlawful behaviour day after day as a senior officer in the police force? Why was Benazir's corruption exposed only after his retirement, and not when he was in office?

Not only was no action taken against Benazir's massive corruption and abuse of power when he was in office, he was also being given one reward after another. This is not only an internal problem of the LEAs. The entire government, including the ministry of home affairs, is also responsible here.

The Public Security Division of the home ministry honoured him with the Integrity Award 2020-21. But ACC data shows that he and his family bought nearly 87.9 acres of land in 2020 and 2021. The Integrity Award is supposed to be given to someone who meets the standards of scrupulousness and honesty. Where were those standards when Benazir was given the award? Apart from the Integrity Award, Benazir was awarded the highest medal of the police force, Bangladesh Police Medal (BPM), a total of five times between 2011 and 2019. With so many intelligence agencies in the country and so much surveillance, is it at all believable that the authorities, including the LEAs, were not aware of his illegal activities? How dysfunctional could a country's institutional system be that the person who was involved in massive corruption was rewarded time and again, instead of being punished?!

VISUAL: **STAR**

The government and law enforcement agencies claim that Benazir Ahmed's corruption is his personal responsibility, that no agency or ministry will take responsibility for him. The problem with this type of claim is that when Benazir was committing the crimes, he held important positions in the agencies concerned. Moreover, he used his administrative powers and even members of the agencies under his control for his personal benefit. For example, according to a report published in *The Daily Star*, during his tenure as IGP and Director General of Rab, Benazir Ahmed purchased over 600 bighas of farmland by intimidating the Hindu community in the Gopalganj Sadar Upazila, and Rajoir Upazila of Madaripur. Benazir engaged a police officer named Taimur Islam to buy the land. Taimur used to go to the land owners on Benazir's behalf and pressure them to sell the land at reduced prices, threatening them that they would lose the land anyway without getting any compensation if they did not sell that to Benazir. Benazir also engaged several police and Rab officials to supervise the construction work of one of his resorts until he went into retirement in 2022. How pathetic is it that a man whose responsibility was to protect citizens has instead used his power against vulnerable populations for his own gains?

He used his official powers not only to grab land, but even to make passports as a private employee while still in service. Government officials cannot travel abroad without prior approval. Moreover, using an official passport creates various complications in case of investing and obtaining residence permit abroad. To avoid these complications, Benazir had repeatedly renewed his passport as a private employee while still in service. At one point in 2016, as reported by *Daily Jugantor*, when the passport directorate objected to the renewal of Benazir's passport as a private employee while he was the director general of Rab, the directorate was forced to give the passport under pressure from the Rab headquarters.

Would it have been possible for a person to do these kinds of corruption and irregularities for years if he was not in important positions in LEAs and if the authorities had not promoted and awarded him? Then, on what grounds can the authorities now avoid responsibility for his misdeeds? The incident of Benazir Ahmed's irregularities, corruption and abuse of power demand special attention because it is not just a case of Benazir's irregularities as an individual, it is also a question of checks and balances of the power and accountability of Bangladesh Police and Rab as institutions.

Benazir's case clearly shows that it is possible for top police and Rab officials to abuse power for personal gains without any accountability. They can invest in land and businesses in violation of government service rules, use police force members for personal or family business, buy land at a low price by intimidating the vulnerable communities, and travel abroad with a fake identity. What is the guarantee that such blatant abuse of power and corruption are not still being practiced by some other powerful officials?

Even after media reports about Benazir's illegal wealth started to appear, there were allegations that the authorities were not proactive enough. The *Kalerkantho* report on Benazir Ahmed's illegal assets was published on March 31, the ACC decided to form a committee to investigate his illegal assets on April 18, and following the ACC's application, the court ordered the seizure of his assets and bank accounts on May 23. But before that, Benazir withdrew money from the bank, sold many assets, and left the country with his family on May 4. There was no action from the ACC or any department of the government to prevent Benazir from going abroad while the investigation was going on. So, what is the guarantee that his departure abroad did not happen as part of his understanding with the authorities?

This question has arisen because during the consecutive tenures of the Awami League government, Benazir Ahmed held three of the most important positions in law enforcement. He was Commissioner of DMP from October 2010 to January 2015, Director General of Rab from January 2015 to April 2020, and IGP from April 2020 to September 2022. There are questions about how much of his behaviour in these positions was that of a professional law enforcement officer, and how much was of a ruling party politician. Besides, many "crossfires" and "gunfights" occurred during his tenure as the Rab and police chief, for which the responsibility rests on him as well as the government. Investigating Benazir Ahmed's corruption is not enough. The allegations of violations of human and democratic rights against him should also be investigated, and he should be brought back to the country and punished. It is also important to uncover who were the beneficiaries of Benazir's corruption and what irregularities were legitimised through them. The most important thing is that the crisis of accountability of various institutions of the government that was exposed through the Benazir incident is also addressed.

Is there a problem with the world of cricket?

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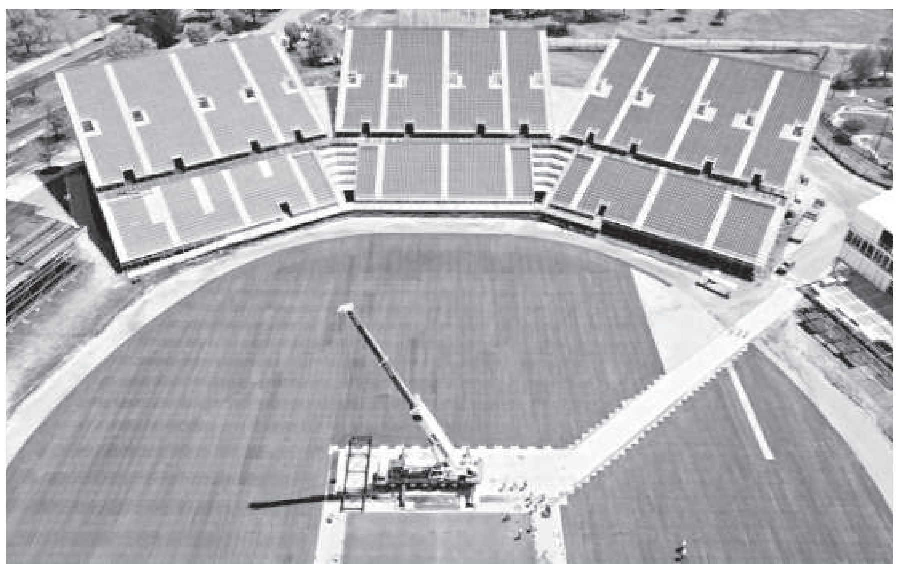
MADIHA ATHAR KHAN

A post on X (formerly known as Twitter) which gained popularity on other social media platforms as well reads, "If you want to promote cricket in the USA, then make India and Pakistan play a 5-match T20I series over there. Don't spoil the biggest cricketing event in the world for the heck of it." There are other posts about the low-scoring pitch in New York with many voicing the sentiment that these are not good enough to play T20 matches on.

The brand image of cricket as a sport has been shaped by the role played by batters. If you ask most cricket fans about their favourite matches or performances, chances are that they will name an unforgettable batting innings. Inadvertently perhaps, batters have assumed the roles of main characters in the team, bowlers the supporting characters, and the fielders have become silent extras. The advent of T20 cricket has only heightened this effect.

The Indian Premier League (IPL) has also set the tone for what to expect from T20 matches. People are accustomed to nearly every match being a 200-plus run stunner where the team batting second nearly achieves the target. There should be no trend set in a sport, to the extent that every match reads like a scripted performance. But when there is such a long tournament played in one country that has perfected its business model by securing eyeballs on every game, they are incentivised to create exactly that. This situation has prompted even the biggest names in the game like Virat Kohli to say that he does not want to see matches where the bowlers have no room to make an impact.

Just because the New York pitch—which has quite an interesting backstory of being constructed in Adelaide and then transported to New York—has failed to produce any of those high-scoring matches, people have been quick to criticise it. It begs the question: what actually is the true essence of cricket?



An aerial photo of the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium under construction in New York, USA, taken on May 1, 2024.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Have we become so used to only one style that we have lost the ability to appreciate cricket's many variations? The dialogue on social media makes it seem like cricket fans have solidified what they expect cricket to be and are only satisfied when those expectations are met. After all, T20 demands a short attention span and its promise has always been to deliver immediate gratification. This has also rendered Test cricket inadmissible in the race to remain relevant under modern entertainment conditions. But cricket fans with a bigger appetite for what cricket has to offer are well aware of what the 5-day format can yield: slow-burn thrillers, unpredictable pendulum swings, grit, determination, and the awe that displays of rigorous discipline can inspire. In the same vein, low-scoring T20 matches where bowlers dominate and the matches go down to the wire encapsulate much of the thrill that we may otherwise be missing out on.

All this is not to say that there isn't a problem with cricket at the moment. But I don't think we are pointing our fingers in the right direction. Along with the quality of New York pitches, people have also raised issues with the inclusion of 20 teams in the T20 World Cup. Granted, this results in some matches where the quality of cricket from both sides is sorely unmatched but surely, we can all see the bigger picture here. If every year is going to be saturated with multiple major cricket tournaments, we might as well invite a bigger pool of teams to partake in it. Cricket fans should rejoice at the prospect of the sport gaining wider popularity in other nations.

An issue with cricket right now is the number of major tournaments taking place close to each other. This does not give the teams that need it, the time to reflect, course-correct and implement changes. The ICC Men's ODI Cricket World Cup 2023 ended in November of last year. With only seven months in hand, the teams had to prepare for the T20 World Cup. If we take a look at a five-year period in the cricket cycle, year one would see an ODI World Cup, year two would have a T20 World Cup, year three might have less fanfare but it could feature an ICC Champions Trophy, and possibly an Asia Cup (which would include all the teams where cricket is the most popular), year four would see another T20 World Cup and then the ODI World Cup in the fifth. What that has led to is a simple continuation of momentum (or lack thereof). The teams who have been doing well continue to do so, and the struggling teams see little to no change.

As Bangladeshi fans, we have been immersed in bitterness and disappointment at the state of our cricket team despite their access to proper resources. We outsiders don't have any role to play in making changes but what can help us is to gain some perspective. There are teams such as Pakistan and Sri Lanka who are arguably faring worse than us currently in international cricket. West Indies did not even qualify for the last ODI World Cup. All of these three teams are former World Champions and have regressed at a more appalling rate than us. This is not meant to be a consolation for the Bangladesh team but rather an evaluation of the overall state of cricket and the system in place that has allowed teams like India, Australia, and England to remain at the top, often at the cost of others.

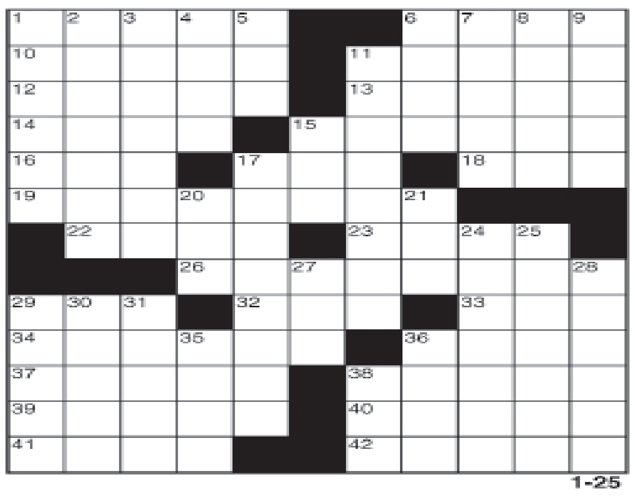
Having said that, there is undeniably always room for uncertainty in cricket, especially in T20s. This is the format in which the quality of cricket matters less than how well you can take advantage of the shorter match time and create upsets. This is also an opportunity for smaller teams to make their mark, while teams like Pakistan, New Zealand, and England in this edition of the World Cup are either already eliminated or struggling to qualify for the next stage.

There are other teams like the Netherlands, Ireland, and the USA of late, who despite not being regarded as serious contenders of the game and not having access to the same cricket resources, display firepower and an intention to prove themselves that is really commendable. They perform with a hunger to prove themselves, probably because it is that much harder for them to get their foot in the door. Much like in other areas of life, the underdogs are scrappy, making the most of what's available to pursue their passions. It is only fair that teams varying greatly in rankings become regular participants in major cricket tournaments. The problems presented by cricket can be offset by the changes that are being introduced. Normalising pitches that are more bowler-friendly and being more welcoming to different cricket teams can build a more exciting future for the sport.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Latitude
6 Disorder
10 Highway sections
11 Entice
12 Left, on a liner
13 Film trophy
14 Wait to pounce
15 Cry to a rescuer
16 Outdated
17 Bro's sibling
18 Sixth sense, briefly
19 Kalahari critters
22 Loyal
23 Inning count
26 Brewery sights
29 Soak up
32 Take a stab at
33 Tourist's aid
34 Penn, for one
36 Renown
37 Beneath
38 Andrews of "Mary Poppins"
39 Land units
40 Add a change to
41 Like an abyss
42 Buttes' kin

DOWN
1 Downhill course
2 Montague foe
3 Not yet in stock
4 Make coffee
5 Id —
6 Interlace
7 Game show host
8 Ship poles
9 Barber's aid
11 Hit movie of 1995
15 Farrow of film
17 Pesky bugs, informally
20 Massage
21 Minivan alternative
24 Mexican snacks
25 Endurance
27 Muff
28 Ignores the limit
29 Team
30 Pound part
31 San Diego player
35 Retain
36 Be enraged
38 Toast spread



1-25

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

U	N	I	T	E	■	T	U	R	K	S
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F	R	O	N	T	R	U	N	N	E	R
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D	E	S	S	E	R	T	■	A	C	E
■	■	■	A	T	E	■	S	L	A	T
A	D	A	G	E	■	R	A	S	P	S
C	U	S	S	■	B	E	N	■	■	■
R	E	P	■	D	E	A	D	S	E	T
O	D	E	■	I	N	D	■	A	L	I
B	A	C	K	S	T	A	B	B	E	R
A	T	T	I	C	■	P	I	E	C	E
T	E	S	T	S	■	T	O	R	T	S

Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to
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Antidepressant discontinuation: what you need to know

If you or someone you know is considering stopping antidepressants, it is crucial to understand potential withdrawal symptoms. A recent study published in *The Lancet Psychiatry* sheds light on this issue, providing valuable insights for patients and healthcare professionals alike.

The study, which is the most comprehensive of its kind to date, analysed data from over 20,000 patients across 79 studies. It found that approximately one in six to seven patients (15%) experienced withdrawal symptoms directly related to stopping antidepressants. These symptoms, which include dizziness, headache, nausea, insomnia, and irritability, can be challenging but are not a sign of addiction.

Furthermore, about 3% of patients experienced severe withdrawal symptoms, leading some to restart antidepressant treatment. Though not inevitable, these symptoms can vary depending on the antidepressant used.

Importantly, the study highlights the need for open communication between patients and doctors when considering discontinuing antidepressants. Joint decision-making and careful monitoring are essential to ensure a smooth transition and minimise any potential discomfort.

While previous studies have suggested higher rates of withdrawal symptoms, this new analysis provides a more accurate picture. It distinguishes between symptoms directly caused by medication cessation and those influenced by patients' or practitioners' expectations.

Ultimately, the goal is to provide patients with evidence-based information to make informed decisions about their treatment. If you are considering stopping antidepressants, speak with your healthcare provider to discuss your options and develop a plan that prioritises your well-being. Remember, you are not alone, and support is available every step of the way.

Chronic and recurrent pneumonia in children: A changing paradigm of a common disease

DR AHAD ADNAN

Pneumonia is a major respiratory problem in children, both in terms of the number of occurrences and the cause of death. The word, more specifically termed “pneumonitis', implies inflammation of lung cells. When the destructive process is at its peak, it thickens your respiratory membrane, resulting in problematic respiration along with fever, cough, and distress.

Conventionally, people believe that only various organisms can cause pneumonia, despite the existence of several non-infectious mechanisms that are alarmingly on the rise. Among the organisms are bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites, with the former two being the most common and originating from both community and hospital settings. The typical course of the disease involves an improved course with or without antibiotics, along with some supportive measures like oxygen therapy, etc.

If a child really has either recurrent or persistent pneumonia, we need to evaluate him/her thoroughly. We must clarify some important histories related to other similar diseases. Pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) should definitely come to mind at the top of the list, especially in our country. TB is somehow difficult to diagnose in children due to non-specific clinical features, difficulty in collecting samples to investigate, and the organism's scarcity.

We should take a history of weight loss, an evening rise in temperature, a persistent cough, less alertness, vaccination, and, most importantly, recent TB contact. Device-induced sputum and stool for GeneXpert are among the most commonly used samples for detecting TB organisms.

Many children used to vomit their feeds, especially liquid feeds, spontaneously or after coughing. Most of them have reflux disease, which drains the vomit from the digestive and respiratory paths and creates repeated pneumonia. We advocate for the mother to feed the babies in a sitting or semi-sitting posture rather than lying, to offer small, frequent feeds, to prepare semi-solid to solid feed in place of whole liquid feed, and also to avoid rigorous shaking after meals. Some long-term medications help with these conditions as well.

A congenital heart defect may be a co-problem or primary culprit for recurrent or persistent pneumonia, mainly due to feeding problems and vomiting. Sometimes the aspiration of a foreign body into the respiratory tract ignites a long-lasting lung pathology. We used to have a history of chocking, violent coughing during feeding, eating seeds or nuts, and also playing with small, rounded objects.

In recent times, we have observed a lot of children with congenitally deficient immunity. If a child presents with at least 4 ear infections, at least 2 serious sinus infections, or at least 2 pneumonias, along with 2 or more months on antibiotics with little effect in a year, recurrent abscess, oral thrush, fungal infection, deep-seated infection, the same family history, and poor growth, we must think of primary immunodeficiency (PID). A PID panel assay will confirm the diagnosis.

These challenging patterns of pneumonia force the paediatric pulmonologist to use non-conventional, newer investigative techniques like fibre optic bronchoscopy. It serves both diagnostic and therapeutic purposes. Genetic testing and immune panel studies are also of critical use.

Last but not least, the old-school investigating technique, culture, and sensitivity test are crucial in detecting specific organisms and determining the appropriate antibiotic to use. More emphasis should be given to such recurrent or pneumonia cases to ensure a healthy lung and a better world.

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DID YOU KNOW?

The benefits of epidural pain relief during labour

A recent study published in the *PubMed* investigated the impact of epidural pain relief during labour on serious health issues for mothers. The research included over 500,000 women who gave birth in Scotland between 2007 and 2019.

About 22% of these women opted for an epidural during labor. The study found that mothers who received an epidural were less likely to experience severe health issues after giving birth. In fact, they had a 35% lower risk of facing serious problems compared to those who did not receive an epidural. Additionally, they were less likely to need critical care.

Interestingly, the benefits of epidurals were even more pronounced for certain groups. For example, women who needed epidurals for medical reasons saw greater protection against severe health issues. Similarly, mothers who delivered their babies prematurely also benefited more from epidurals.

The study's findings highlight the potential importance of epidural pain relief during labour, especially for women at higher risk of complications. By making epidurals more accessible to these groups, healthcare providers may be able to improve maternal health outcomes and ensure safer childbirth experiences.

Overall, the research suggests that epidurals play a significant role in reducing the likelihood of serious health problems for mothers during and after childbirth. However, to fully understand the extent of their benefits and how to optimise them for different populations, further studies may be necessary.

WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY 2024

20 years of celebrating giving: thank you, blood donors!

On World Blood Donor Day, celebrated on June 14, 2024, WHO, its partners, and communities across the world united behind the theme: 20 years of celebrating giving: thank you, blood donors!

The 20th anniversary of World Blood Donor Day is an excellent and timely opportunity to thank blood donors across the world for their life-saving donations over the years and honour the profound impact on both patients and donors. It is also a timely moment to address continued challenges and accelerate progress towards a future where safe blood transfusions are universally accessible.

The campaign's objectives are as follows:

- Thank and recognise the millions of voluntary blood donors who have contributed to the health and well-being of millions of people around the world.
- Showcase the achievements and challenges of national blood programmes, and share best practices and lessons learned.
- Highlight the continuous need for regular, unpaid blood donation to achieve universal access to safe blood transfusions.
- Promote a culture of regular blood donation among young people and the general public, and increase the diversity and sustainability of the blood donor pool.

Key messages:

- Safe blood saves lives.
- Blood is needed by women with complications during pregnancy and childbirth, children with severe anaemia, often resulting from malaria or malnutrition, accident victims, and surgical and cancer patients.
- Regular blood donation by a sufficient number of healthy people is needed to ensure that blood will always be available whenever and wherever it is needed.
- While the need for blood is universal, access to blood is not.
- Blood shortages are acute in low- and middle-income countries.
- Every single blood or plasma donation is a precious lifesaving gift; regular donation is the key to building a safe and sustainable supply.
- The wide participation of the population in regular blood and plasma donations ensures that everyone can access blood and plasma proteins when they need them.
- Ensuring the safety and well-being of blood and plasma donors is critical; it helps build commitment to regular donations.
- Thank you, blood donors. Your selfless donations have had a profound impact on the lives and well-being of hundreds of millions of people, as well as their families and communities across the world.

***Source:** World Health Organisation*

HPV vaccine: a game changer in preventing cervical cancer

The HPV vaccine has been available to girls aged 12–13 since 2008, and catch-up programmes are available until age 19. Previous research showed that vaccinated women had significantly lower rates of cervical cancer, but uptake of the vaccine was lower in areas with more economic challenges.

A study published in the BMJ looked at the impact of the HPV vaccine on cervical cancer and precancerous changes in England. The study analysed data from the National Health Service's cancer registry between 2006 and 2020. It found that among women who received the HPV vaccine, the incidence of cervical cancer dropped by 83.9%, and the incidence of precancerous changes (CIN3) dropped by 94.3%. These benefits were even greater for women vaccinated at a younger age.

Interestingly, while more cases of cervical cancer still occurred in economically deprived areas, the relative reduction in cases was similar across all social classes. This means that the vaccine was equally effective in protecting women from cervical cancer, regardless of their socioeconomic background. This study highlights the importance of HPV vaccination in preventing cervical cancer and reducing health inequalities.

It emphasises that simple interventions like vaccination can have significant health benefits for individuals and communities. The researchers and editorialists urge healthcare professionals and policymakers to work together to ensure that more than 90% of girls and boys receive the HPV vaccine, thereby maximising its impact on public health.

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"Extremely disappointed to play ourselves out of the tournament. We have a proud record in World Cups in the last ten years and it has now come to an end."

New Zealand pacer **Tim Southee** after consolation win against Uganda

Will Shanto's willow stop snoozing?

ASHFAQ-UL-ALAM

Bangladesh's campaign in this year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup has been refreshingly devoid of any off-field drama surrounding captaincy, thanks to Najmul Hossain Shanto who has taken the captaincy mantle on his stride and has done a commendable job so far.

That being said, in a playful attempt to spark some off-field spice, here's a whimsical conspiracy theory: Bangladesh have two Shantos playing in the marquee event.

At one end, there is captain Shanto, a smart leader who has been brave with his use of bowlers, excellent with his on-field decisions, has taken a number of gutsy calls, and almost all of his gambles have come off.

At the age of 26, leading the team for the first time in an ICC event as a fulltime captain, Shanto has shown the wits of a seasoned veteran and has been rightfully showered with praises for it.

But at the other end stands the batter Shanto, who looks fidgety, indecisive, unsure whether to press on or grind it out in the middle.

Since arriving in North America, he has batted six times, including a warm-up match against India, and has made three, 36, zero, seven, 14 and one, in that order -- the last three off which have come in the T20 World Cup.

It's not like Shanto has been struggling against a particular type of bowling either.

He has been dismissed twice against off-spinners, stumped against the USA's Steven Taylor and caught at slip to the Netherlands' Aryan Dutt, lost his stumps to India's Mohammad Siraj, got caught trying to pull South Africa's Anrich Nortje and gave a straight-forward catch to extra cover against Sri Lanka's Nuwan Thushara.

The only time he got going was the 34-ball 36-run knock against the USA in the second T20I of the three-match series last month, which ended with a run-out dismissal.

Realistically, had Shanto not been the captain of the team, his place in the starting eleven would have been under serious threat.

But while batter Shanto has been a liability for the team so far, captain Shanto has been indispensable. Most notably, his use of leg-spinner Rishad Hossain has been inspiring, arguably the key move in Bangladesh's winning encounters against Netherlands and Sri Lanka.

Giving Shakib Al Hasan just one over and completing his quota with three overs from Mahmudullah Riyad against South Africa was another inspired decision, one that paid dividends.

In a team where former captains like Shakib and Mahmudullah are in the middle, Shanto has emerged as the clear leader on the field; always communicating with the bowlers from mid-on.

But even his excellent captaincy is not enough to hide his blushes with the bat.

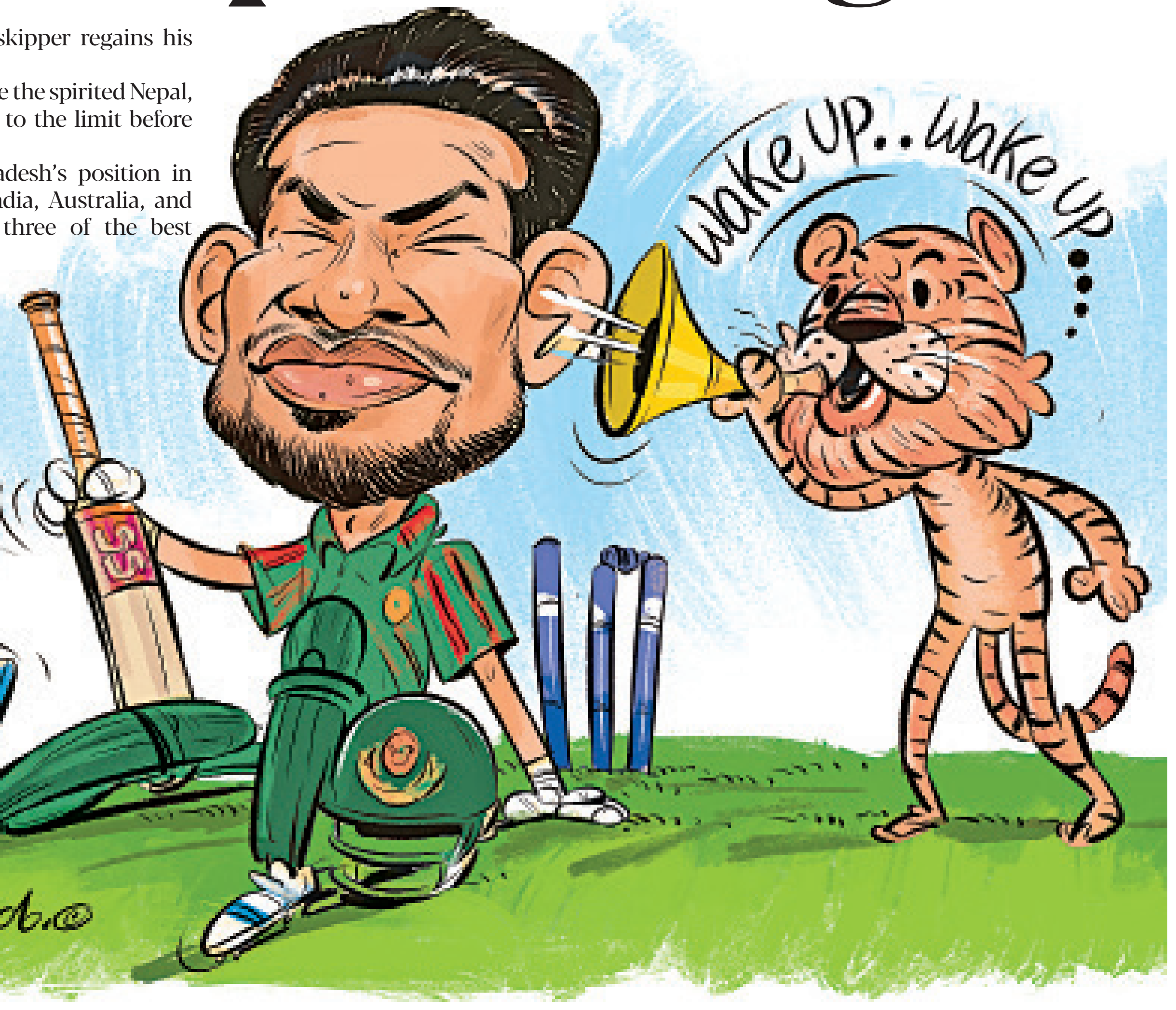
Liton Das, who also came into the tournament with questionable form, contributed in the win over Sri Lanka with a steadfast 36 off 38 balls while Tanzid Hasan Tamim gave glimpses of his abilities at the top with a flashy 35 off 26 balls against the Dutch.

Shanto is the only top-order batter who is yet to play an effective knock and, with Bangladesh in pole position for Super Eight, it is imperative that the skipper regains his groove.

Next up for the Tigers are the spirited Nepal, who pushed South Africa to the limit before conceding a one-run loss.

A win will seal Bangladesh's position in the next round among India, Australia, and Afghanistan -- arguably three of the best bowling attacks in the competition.

For Shanto, the match against Nepal is an opportunity to get some runs under his belt and get off the mark in leading the team from the front with the bat. If he fails to do so, who knows, the ludicrous conspiracy theory proposed above could gain some steam.



SPORTS ON TV
During EID Holidays

NAGORIK TV AND STAR SPORTS 1,2,3
T20 World Cup
Australia vs Scotland
Live from 6:30 am
Pakistan vs Ireland
Live from 8:30 pm

June 17, Monday
Bangladesh vs Nepal
Live from 5:30 am
Sri Lanka vs Netherlands
Live from 6:30 am
New Zealand vs Papua New Guinea
Live from 8:30 pm

June 18, Tuesday
West Indies vs Afghanistan
Live from 6:30 am
June 19, Wednesday
USA vs South Africa
Live from 8:30 pm

T SPORTS & SONY SPORTS
Euro
Poland vs Netherlands
Live from 7:00 pm
Slovenia vs Denmark
Live from 10:00 pm

June 17, Monday
Serbia vs England
Live from 1:00 am
Romania vs Ukraine
Live from 7:00 pm
Belgium vs Slovakia
Live from 10:00 pm

June 18, Tuesday
Austria vs France
Live from 1:00 am
Turkey vs Georgia
Live from 10:00 pm

June 19, Wednesday
Portugal vs Czech Republic
Live from 1:00 am
Croatia vs Albania
Live from 7:00 pm
Germany vs Hungary
Live from 10:00 pm
Scotland vs Switzerland (Thursday)

Nepal's near-upset chimes CHARM OF CRICKET

AGENCIES

In a match decided by the slimmest of margins and filled with twists and turns, Heinrich Klaasen's decisive run-out from the final ball secured South Africa's unbeaten record at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup and eliminated Nepal from Super Eights contention in a thrilling one-run victory in St Vincent yesterday.

Needing two runs from the final delivery to keep their Super Eights hopes alive, Nepal's Gulsan Jha was run out at the non-striker's end by Klaasen, as the match seemed destined for a Super Over.

This heartbreaking conclusion was particularly harsh for Nepal, who had been the superior team for much of the contest. Their spinners dominated South Africa, restricting them to 115 for seven, and their top-order batsmen were in control, reaching 85 for two in the 14th over with the required rate well within reach.

Despite the narrow loss, Nepal captain Rohit Paudel expressed pride in his team's performance. "I feel like the way we played today shows that we belong here," Paudel said.

Nepal's efforts, backed by their spirited fans who continued to flock in numbers, did not go unnoticed. South African legend Dale Steyn commended the atmosphere created by the vocal and invested Nepalese fan base at the Arnos Vale Ground, which had seen international action return after almost ten years in Thursday's nail-biter between Bangladesh and the Netherlands.

"It would've been the talk of the tournament if Nepal had gotten over the line," Steyn said on ICC's Digital Daily show, hailing the match as the tournament's best so far. "It was fantastic, and they deserved to win. This was the match of the tournament. The matches have gone down to the wire in the USA, and now in the Caribbean, we've seen nail-biting thrillers. I saw people crying in the stands; it shows how much it means to them, and that's what cricket is all about."

The disappointment of a narrow loss and early exit should be hard to overcome for the Himalayan nation. However, on a global platform which could set the fate of an emerging team on course for prosperity, Nepal's near-upset against a top-tier team like South Africa has undoubtedly demonstrated their potential and belonging on the global stage.

There have been six instances of one-run wins in Men's T20 World Cup: South Africa (SA) vs New Zealand (NZ), Lord's, 2009; NZ vs Pakistan (PAK), Bridgetown, 2010; India (IND) vs SA, Colombo, 2012; IND vs Bangladesh, Bengaluru, 2016; Zimbabwe vs PAK, Perth, 2022; SA vs Nepal, Kingstown, 2024.

Teams with multiple 1-run wins in T20Is: SA (5), England (2), IND (2), NZ (2), Ireland (2), Kenya (2).

England out to dispel Euro doubts

AGENCIES

England's attacking arsenal sees them start Euro 2024 as the bookmakers' favourites to end a wait since 1966 to win a major tournament, but doubts persist over the Three Lions ahead of Sunday's opener against Serbia.

Gareth Southgate's men have won just one of their last five matches -- a run that includes a 1-1 draw with North Macedonia and a shock 1-0 home defeat to Iceland in their final warm-up match before flying out to Germany.

England are still expected to cruise through a group that also includes Denmark and Slovenia.

The biggest question over England's credentials to be European champions is at the back as injury has robbed Southgate of his settled back four from previous tournaments.

Harry Maguire failed to make the squad due to a calf problem, while Luke Shaw is included as the only natural left-back despite not having played any minutes for club or country since February.

John Stones is therefore even more crucial as the one experienced centreback at international tournament level, but the Manchester City man has also been dogged by fitness problems this season.

Kieran Trippier, a right-back by trade, is set to start against Serbia at left-back.

Crystal Palace's Marc Guehi is the leading candidate to partner Stones for his first major tournament start.

England's defensive deficiencies have already been exploited by Brazil, Belgium and Iceland in 2024.

And Serbia have the firepower to hurt them with their powerful strike pairing of Aleksandar Mitrovic and Dusan Vlahovic.

Vlahovic, who has scored 18 goals in 38 outings for Seria A side Juventus this season, is drawing inspiration from Iceland's 1-0 victory over England in a friendly at Wembley last week.

"No one is invincible," Vlahovic said ahead of Sunday's match in Gelsenkirchen. "We looked at the match against Iceland and there are things that can be copied from them, because they beat them at Wembley in front of 80,000 people. Everything is possible."

Southgate's paucity of options at the back are compensated by the abundance of weapons in attack. The quartet of Phil Foden, Jude Bellingham, Bukayo Saka and Harry Kane is the envy of Europe.

However, Southgate is still to find the right balance to help them perform on the international stage to the same level as they have for their clubs this season -- the quartet scored a combined 114 goals in club football in the 2023/24 campaign.

Germany strike balance, promise resurgence

REUTERS, *Munich*

Germany's young attackers sent a clear message that they are ready to lead the team into a new era, with 21-year-olds Florian Wirtz and Jamal Musiala putting on a sparkling display in their country's opening 5-1 Euro 2024 win over Scotland on Friday.

The two wingers scored the opening goals in the Group A victory, while Kai Havertz, 25, converted a penalty and substitutes Niclas Fuellkrug and Emre Can scored in the second half against the reeling 10-man Scots.

But it was Wirtz and Musiala who drew the eyes of the expectant, yet anxious, home fans who had been chastened by Germany's underperformance in the past decade - with the team going out of successive World Cups (2018, 2022) in the group stage and losing in the last 16 at Euro 2020.

Wirtz underlined his status as one of European football's most exciting young talents with his goal, having already tested goalkeeper Angus Gunn in the opening minutes of the match.

His 10th-minute strike was a perfect example of his play this past year, with 11 goals and 12 assists for Bundesliga champions Bayer Leverkusen, ghosting in at the edge of the area to power the ball home, despite Gunn getting a hand on it.

It meant Wirtz became the youngest scorer for Germany at a Euros at 21 years and 42 days old, beating the previous record of Havertz who was 22 when he scored at Euro 2020.

Musiala, who grew up in England and played for their youth team but then opted to represent the nation of his birth, got a much cleaner strike when he smashed the ball high into the net nine minutes later having been teed up by Havertz in the box.

The forward, given the prestigious No. 10 shirt by Julian Nagelsmann, is only 67 days older than Wirtz and ran Scotland's defence ragged with his deft technique while travelling with the ball, which has earned him the nickname "Bambi".

While stalwarts like keeper Manuel Neuer, 38, and captain Ilkay Gundogan, 33, are still in the starting lineup, there is a sense of a passing of the torch, particularly in the attacking area of the pitch where Germany have struggled in recent years.

They are ably helped by the precision passing of 34-year-old Toni Kroos. The midfield maestro, who will retire from playing after the tournament, had a 99% passing accuracy rate during his 80 minutes - though tougher opponents will come.

He has won a glut of titles at club level with Bayern Munich and Real Madrid and was part of the Germany team that won the World Cup in 2014. But helping to win their first Euro title in almost 30 years at home would be a perfect climax to his career.

Nagelsmann, who made history on Friday as the youngest coach at a Euros aged 36 years and 327 days, eclipsing Slovenia's Srecko Katanec, could have found the perfect balance between youth and experience to take his country to glory.

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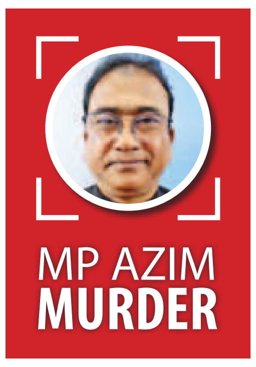
Political feud now comes into focus

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN



Not only gold smuggling, political rivalry may have also been a key reason behind the murder of Jhenaidah-4 lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar, investigators have said.

Two top leaders of Jhenaidah Awami League, Saidul Karim Mintu, the general secretary, and Kamal Ahmed Babu, the welfare affairs secretary, have been arrested. The former is currently on an eight-day remand while the latter is in jail after confessing to his role in the murder.

Referring to Babu's confessional statement made on Friday, investigators say that both AL leaders promised to pay the assailants.

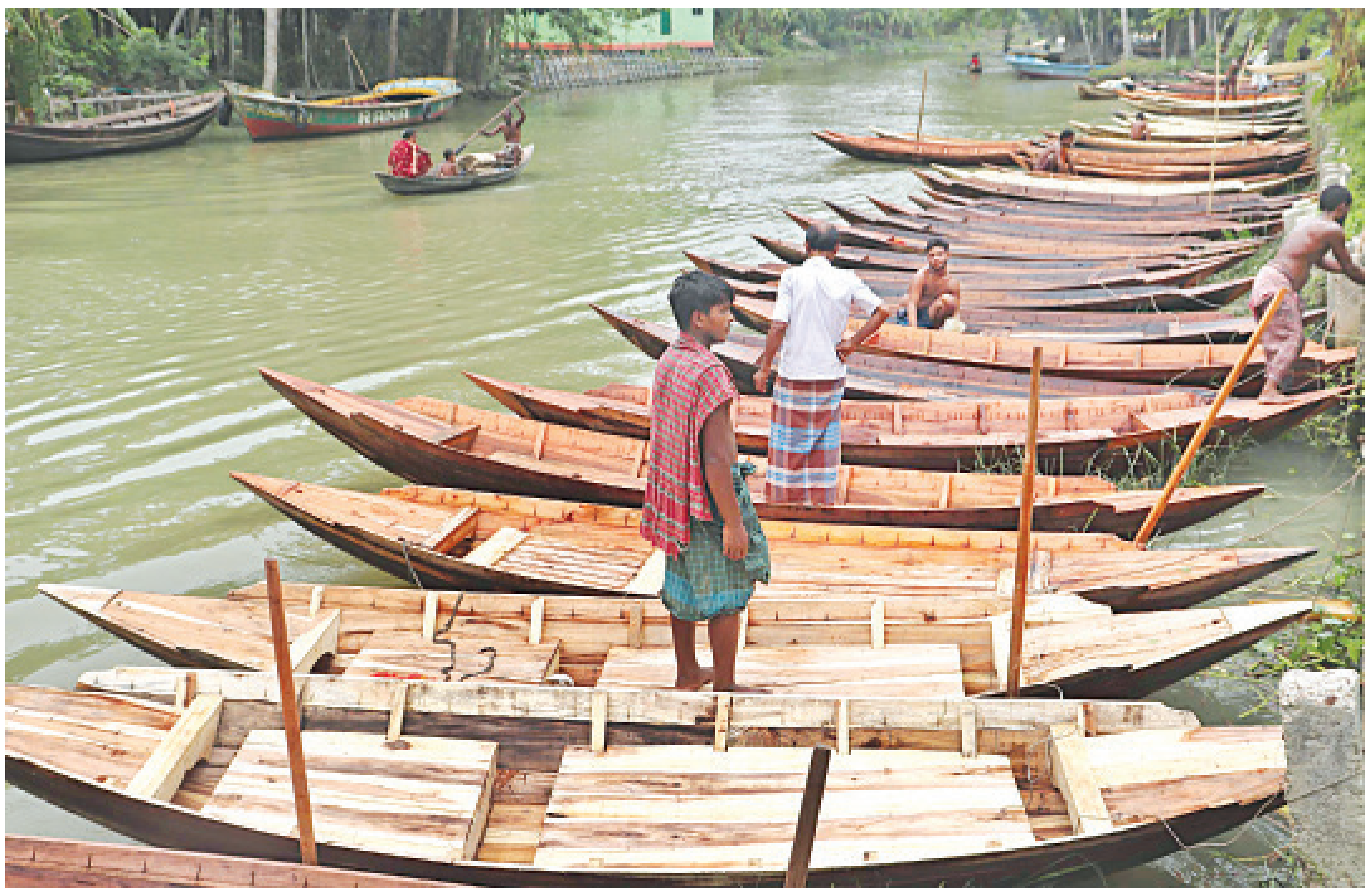
Mintu desired to replace Azim as the lawmaker, they added.

After India and Bangladesh police on May 22 said Azim had been killed, Babu and Mintu visited the slain lawmaker's house and offered condolences to the grieving family members, they said.

The announcement of his death came 10 days after Azim went to Kolkata and remained traceless for over a week.

Besides, Azim made an enemy of his partner

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



This year's "noukar haat", or boat market, in Pirojpur began around a month ago in Nesarabad upazila. As people of the marshlands of Barishal, Jhalakathi and Pirojpur largely rely on boats for commuting, this market attracts a huge crowd. Each boat here is sold at Tk 3,000-8,000 depending on the quality of the wood used. Over a century old, this market operates only on Fridays and begins just ahead of the monsoon, continuing for four-five months every year. The photo was taken on Friday. PHOTO: KM HABIBUR RAHMAN

Rain likely on Eid day

STAR REPORT

The Met office predicts rain in several divisions this week, including tomorrow, when Eid-ul-Azha will be celebrated across the country.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by gusty winds are likely to occur at most places in Rangpur, Mymensingh, and Sylhet divisions on Monday and Tuesday, said a weather bulletin from the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) yesterday.

Besides, parts of the Chattogram, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna, and Barishal divisions may also experience light to moderate rain or thundershowers this week, it added.

The rainfall activity may gradually increase till Thursday, the BMD bulletin added.

Meanwhile, a weather bulletin from the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) yesterday

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

No respite for Gazans even ahead of Eid

- Hezbollah launches rockets, drones at Israel days after commander's death
- Crew evacuated as ship hit by Yemen rebels drifts in Red Sea
- Gaza death toll rises to 37,296
- Erdogan says Biden faces a test of sincerity in handling the Gaza war
- US preparing to temporarily remove Gaza pier due to sea conditions

AGENCIES

Israel bombed and shelled Gaza yesterday, witnesses and first responders said, with fallout from the war bringing a resurgence of tensions to the Lebanon border and Yemen.

The bombardment came a day before Eid-ul Azha as most of the Muslim worldwide prepare to mark the occasion starting from today.

In the ninth month of the Israeli offensive on Gaza, the Civil Defence agency in Gaza City said they recovered 10 bodies from three separate homes after Israeli airstrikes pounded those.

In Rafah, in Gaza's far south near Egypt, witnesses reported clashes between militants and Israeli troops in the city's west, and artillery fire towards a refugee camp in the city centre. AFPTV images showed streets largely deserted.

The United Nations says about one million people have been displaced from Rafah since early May, when Israel began ground operations in the Palestinian enclave.

Israel's military has also been operating in central Gaza, where on Friday at a hospital in Deir al-Balah city a middle-aged man wept over the body of a younger man. Blood soaked through a white cloth around his neck.

Israel's offensive has killed at least 37,266 people in Gaza, mostly civilians, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory.

Fears of a broader Middle East conflict have surged again, with Lebanon-based Hezbollah fighters, who are

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

ST MARTIN'S ISLAND

Crisis eases after essential supplies arrive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

The food crisis on St Martin's Island has eased up after a tourist ship from Cox's Bazar delivered food and other essential supplies to the island early yesterday.

"The marginalised people are now being given the rice that was brought to us under the government's food assistance programme," said Mujibor Rahman, chairman of St Martin's Island.

"The prices of essential food items have now dropped as traders have brought a month's supply of food and necessities," he added.

However, locals are still unable to leave the island because communication with the mainland has been suspended for 10 days.

The chairman said if any medical emergencies arise, the administration will make special arrangements to establish communication with the mainland.

Over the last few days, several trawlers and speedboats had been fired upon from across the border when they reached the estuary of the Naf River.

St Martin's, which can only be accessed by boats through the Naf River

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Mangoes from 4 continents in one single orchard

Univ graduate Shibli's 'Matri Bagan' in Pabna offers 42 varieties

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, *Pabna*

Shibli in his orchard. PHOTO: STAR

American Red Palmer, Australian R2E2, Japanese Miyazaki, Brunai King Mango, Ivory Coast's Red Ivory, Thailand's "King of Chakapat" and many more – as many as 42 varieties of mangoes from four different continents can be found in one single orchard in Dhulti village of Pabna's Ishwardi upazila.

How? All thanks to young entrepreneur Mehedi Hasan Shibli.

A recent university graduate, Shibli has been collecting seedlings of fruits of foreign varieties, especially mangoes, since 2019. As a college student, he had an innate passion for expanding his orchard, which now is a profitable business.

"I first collected 19 varieties of mangoes and cultivated them at my orchard 'Matri Bagan' in 2019. Within a year, the plants began giving fruits, inspiring me to further develop my garden and nursery.

"Within five years, I was able to collect 42 different varieties of mangoes from different countries of four continents [Asia,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Tigers' chance to seal Super Eight spot

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will be confident of making it to the Super Eight stage of the Twenty20 World Cup for the first time since 2007 as they square off against winless Nepal in the last match of Group D in the early hours on Monday.

The match will get underway at 5:30 am (Bangladesh time) at the Arnos Vale Stadium in Kingstown, the capital of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Najmul Hossain Shanto-led side are in pole position to go through to the next round -- behind group winners South Africa -- with two wins out of three. They started the campaign with a crucial two-wicket win against former champions Sri Lanka before going down by four runs against the Proteas – a result they would be looking back with some regret for some time to come, especially given that the Tigers have never

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Bangladesh batter Towhid Hridoy (C) would be at more ease with his batting as he leads in runs scored for the Tigers in the T20 World Cup so far. The same, however, can't be said about skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto (L) and Tanzid Tamim -- Bangladesh's opening pair in the last two matches – both of whom will be focused on stepping up in their final Group D fixture against Nepal at the Arnos Vale Stadium in Kingstown on Monday. The Tigers trained at the venue yesterday ahead of the contest. PHOTO: BCB

Wild horse species returns to the Kazakh steppes

AFP, *Arqalyk*

After a few hesitant steps following a long flight from Prague, three Przewalski horses galloped off for the first time into the Kazakh steppe -- the native habitat of this endangered species.

The horses emerged after being locked in containers for 20 hours and are the first of 40 which are to be released into the wild in this vast Central Asian country over the next five years.

"We have been waiting for this moment for a very long time," Albert Salemgareyev from the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan told AFP.

"A lot of work has been carried out in recent months in order for the Przewalski horses to come to Kazakhstan."

The project run by the Prague and Berlin zoo is aimed at preserving this species of stockily built horse with large heads which share a common ancestry with modern domestic horses but are genetically different.

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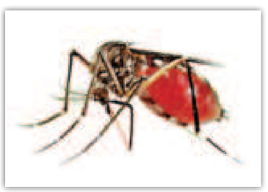


Eid vacation puts Dhaka at dengue risk

P3

Sal forest shrinking fast

P5

Taiwan 'will not bow' to China's pressure: Lai

P7

Spotlight on Messi, Endrick in Copa America

P11

1.6m marooned in Sylhet flood

Major rivers swell amid heavy downpour

DWOHA CHOWDHURY *and* **MINTU DESHWARA**

Eid has not brought joy to many in the Sylhet region as homes of more than 1.6 million people were flooded and nearly 30,000 had to move to shelter centres.

Many families with children and elderly left their inundated homes and took shelter on roads with nothing but plastic sheets to protect them from rain.

"Flood water entered my home the night before the Eid. As the water rose, I left the earthen hut with my grandchildren and waded through knee-deep water to this road," 60-year-old Mosammat Begum, who was by the Sylhet-Bholaganj road in Tukerbazar area, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Her three grandchildren, aged less than 10, were with her under a shed the family built with plastic sheets and sticks by the road.

"We can see our hut from here. There is chest-high water inside. It may collapse anytime. Our food and belongings are already damaged," said the woman whose son is a farm worker.

Many families were seen by the side of roads in Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar and Habiganj over the last two days.

On Sylhet-Tamabil and Sylhet-Bholaganj roads, people took shelter on empty trucks and lorries.

In vast areas and hundreds of inundated villages, dinghies are the only means to go from one place to another in monsoon.

Since many poor families do not have one, they are not able to move to government shelters.

Samad Ahmed, a farmer of Meghargao area in Sylhet's Companiganj, said he, his wife and children went to a primary school near their village the day before Eid, but it was already overcrowded.

"Then we went to a kitchen market where a shopkeeper let us stay in his shop," he said.

In Sylhet district, almost 75 percent of areas, including 23 wards of the city and 1,548 villages in 13 upazilas, have been

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Heavy rains and onrush of water from upstream have flooded most of the areas of Sylhet city. This intersection in the city's Taltala area has gone under water, affecting people and businesses alike. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon. PHOTO: **SHEIKH NASIR**

Air pollution caused most deaths in 2021

2.36 lakh people died in Bangladesh, says global study; children under 5 years particularly vulnerable

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Air pollution has become the leading cause of death in Bangladesh, outpacing fatalities from high blood pressure, poor diet and tobacco use, found a new study.

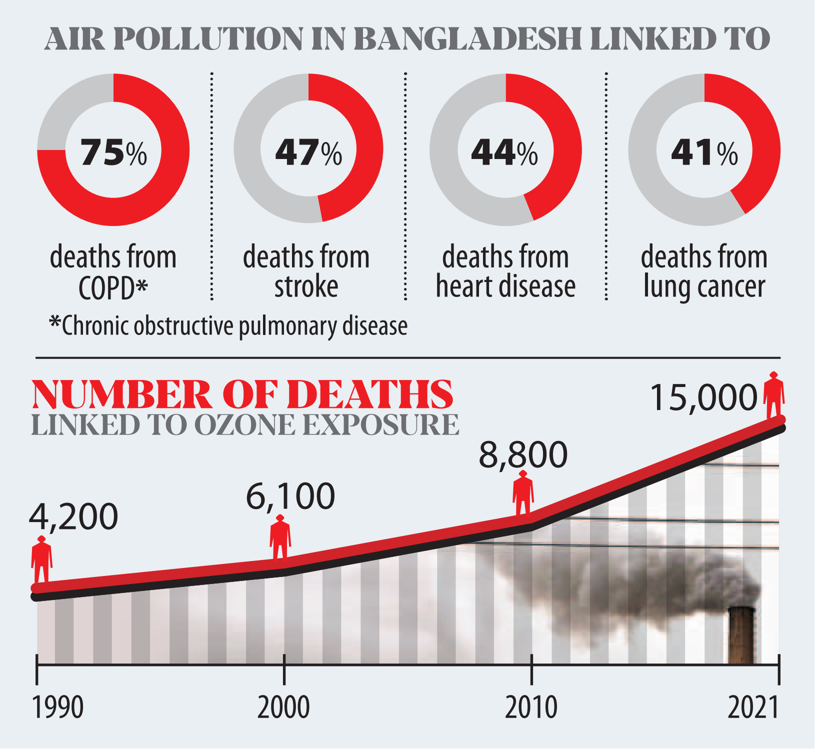
In 2021, at least 236,000 lives were lost in Bangladesh due to air pollution, according to the fifth edition of the State of Global Air report, which was released yesterday.

In contrast, there were 200,000 deaths linked to high blood pressure, 130,100 deaths linked to tobacco use and 130,400 deaths linked to poor diet.

Children in Bangladesh are particularly vulnerable to air pollution: the country ranked fifth globally in 2021 in the total number of deaths among children under the age of five due to air pollution.

As many as 19,000 children under five years old died due to air pollution, said the report, which was produced by the State of Global Air Initiative, a collaboration between the Health Effects Institute (HEI) and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



MP AZIM MURDER

AL leader Mintu assured plotter of blood money

Says DB report to court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Saidul Karim Mintu, general secretary of Jhenaidah Awami League, promised to pay a plotter of lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar murder, says a forwarding report submitted to a court on June 16.

Mintu's involvement was mentioned in the confessional statement of key accused Amanullah, according to the report by Assistant Commissioner (DB) Mahfuzur Rahman.

Azim

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Afnan Sumi sent Mintu to jail after receiving the report.

Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, Jhenaidah AL welfare affairs secretary, also told investigators about Mintu's role in the abduction and murder.

Amanullah confessed that Mintu and another key accused Aktaruzzaman talked on WhatsApp in early May about a financial

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Landslides kill 9 in Ukhiya camps

Seven of them Rohingyas; refugees being evacuated from hilly areas amid heavy rain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

At least nine people, including seven Rohingyas, were killed in landslides, while another Rohingya died after the wall of his house collapsed on him, due to torrential rain in Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya yesterday morning.

Confirming the number of deaths, Mohammad Samsuddouza, additional refugee relief and repatriation commissioner, told The Daily Star that while landslides occurred in several camps, the deaths took place in camps one, eight, nine, 10 and 14.

Around 1.2 million Rohingyas have been living in 33 camps of Ukhiya and Teknaf of Cox's Bazar, most of them since 2017 after fleeing persecution by the Myanmar military.

"So far, 10 bodies have been recovered," Samsuddouza said, adding that two of the dead are locals. He also said refugees living in the risky, hilly areas are being evacuated.

Atish Chakma, deputy assistant director of Cox's Bazar fire service, said the landslides began early Wednesday and continued till 7:00am.

"We first received a message around 3:00am about several landslides at camp-9. We recovered two bodies there and then conducted another rescue operation at camp-10, where four members of a family were killed around 6:00am. At least 10 people have died."

Hamid Ali, a Rohingya of camp-10, said the hill near his house suddenly collapsed around 6:00am, killing the four family members.

"If tarpaulin was used on the hills slopes, the deaths could have been avoided."

According to sources of the Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, one person, whose wall had collapsed, died in camp-1; two were killed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

SCORCHING HEAT

Hajj death toll surges past 900

AFP, *Riyadh*

Friends and family searched for missing hajj pilgrims yesterday as the death toll at the annual rituals, which were carried out in scorching heat, surged past 900.

Relatives scoured hospitals and pleaded online for news, fearing the worst after temperatures hit 51.8 degrees Celsius (125 Fahrenheit) in Makkah, Islam's holiest city, on Monday.

About 1.8 million people from all over the world, many old and infirm, took part in the days-long, mostly outdoor pilgrimage, held this year during the Saudi summer.

An Arab diplomat told AFP that deaths among Egyptians alone had jumped to "at least 600", from more than 300 a day earlier, mostly from the unforgiving heat.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Workers unloading hilsa from a boat at the wholesale fish market in Barishal city's Port Road area yesterday morning. The fish, caught from the Meghna river, was sold for Tk 20,000 to Tk 40,000 per maund, depending on size and quality. PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

PM'S INDIA VISIT

Defence, Teesta project, port likely to be on agenda

Both sides finalising several deals, MoUs, say diplomatic sources

PORIMOL PALMA *and* **PALLAB BHATTACHARYA**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's upcoming visit to New Delhi on June 21-22 will focus on some key issues in bilateral relations that have regional geopolitical significance.

Issues such as water, port and defence will be discussed, The Daily Star has learnt from diplomatic sources in Dhaka and New Delhi.

Fresh loans from India under a new framework will also be high on the agenda of the bilateral talks as Bangladesh grapples with a crunch in foreign currency reserves, they said.

Besides, the Myanmar crisis, especially the intense

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

NOTICE

Star Business has not been published today since economic activities are yet to gain momentum following Eid-ul-Azha holidays. It will come out tomorrow.

Homes in Khagail area of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila submerged as the region grapples with floods caused by continuous rains and the swelling of rivers. *Right top:* Two families yesterday set up a tent on a highway for shelter in Companiganj upazila's Borni area, after their homes went under water. *Right bottom:* Flood victims waiting in line for relief, distributed by the Red Crescent, at the Companiganj Thana Sadar High School shelter. PHOTOS: SHEIKH NASIR

1.6m marooned

FROM PAGE 1

flooded, directly affecting over 8.25 lakh people, said Deputy Commissioner Sheikh Russel Hasan.

While poor people are the most vulnerable, the comparatively well-off farmers also lost their stored grain to the flood.

In Sunamganj, homes of 5.6 lakh people have been flooded as the Surma flowed 145cm above the danger mark in Chhatak, 43cm in Sunamganj town and 21cm in Derai.

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Rashed Iqubal Chowdhury said new areas were flooded yesterday.

Officials in Moulvibazar said nearly half of the district was flooded, affecting 1.93 lakh people.

Urme Binte Salam, deputy commissioner of Moulvibazar, said, "As more rainfall is in the forecast, we are preparing for an even more devastating flood."

In Habiganj, homes of thousands of people have been flooded and more villages are at risk as rivers have been swelling since Wednesday night.

The floods are caused as the Surma, Kushiyara, Manu, Dhalai, Kalni, and Gowain rivers have swelled, said Bangladesh Water Development Board officials.

In Sylhet, the Surma was flowing 94cm above the danger level at Kanaighat and 36cm in Sylhet city; the Kushiyara was 56cm above in Zakiganj, and 99cm in Fenchuganj; and the Gowain was flowing 5cm above in Gowainghat.

In Moulvibazar, the Juri river was flowing 199cm above the danger level in Juri; the Dhalai was 23cm above in the town; and the Kushiyara 20cm in Sherpur.

In Habiganj, the Khowai River in Chunarughat's Balla was flowing 131cm over of the danger level with 75cm in Habiganj's town and 21cm in Sayestaganj. The Kushiyara was also flowing 21cm above the danger level in Baniachang's Markuli with Kalni-Kushiyara 31cm in Ajmiriganj.

Officials say the rivers are swelling due to torrential rains in Meghalaya, which is upstream from Sylhet. The Indian Met office yesterday morning said it rained 111.4mm in Meghalaya's Mawsynram and 109.8mm in Cherrapunji in just 24 hours.

Besides, Sunamganj town saw 100mm rainfall, Habiganj 115mm, Sylhet city 94mm, and Moulvibazar's Sherpur 75mm.

The Met office in Bangladesh forecasts heavy and very heavy rains in Sylhet division, starting from today.

Officials said many areas were at risk of landslides.

US forces destroy eight Houthi drones in Yemen

AFP, *Washington*

American forces destroyed eight drones belonging to the Houthi rebels in Yemen over the past 24 hours, the US military said later on Tuesday.

The Houthis have been targeting vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since November 2023 in attacks they say are in solidarity with Palestinians during the ongoing Israel offensive in the Gaza Strip.

The United States and Britain have carried out strikes in Yemen aimed at degrading the Iran-backed rebels' ability to carry out the attacks, while there is also an international military effort to intercept drones and missiles fired at ships.

Defence, Teesta project, port likely to be on agenda

FROM PAGE 1

fighting in Rakhine State, will feature prominently during the delegation-level meeting between Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.

The Bangladesh premier is scheduled to reach New Delhi in the afternoon tomorrow. On June 22, she will hold the delegation-level meeting centring on a new phase in the bilateral relationship, a diplomat told The Daily Star yesterday.

The two countries are finalising several agreements and memorandums of understanding that may be signed during Hasina's tour of India.

TEESTA PROJECT

The issue of funding for the "Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project" will feature prominently in the talks, according to diplomatic sources in Dhaka and New Delhi.

The agreement was finalised in 2011, but could not be inked due to opposition from West Bengal.

The Economic Relations Division sought a $983.27 million loan from China to implement the Teesta project, which includes river dredging, setting up reservoirs and building townships along the river.

On October 13, 2022, then-Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming said his country was serious about implementing the project, but also had a sense of reluctance due to sensitive issues surrounding it.

During a visit to Dhaka on May 9, Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra told Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud that India was interested in financing the Teesta project.

On June 13, Hasina told the parliament that the government was considering a proposal for a detailed feasibility study for the Teesta project as China's evaluation pointed out that there was a lack of detailed proposals on land development and water navigation.

"Our government needs to know whether India would sign the Teesta water sharing agreement because the river restoration and management project would depend on this," said Faiz Ahmad, a former ambassador of Bangladesh to China.

India and China also can fund different components of the project, said Ahmad, also a former chair of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies.

A diplomat in New Delhi said the two prime ministers will also discuss the renewal of the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty that was signed in 1996. The treaty is set to expire in 2026.

MONGLA PORT

India is keen to manage the Mongla river port, which is crucial for better connectivity between Kolkata and India's north-eastern states, said a diplomatic source in New Delhi.

According to a report in India's The Economic Times, India has shown interest in managing Mongla port as it aligns with the country's broader strategy to counter China's expanding influence in the region.

It should not be an issue if Bangladesh gives the port handling work to India, Ahmad said.

"Japan is already working on Matarbari deep sea port, and China can manage the Payra Port in Patuakhali. But we need to be careful so that we don't upset anyone by satisfying another," he added.

India is also keen to develop an alternative network of railway routes through Bangladesh to connect its northeast with the rest of the country. This would reduce India's reliance on the existing route through Siliguri, according to a report by The Times of India.

"Detailed negotiation on such projects is needed to know whether Indian trains will run on Bangladesh's territory and whether Bangladesh's trains can use India's territories," Ahmad said.

According to sources, India may in principle approve the supply of electricity from Bhutan to Bangladesh using its power grid.

India is also likely to push for defence equipment sales to Bangladesh under the $500 million line of credit.

Bangladesh will seek smooth supply of essentials like wheat, sugar and onions from India.

The two leaders may also announce the launch of formal negotiations for a comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA), said Bangladesh foreign ministry sources.

The issue of border killings will also be on the agenda.

Air pollution caused most deaths in 2021

FROM PAGE 1

the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation's Global Burden of Disease project in partnership with Unicef.

India tops the list with 169,000 deaths in children under 5, followed by Nigeria (114,000), Pakistan (68,000) and Ethiopia (31,000).

"In the last 20 years, we have talked a lot about air pollution but when it comes to action, we rarely see any action -- even the interventions that we saw are very insignificant," said Abdus Salam, one of the reviewers of the study.

The study focuses on the danger of both indoor and outdoor pollution and the vulnerability of children due to indoor air pollution in Bangladesh, said Salam, a professor of chemistry at Dhaka University.

As much as 36 percent of preterm births in Bangladesh in 2021 were linked to exposure to air pollution.

Air pollution impacts children's health in many ways -- from pregnancy through early childhood -- through impacts on newborns including preterm birth, as well as through lower respiratory infections and asthma in children,said Pallavi Pant, head of global health at HEI.

The study found South Asia to be the most polluted region in the world in terms of air: about 18 percent of the total deaths in the region are linked to air pollution.

Bangladesh also featured in the top 20 countries with the highest outdoor PM2.5 exposures.

More than 92 percent of the country's population live in areas that exceed the least stringent interim target for PM2.5 (35 μg/m3) from the World Health Organisation, the report said.

Exposure to household air pollution caused by the use of solid fuels for cooking is also linked to the development of cataracts, a debilitating disease that affects many across South Asia, Pant told The Daily Star.

Across South Asia, residential solid fuel use continues to be an important contributor to outdoor PM2.5, together with energy, industry, agriculture and transportation sectors.

"It is promising to see progress including reductions in PM2.5 levels and exposure to household air pollution over the last few years. However, exposures to various pollutants remain high in much of South Asia, and the data brings into focus the need for sustained and science-based local and regional action to improve air quality," said Pant, who oversaw the report's release.

While there is a silver lining with the stabilisation and even reduction of annual average PM2.5 levels of air pollutants at the national level, another threat looms large: ozone pollution, according to the report.

For the first time, this year's report includes exposure levels and related health effects of nitrogen dioxide (NO2), including the impact of NO2 exposures on the development of childhood asthma.

Since 2000, deaths linked to exposure to ozone have more than doubled, with 15,000 deaths in 2021 compared with 6,200 deaths in 2000.

Traffic exhaust is a major source of NO2, which means densely populated urban areas, particularly in high-income countries, often see the highest levels of NO2 exposure and health impacts.

4 arrested

FROM PAGE 12

was undergoing treatment at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Among the named accused are Sayed Sarzeel Ahmed Tipu, member of Bogura Zilla Parishad and also the secretary of ward-1 Awami League and Md Mehedi Hasan Himu, former publicity affairs secretary of Swechhasebak Dal and also a councillor of Bogura municipality's ward-1.

Sarzeel is the younger brother of arrestee Kabir Ahmed Mithu.

Kabir was arrested by Rab-12 while the three others were picked up by police, said Bogura Sadar Police Station Inspector Shahinuzzaman, also the investigation officer of the case.

AL leader Mintu assured plotter of blood money

FROM PAGE 1

transaction regarding the murder, says the report.

Babu also confessed that he and Amanullah met in person to discuss the same matter and one of them provided the other with photos of the crime scene.

Babu was supposed to collect a part of the assailants' payment from Mintu and pay Amanullah, it adds.

Arrested on June 12, Mintu was later placed on an eight-day remand.

Lawmaker Azim went to Kolkata on May 12. Nine days later, India and Bangladesh police said he was murdered at a Kolkata flat.

Of the accused, Amanullah, Tanvir Bhuiyan, Celesty Rahman and Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu made confessional statements.

West Bengal CID arrested two suspects named Siam Hossain and Jihad Howlader.

Landslides kill 9 in Ukhiya

FROM PAGE 1

in a landslide at camp- 8; two in camp-9; four members of family in camp-10; and one in camp-14.

The four of a family who died in camp-10 were identified as Abu Meher, 25, Shahana, 22, Abul Kalam, 50 and Selima Khatun, 45. The two in camp-9 were Mohammad Hossain, 50, and Anwara Begum, 18.

The RRRC could not confirm the names of the other victims.

Mohammad Samsuddouza said the locals who died in landslides are of camps eight and 14.

Locals said a Bangladeshi child, Abdul Karim, 12, was killed in the landslide at camp-8. They said he was a sixth grader at Thayangkhali High School in Ukhiya.

Cox's Bazar has been witnessing heavy rainfall since yesterday.

Abdul Hannan, Met officer at Cox's Bazar, said his office recorded 63mm rainfall in 24 hours till 12:00pm yesterday.

The wreckage left behind by a landslide in Ukhiya camp of Cox's Bazar yesterday morning. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Hajj death toll surges past 900

FROM PAGE 1

That figure brought the total reported dead so far to 922, according to an AFP tally of figures released by various countries.

Mabrouka bint Salem Shushana of Tunisia, in her early 70s, has been missing since the climax of the pilgrimage on Saturday at Mount Arafat, her husband Mohammed told AFP yesterday.

Because she was unregistered and did not have an official hajj permit, she was unable to access air-conditioned facilities that allow pilgrims to cool down, he said.

"She's an old lady. She was tired. She was feeling so hot, and she had no place to sleep," he said. "I looked for her in all the hospitals. Until now I don't have a clue."

Facebook and other social media networks have been flooded with pictures of the missing and requests for information.

Those searching for news include family and friends of Ghada Mahmoud Ahmed Dawood, an Egyptian pilgrim unaccounted for since Saturday.

"I received a call from her daughter in Egypt begging me to put any post on Facebook that can help track her or find her," said one family friend based in Saudi Arabia.

In addition to Egypt, fatalities have also been confirmed by Jordan, Indonesia, Iran, Senegal, Tunisia and Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region, though in many cases authorities have not specified the cause.

A second Arab diplomat told AFP yesterday that Jordanian officials were looking for 20 missing pilgrims, though 80 others who were initially reported missing were located in hospitals.

An Asian diplomat told AFP there were "around 68 dead" from India and that others were missing.

"Some (died) because of natural causes and we had many old-age pilgrims. And some are due to the weather conditions, that's what we assume," he said.

Russia, N Korea sign

FROM PAGE 12

After talks, Putin drove Kim around in a luxury Russian limousine. They then switched places and Kim drove Putin. Later, they watched a concert together.

Putin accused the United States, South Korea and Japan of raising tensions on the Korean peninsula and said North Korea had a right to strengthen its own defences.

Kim said the pact would expand cooperation in politics, economy and defence, calling it "strictly peace-loving and defensive" in nature.

"Our two countries' relations have been elevated to the new higher level of an alliance," Kim said.

At the start of their summit, Kim expressed "unconditional support" for "all of Russia's policies", including "a full support and firm alliance" for Putin's war with Ukraine.

Putin said Moscow was fighting the hegemonic, imperialist policy of the United States and its allies, Russian media reported.

"We highly appreciate your consistent and unwavering support for Russian policy, including in the Ukrainian direction," Putin said.

The countries' partnership was an "engine for accelerating the building of a new multi-polar world", North Korea's state news agency KCNA said.

Russia has used its warming ties with North Korea to needle Washington, while heavily sanctioned North Korea has won political backing and promises of economic support and trade from Moscow.

The United States and its allies say they fear Russia could provide aid for North Korea's missile and nuclear programmes, which are banned by UN Security Council resolutions, and have accused Pyongyang of providing ballistic missiles and artillery shells that Russia has used in its war in Ukraine.

On the third day of Eid, thousands thronged Dhaka's parks, historic places and other recreation centres. The National Zoo in Mirpur was abuzz with children's laughter and excitement. The capital yesterday was relatively empty as people have just started to return from their hometowns after spending time with family members. Meanwhile, a welcoming rain in the afternoon drenched the city.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS, ANISUR RAHMAN**

Most of capital cleaned up promptly

Dhanmodi

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The combined efforts of Dhaka residents and the two city corporations saw most part of the capital cleaned up within three days of Eid-ul-Azha.

Residents were also encouraged to dispose of animal wastes properly and keep surroundings clean with bleaching powder, and they were seen following the instructions in many areas.

Mohammadpur

"After sacrificing our cattle, we cleaned up the slaughtering area and left the wastes bagged by the roadside, which was then collected by conservancy workers quickly," said Mujahidul Islam, a resident of Shyamoli area.

Masum Ali of Narinda area echoed him.

Earlier, the two Dhaka mayors announced that they would ensure the city to be completely cleaned soon after the Eid.

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh promised to clean DSCC areas within 24 hours and Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam announced to do so within six hours.

According to the city corporations' public relations departments, DSCC completed cleaning up 23,958 tonnes of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Eid vacation puts Dhaka at dengue risk

Many under-construction buildings, offices, educational institutes turn into breeding sources of Aedes mosquitoes

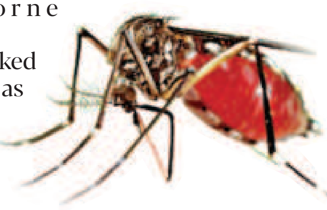
HELEMUL ALAM

Water accumulating on the roof of an under-construction building on Indira Road.

PHOTO: **STAR**

While Dhaka has worn a deserted look, giving some respite to the dwellers from traffic jams and usual hassles, the six-day holiday for Eid-ul-Azha has increased the risk of spreading dengue in the city.

During this time, many under-construction buildings, empty houses, offices, and educational institutes in the capital have turned into breeding sources of Aedes mosquitoes, causing the mosquito-borne disease to spread.



Experts asked city dwellers as well as city corporations to take effective measures, as intermittent rains during this time may exaggerate the situation.

Many under-construction buildings became breeding grounds because the owners or developers preserved water on the newly constructed roof to strengthen it.

A recent pre-monsoon survey by Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), conducted from April 17 to April 26, found a high density of Aedes mosquito larvae in 29 wards of Dhaka South City Corporation and 12 wards of Dhaka North City Corporation.

Among the Aedes larvae-positive houses, 42.33 percent are high-rise buildings, 21.6 percent are individual houses, 21.6 percent are under-construction buildings, 12.74 percent are semi-concrete houses, and 1.73 percent are open spaces.

Among Aedes breeding sources, 18 percent were found in plastic drums, 15 percent in floors with retained water, and 14 percent in plastic buckets.

Meanwhile, according to DGHS data, at least 40 people died of dengue, while 3,218 were hospitalised across the country till yesterday morning.

"The chances of increasing new breeding sources are heavy as the holidays span around a week, which is a suitable time to create a new generation of Aedes mosquitoes," said Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

ROAD ACCIDENTS

Bikes, 3-wheelers major causes

Says Quader

UNB, *Dhaka*

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said motorcycles and easy bikes are causing the highest number of road accidents across the country.

Quader said this during the exchange of Eid greetings at his ministry's conference room in the Secretariat.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Army working for people's welfare

Says outgoing army chief at farewell reception

UNB, *Savar*

Despite challenges, every member in Bangladesh Army is working for the welfare of the country, outgoing Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed said yesterday.

He said this while attending his farewell reception at Savar Cantonment in the afternoon.

He further said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Full-scale rawhide trade yet to start

Tanners point at rain, delay in animal sacrifice

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA, SUKANTA HALDER *and* **JAGARAN CHAKMA**

Full-scale rawhide procurement across the country has yet to begin due to rainfall and subsequent delays in animal sacrifices.

Tanners and merchants expect the salt-applied rawhide sales to gain momentum on Saturday, as seasonal traders are preparing them to be sold to the major haats after procuring most rawhide without salt from the field level.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Nearly 85 lakh pieces of cowhides are expected to be sold in 42 designated major haats across the country this year, said Aftab Khan, president of Bangladesh Hide and Skin Merchants' Association.

Khan also said nearly 20 percent of animals were sacrificed after two days of Eid due to inclement weather and rainfall, delaying the arrival of rawhide from the countryside.

In recent years, most of the rawhides have been bought either directly by tanners or by their appointed agents across the country. As a result, the traditional rawhide trading system through merchants has broken down.

"We have already bought eight lakh pieces of rawhide from Dhaka and its adjacent areas," said Shaheen Ahmed, president of Bangladesh Tanners Association (BTA).

Shaheen also said rawhides will be processed in rationing at the Savar Tannery Industrial Estate (STIE) in Hemayetpur, where the Central Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) is situated.

The estate's capacity is not high enough to accommodate and process all the rawhide at a time, he added.

Annual production capacity of 140 running tanneries at STIE is 900 million cubic feet, while around 400 million cubic feet are produced there per year, he said.

However, during Eid ul Azha, over 200 million

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

Current conflict in Myanmar may stall the process

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

Rohingyas at a camp in Teknaf.

PHOTO: **STAR**

While the World Refugee Day is being observed today across the globe, Rohingyas living in Cox's Bazar are still passing days amid uncertainty regarding their repatriation to Myanmar.

Around 1 million Rohingyas, most of whom had fled to Bangladesh facing persecution by Myanmar junta forces in 2017, have been living as refugees at camps in Cox's Bazar for the last seven years.

The ongoing armed conflict in Myanmar may stall the process of their repatriation, feared Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar.

Fierce clashes between Myanmar junta forces and rebel Arakan Army have been going on in Rakhine state along the Bangladesh border since February this year.

The Arakan Army has captured a vast part of the state including the areas once populated by Rohingyas before they faced persecution and displacement in 2017.

Many Rohingyas at Cox's Bazar camps are worried about a safe and dignified return to their homeland.

Mohammad Hossain, who lives in Camp-1, is one of them.

"Amid the ongoing clashes in Myanmar, I am not sure how our repatriation process might progress, while many of our brothers and sisters are in great danger there," he said.

Mohammad Zubair, chairman of Arakan Rohingya Society of Peace and Human Rights, said they want to be repatriated under the agreement with the junta government, not with the Arakan Army.

However, without a treaty with the Junta government, the agreement would not be valid, he also said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Full-scale rawhide

FROM PAGE 3

cubic feet of rawhide are collected just within a week, which is half the entire year's production, he said, adding, "So, the rawhide will be tanned in three months and merchants and tanners will preserve them by applying salt during this period."

However, local tanners are compelled to sell the tanned hide mainly to Chinese traders at nearly 60 percent lower than international price level because of poor compliance at STIE.

The BTA chief also said they are selling the tanned hides at 70 cents per square foot, down from US $1.50 per square foot a few years ago, as the sector has been affected following the pandemic and Russia-Ukraine war.

The association has set a target to procure 80 lakh pieces of rawhide this year, 10 lakh lower than the previous one, said Shaheen at a press conference in the capital yesterday.

Robiul Alam, president of Dhaka District Hide Merchants Association, said around 25 percent of rawhide will get damaged this year due to not preserving them on time.

Currently, the CETP can treat 25,000 to 30,000 cubic metres of liquid waste per day. But during Eid-ul-Azha, the generation of waste climbs to 40,000 cubic metres as the number of rawhides shoots up.

Md Golam Shahnewaz, managing director of Dhaka Tannery Industrial Estate Waste Treatment Plant Company Limited, which runs the CETP, said various upgrades have been done to increase the CETP's capacity, and two ponds have been excavated for solid waste removal.

This will help curb the pollution caused by the rawhide processing, he added.

Most of capital

FROM PAGE 3

wastes within around 10 hours and DNCC cleaned up 20,105 tonnes of wastes in around six hours.

Visiting different areas in the capital on the second day of Eid, this correspondent found Agargaon, Farmgate, Kawran Bazar, Bangla Motor, Shahbagh, Segun Bagicha, Paltan, Gulistan, Wari, Tikatuli, Doyagonj and Gandaria areas clean.

The residents of those areas said they heightened their sense of responsibility towards managing sacrificial wastes this year compared to previous occasions.

"The city corporation provided poly-bags to residents and sanitation workers for waste collection. Individuals who did not receive poly-bags from the city corporations later purchased bags themselves and collected the wastes," said Rezaul Hasan, a resident of Agargaon Taltola area.

Some residents even took it upon themselves to clean the bloodstains left from animal sacrifices.

"Through proper planning, we managed to complete the task successfully on the first day, and even after sacrifices continued on the second day of Eid," said DSCC Mayor Taposh.

DNCC Mayor Atiqul expressed gratitude to the residents for their cooperation in cleaning up the wastes within the scheduled deadline.

However, animal wastes were still seen emanating bad odour in a few areas of the capital including Dinanath Sen Road in Gandaria, Dayanath intersection, Bangshal Road, and Sutrapur's Kagajitola area, where cattle markets were set up.

In this regard, Taposh said, "People sacrificed the animals at different times as per their conveniences. Therefore, after we cleaned up in different areas, many people disposed of wastes from animals slaughtered later. These are isolated incidents. The remaining wastes will be cleaned too."

Bikes, 3-wheelers

FROM PAGE 3

"It's very unfortunate that lately, motorcycle accidents have become more frequent. Looking at the accident data, motorcycles account for the highest number of accidents, followed by easy bikes. Reckless driving also plays a significant role. We can't ignore this. I urge the secretary (concerned) to expedite the formulation of a policy," he said.

The minister further mentioned that the lack of regulation for millions of three-wheelers and motorcycles is disrupting order on the roads, highlighting the urgent need for a policy.

Quader also noted that while the Eid journeys on roads have been relatively smooth, the return trips remain a concern.

"We must prioritise discipline to reduce road accidents," Quader said.

A child sits on one side of a dried tree branch while another pulls it -- that's pretty much all these children needed to have a joy ride. The photo was taken in Barishal Sadar upazila recently.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

ASI among 4 bullet-hit in Narsingdi clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narsingdi*

Four people including a policeman suffered bullet wounds in a clash in Narsingdi Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The incident took place around 11:30am at Najarpur, said Md Tanvir Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

The injured are Joy Banik, assistant sub-inspector, Saiful Islam, Dawod Mona, and Faruk.

Mahmudul Kabir Bashar, resident medical officer at Narsingdi Sadar Hospital, said the four injured were released after treatment.

According to police and locals, there has been a longstanding dispute between two locals -- Ismail Hossain, vice-president of Najarpur union Awami League unit, and Shah Jahan Mona, former organising secretary of the same unit -- over establishing supremacy in Alipura area under Najarpur union.

Due to the dispute, their supporters locked into a clash yesterday.

Police rushed to the spot to control the situation but the four including ASI Banik suffered bullet wounds, the OC said. Additional law enforcers have been deployed in the area, he added.

"No one filed any complaint yet. We are investigating the incident and will take further steps after the probe," he said.

Some were given chance to loot: Rizvi

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday alleged that some individuals have been given the opportunity to loot in the name of "so-called" development.

"Some people have grabbed the land and property of ordinary poor people," he alleged.

The BNP leader said this while speaking at a demonstration in front of the BNP's Nayapaltan central office, demanding unconditional release of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia. He said the prime minister used to say not to spare anyone involved in corruption, but her government allowed former IGP Benazir Ahmed to leave the country.

"We don't know how much money Benazir's family has amassed here and abroad," he added.

He also said the prices of utility services and all commodities have risen due to the anti-people policies of the government.

He mentioned that people who went to their village homes to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha faced serious ordeals due to poor electricity supply.

Current conflict

FROM PAGE 3

"We want to return home with dignity and recognition of our ethnicity," Zubair said.

Visiting the camps arranged by the UNHCR recently, this correspondent witnessed the plight of Rohingyas living there in densely packed makeshift shelters made using tarpaulin and bamboo.

The heat wave was unbearable living under the tarpaulin, even though the camp area is now much greener compared to previously, said Mohammad Solim of Camp-4.

Over 2,500 hectares of forest land in Ukhiya and Teknaf had been cleared for building the Rohingya camps and to provide firewood for cooking.

To stop the deforestation, cylindered gas was later distributed among around 200,000 Rohingya families in the camps.

Simultaneously, under a reforestation project, greenery returned to around 700 hectares of land in the camps, according to UNHCR.

According to Unicef data, around 3 lakh Rohingya children now have access to education up to grade 10 taught in the Myanmar curriculum.

Per capita ration for Rohingyas was cut into phases from $12 to $8 per person per month 2023, before it rose to $10 in 2024.

Around 5,000 Rohingya youths have been provided life-skill trainings including sewing, plumbing, electrical, masonry, etc.

"We are happy that the Bangladesh government has given us safe shelters. However, we don't want to be burden to Bangladesh. We want dignified repatriation to Myanmar. We feel our lives are stuck in these dense camps," said Maulana Abdul Hamid, a Rohingya from Camp-1 East.

Idrakpur Fort

FROM PAGE 5

the treasury. However, I cannot say how many idols there are in total."

Recently, one Vishnu idol was found on April 13 and two more on May 17 and May 20 in Munshiganj. The discovered idols were deposited in the Munshiganj District Treasury. According to the news published in various newspapers, at least 12 idols were recovered from different places of Sadar and Tongibari upazilas of Munshiganj in 11 years from 2013 to 2024.

Afroza Khan Mita, regional director of the Department of Archaeology, said, "The Department of Archeology has written letters to the district administrators of all districts to know how many statues, inscriptions or other antiquities are there in the district treasury."

"After receiving information from them, we will arrange for the preservation of the antiquities through the court. Arrangements will be made to exhibit one or two idols at Idrakpur Fort Museum in Munshiganj," she added.

Eid festivities cut

FROM PAGE 5

"This season of litchi has posed significant challenges due to adverse weather conditions and early harvesting. However, higher market prices have provided some relief to farmers," said Nuruzzaman.

For example, Mosaddek Hossain from Dinajpur Sadar upazila is selling Madrazi and Bombay litchis at Tk 350 to Tk 400 per 100 pieces, Bedana at Tk 8,000 to Tk 10,000 per 1,000 pieces, and China-3 litchi at Tk 12,000 per 1,000 pieces at the Kalitola market.

However, wholesale buyers from Dhaka, Cumilla, Bhairav, Ashuganj, Barishal, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Chattogram have expressed dissatisfaction with the high prices.

Poet Asim Saha

FROM PAGE 5

shock and sorrow at his demise.

Born on February 20 in 1949 at his maternal uncle's house in Netrakona district, Saha completed his secondary education in 1965 and his higher secondary at Madaripur Government Nazimuddin College in 1967.

He pursued higher studies at Dhaka University, where he obtained a postgraduate degree in Bangla literature in 1973.

His poetry, known for its depth and sensitivity, had earned numerous accolades. He was honoured with 12 awards for his contributions to Bangla literature.

He was honoured with the Bangla Academy Literary Award in 2012.

Meanwhile, the government recognised his contributions to the Bangla language and literature by awarding him the Ekushey Padak, the country's second-highest civilian award in 2019.

Asim Saha has written over 20 poetry books and novels.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 20

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-52	8-17
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Sal forest shrinking

FROM PAGE 5

Officer in Tangail revealed that around 21,000 acres of encroached forest land had been recovered through drives till December last year. The drives are continuing, according to officials.

At present, social afforestation is being done on around 30,000 acres of the forest land.

Meanwhile, several organisations, including Bangladesh Forest Industry Development Corporation, Bangladesh Forest Research Institute, Bangladesh Army, and Bangladesh Air Force, have been granted permission to use a total of 15,342 acres of the forest land for various purposes in Madhupur, Ghatail, and Sakhipur upazilas.

Now, the natural forest remains on less than 40,000 acres. Environmentalists, however, claim the amount of remaining natural forest is even less than 20,000 acres.

Prof Asm Saifullah, a teacher of environment science and resource management department at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, said the Sal forest sustained significant damage over the years and prompt measures are necessary to restore it.

Contacted, Sajjadur Rahman, DFO in Tangail, said they are doing their best to protect the forest despite having a limited workforce and logistics.

"Cases were filed to reclaim around 14,000 acres of grabbed forest lands and the process to recover the rest is on. We need support from all concerned to this end," he added.

Eid vacation puts

FROM PAGE 3

He said if there were monitoring cells to look after this, then the risk would be less. "But unfortunately, there is no such monitoring," he added.

Everyone who will return after vacation needs to carefully destroy all breeding sources and containers carrying stagnant water, Saifur also said, suggesting they use mosquito repellent to kill adult mosquitoes after getting into the house.

Similarly, educational institutions and offices must also take necessary initiatives to kill adult mosquitoes before starting activities, he said.

The city corporations can play a vital role here and spray mosquito repellent at educational institutes before classes start following a long vacation, Saifur said.

"Creating more awareness in this regard is very necessary, as dengue is a sustainable problem in Bangladesh," he added.

Saifur warned that the number of infections may increase after the vacation, and said city corporations will have to intensify their mosquito control activities.

Entomologist Kabiru Bashar said Aedes mosquitoes will breed at construction sites and under-construction buildings as construction activities are stopped for some time, so the buildings adjoining those sites and buildings are at very high risk and will have to be careful.

Residents of under-construction sites or buildings will have to take the initiative to destroy the breeding sources, he said, adding that kerosene or bleaching powder should be applied to stagnant water to kill Aedes larvae.

Army working

FROM PAGE 3

has modernised the Bangladesh Army.

Earlier, the army chief went to the Savar Cantonment and held a views-exchange meeting with the army personnel and inaugurated a mosque in the DOHS area and planted trees.

He was later given a farewell reception by the 9th Infantry Division.

সিলেট গ্যাস ফিল্ডস লিমিটেড
(পেট্রোবাংলার একটি কোম্পানী)
SGFL
Sylhet Gas Fields Limited
(A Company of Petrobangla)

বিদ্যুৎ ও জ্বালানি নিরাপত্তা
সর্বোচ্চ অগ্রাধিকার

গ্যাস জাতীয় সম্পদ। এর অপচয় রোধ করে জাতীয় দায়িত্ব পালন করুন।

Ref No.: 28.20.9153.276.28.521.24/Corrigendum Date: 13-06-2024

Corrigendum Notice

Subject: Amendment of e-Tender Ref No. 28.20.9153.276.28.521.24 Dated 30-05-2024

Tender ID	Description of Works	Existing	Amended As
895272	Design, Engineering, Procurement, Supply, Construction, Installation, Hook-Up, Testing, Commissioning, Startup and Hand-over of One 100 cubic meter/day capacity Water Treatment Plant (WTP) with 300 cubic meter RCC water storage tank & associated facilities at 4000 BPD CFP, Bahubal, Habiganj under Sylhet Gas Fields Limited.	100 Cubic Meter/Day Capacity Water Treatment Plant	100 Cubic Meter/Hour Capacity Water Treatment Plant (WTP)
		100 Cubic Meter/day in all tender documents.	100 Cubic Meter/hour in all tender documents.

13.06.2024
Md. Kamrul Islam Sarder
General Manager (P&D)
E-mail: gmpnd@sgfl.org.bd

GD- 1012

Khulna City Corporation
E-mail: pe.civil.xen2@ khulnacity.org

"শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি"

e-Tender Notice:
Invitation for Tender (Works)

Reference No. KCC/LGCRRP/XEN-Zone-A/2023-24/1281 Date: 13/06/2024

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following work, details are given below.

Sl No.	Name of work	Tender security	Tender/proposal document last selling/downloading (date & time)	Last date & time for tender/proposal security submission	Tender proposal closing (date & time)	Tender / proposal opening (date & time)	e-Tender ID No.	Tendering method
1	Construction of Chitrali Khalishpur Kitchen Market (1st Floor) (Ward-10)	16,00,000/-	14/07/2024 17-00	15/07/2024 11-50	15/07/2024 12-00	15/07/2024 12-00	996583	OTM
2	Repair & Maintenance of Munshipara 3rd lane (Ward-22) Installation of GI Pole and Light of Munshipara 3rd lane (Ward-22) Repair & Maintenance of Diabetic Centre Adjacent to Sir Iqbal Road, (Ward-23) Repair & Maintenance of Najirghat Main Road Bylane and Pathan Bari Goli Bylane (ward-26), Upgrading of Rupsha Bazar Road with Drain (ward-30)	6,50,000/-	14/07/2024 17-00	15/07/2024 11-50	15/07/2024 12-00	15/07/2024 12-00	996610	OTM
3	Repair & Maintenance of Modhodanga Main Road (Ward-03) Construction of Mosheswarpash Graveyard Boundary Wall & Internal Road (Ward-03) Construction of Office Building at Deyana Morolpara Graveyard (Ward-4) Repair & Maintenance of Muzgunni Residential Area Road No-10 (Ward-9)	6,50,000/-	14/07/2024 17-00	15/07/2024 11-50	15/07/2024 12-00	15/07/2024 12-00	996612	OTM
4	Repair & Maintenance of Khalishpur 223 No. Road with Partial Drain (Ward-10) and Upgrading of RCC road with drain Jayanty Para Karai Company Road (Main road to Rani Shikari house) (Ward-9)	2,00,000/-	14/07/2024 17-00	15/07/2024 11-50	15/07/2024 12-00	15/07/2024 12-00	996592	OTM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). These Scheme will be implemented under the Project "Local Government Covid-19 Response and Recovery Project (LGCRRP) In Khulna City Corporation" Bill will be paid after receiving the fund of this project.

কেসিসি/জন-৫৩ (৩) (২০২৩-২০২৪)

Shaikh Mohammad Masud Karim
Executive Engineer-Zone-A
Khulna City Corporation
Phone No. 01911-149177

GD-1013

PHOTO: STAR

Idrakpur Fort: a museum without artefacts

TANJIL HASAN

Abdur Rahman Mustakim, a student from Narayanganj, visited the Idrakpur Fort Museum in Munshiganj with his relatives on Tuesday. While he was impressed by the fort itself, he was deeply disappointed by the museum's lack of antiquities.

"I traveled a long way expecting to see many traditional artefacts unearthed in Munshiganj," he said. "But there is nothing traditional in the museum. I expected something better."

Other visitors, including madrasa student Naeem, teacher Mizanur Rahman, and homemaker Sonia Akhtar, shared similar sentiments. They all demanded that the antiquities found in Munshiganj be exhibited at the fort museum.

Idrakpur Fort is a Mughal structure. According to the Archaeological Survey Report of the Department of Archeology (published in April, 2000), Mughal Subedar Mir Jumla of Bengal built the fort in 1660 as an outpost to guard the water route to Dhaka against the raids of the Portuguese and Mogh pirates.

The fort stands on the northern bank of the dried up Ichamati river in Munshiganj, 24 kilometers south-east of Dhaka.

Since the British era, the fort has been used as the residence of the sub-divisional officer and later, after independence as the residence of the district commissioner.

The fort complex also housed the district jail.

In 1993, the residence of the DC was shifted from the fort to a new place. After that, the jail was also shifted to a new building.

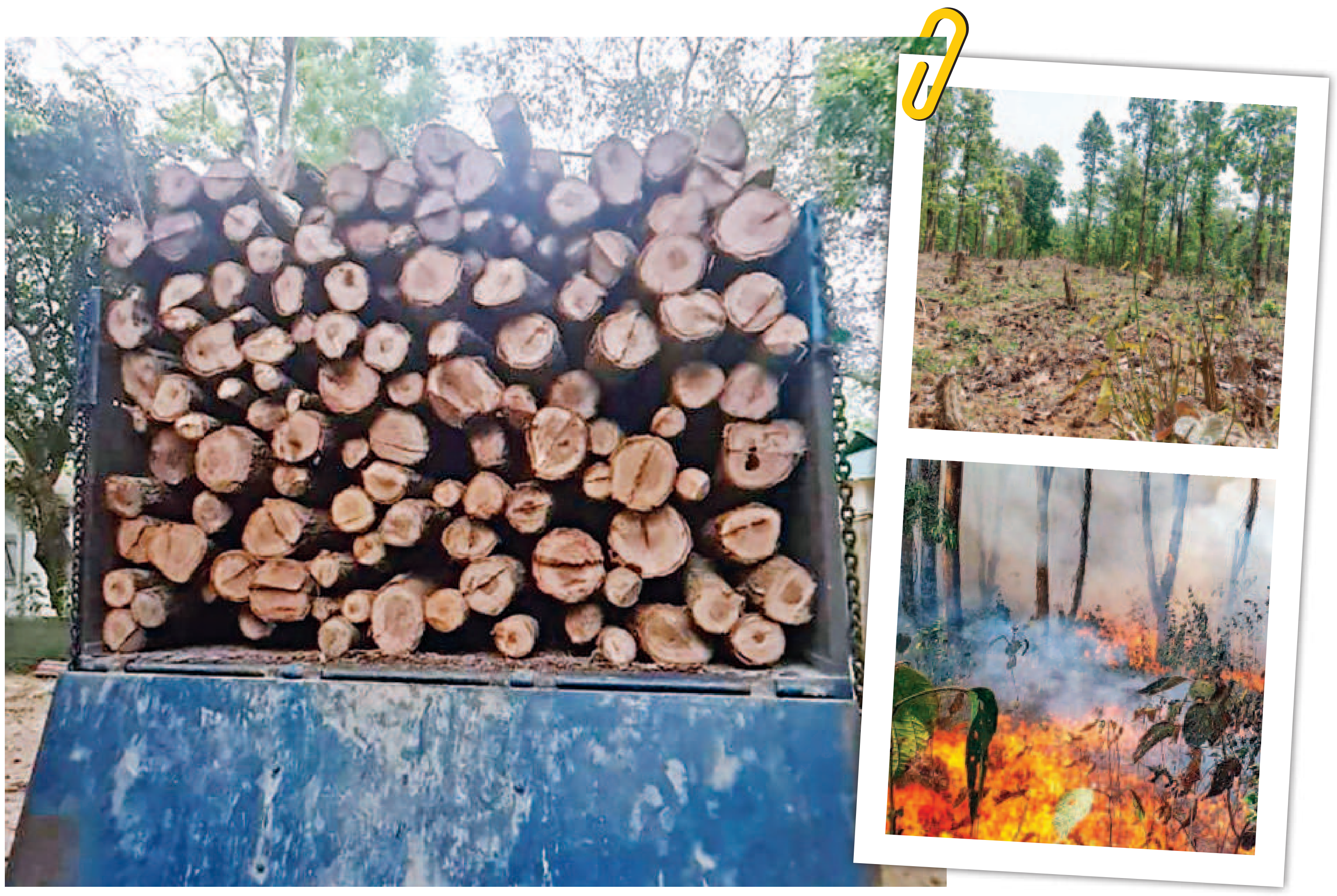
On March 19, 2022, the Department of Archeology established the Idrakpur Fort Museum in the old jail building. But there is nothing in the museum except some pictures and terracotta replicas. While visitors are enamoured by the more than 400-year-old fort, the museum leaves them bitterly disappointed.

Meanwhile, various ancient statues have been discovered at regular intervals in Munshiganj. But none of those artefacts are on display in local museums.

Sufi Mustafizur Rahman, professor of Archeology at Jahangirnagar University, said, "The Vishnu idols found in Munshiganj recently are from the 19th century. They are invaluable resources made of black basalt stone. Since there is a museum in Munshiganj, these idols should be kept there."

Omar Sharif Fahad, assistant commissioner (treasury branch) of Munshiganj District Administration office, said, "There are some idols in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



From left, a truckload of logs seized by forest guards. Meanwhile, vested groups tried to grab a large part of the natural forest for turning it into commercial fruit orchards. Miscreants allegedly set fire to the forest to clear forest land for grabbing and collecting firewood. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Sal forest shrinking fast

Tree felling, land grabbing continue unabated

MIRZA SHAKIL, *Tangail*

The Sal forest under Madhupur National Park in Tangail is disappearing at an alarming rate due to unabated tree felling and grabbing of land.

According to the Forest Department, the Sal forest -- scattered across several districts including Gazipur, Tangail, and Mymensingh -- has a total area of 1,21,000 hectares, around 2.4 percent of the country's forest area.

In Tangail, the Sal forest cover is the largest in Bangladesh. In 1925, it was spread across more than 1,22,876 acres of land in Madhupur, Sakhipur, Ghatail, Mirzapur, and Kalihati upazilas, of which 58,206 acres were part of the reserve forest.

It was once home to diverse flora and fauna -- including tigers, bears, peafowl, and langurs.

Over the years, the decimation of the natural forest has allegedly been going on right under the nose of the authorities concerned.

In fact, a section of unscrupulous forest officials and community forest workers are assisting those destroying the forest in exchange for unethical personal benefits, locals alleged.

Around 25,000 people, including those belonging to ethnic minority communities, live in 41 villages in the vicinity of the forest in Madhupur upazila.

Around 26,048 acres of the forest have been grabbed in Sakhipur upazila and around 19,861 acres in Madhupur, according to the Forest Department's data.

"A section of foresters are helping vested groups to grab, clear, and turn a large part of the natural forest into commercial fruit orchards in the name of social afforestation," alleged Prince Edward Mangsang, a local resident.

Lawyer Jhon Jetra, a leader of the local Garo community, said compared to the extent of damage caused to the forest, the foresters' efforts are inadequate.

Meanwhile, hundreds of acres of the forest have been razed in at least 50 fire incidents in and around the forest in April and May this year. In most cases, miscreants set fire to the forest to collect firewood or to clear forest land for grabbing, locals alleged.

The Forest Department, however, blamed local population growth and their dependence on forest resources for their livelihoods as reasons for the forest destruction.

"Some locals are involved in tree felling and forest land grabbing. The forest guards find it difficult to take action against them with a limited workforce," said Abdul Hamid, ranger of Dokhala Range in Madhupur National Park.

Around 26,048 acres of the forest have been grabbed in Sakhipur upazila and around 19,861 acres in Madhupur, according to Forest Department's data.

The office of the Divisional Forest

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Poet Asim Saha no more

BSS, *Dhaka*

Ekushey Padak-winning poet and novelist Asim Saha passed away on Tuesday afternoon while undergoing treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University hospital in the capital. He was 75.

"He was undergoing treatment at the intensive care unit of the BSMMU with Parkinson's disease, constipation, and diabetes," his family friend poet Mahbuba Rahman Laki told the news agency.

He left behind his wife Anjona Saha, also a noted singer and poet, and two sons -- Avro and Aorga, and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Eid festivities cut short litchi season

PHOTO: STAR

KONGKON KARMAKER, *Dinajpur*

Although litchi is grown all over the country, the little red round spheres of sweetness coming from Dinajpur are renowned for their taste and flavour.

However, Dinajpur's litchi is experiencing a challenging season this year.

The season for litchi typically lasts between 45 and 60 days from the start of its harvest. However, this year's season is expected to be shorter as growers expedited harvesting to avoid transportation hassles before and after Eid-ul-Azha.

Mominul Islam, a wholesale trader in Dinajpur's Kalitola litchi market, expressed concerns about demand decreasing after the Eid festival as consumers' attention will be elsewhere during the festival.

Additionally, the suspension of truck services during Eid will complicate litchi transportation, prompting growers to hasten their harvest to ensure timely sales, said traders.

Despite the challenges, the litchi markets in Dinajpur are bustling.

According to Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) officials, harvesting usually begins at the end of May and lasts for at least two months. This year, however, harvesting started about a week earlier, leading to an ample supply in the market.

Dinajpur's largest litchi markets, located around the Kotwali Police Station and New Market, are vibrant with activity.

Wholesalers from across the country are purchasing litchis in bulk and transporting them to their respective regions.

Some wholesalers even buy directly from the orchards.

The adverse weather conditions, including severe heat and lack of rain, have significantly impacted this season's litchi yield. According to Nuruzzaman, Deputy Director of the Dinajpur DAE, last year's production was around 30,000 tonnes.

Although this year's yield is lower, specific figures are unavailable. With over 5,500 hectares dedicated to litchi cultivation, varieties like Bombay and Madrazi have shown resilience, while Bedana and China-3 varieties have seen yields drop by 50 percent due to the prolonged heatwave and drought-like situation.

Besides, the large number of litchi orchards were affected by storms that hit several times this season.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

In loving memory of

DR. TOUFIQ M. SERAJ
(1956-2019)
FOUNDER MANAGING DIRECTOR
SHELTECH GROUP

Five years have gone by since you left us. The impact of your extraordinary life still lingers, deeply touching our hearts. You live on in our cherished memories, always our beloved inspiration.

SHELTECH
SINCE 1988

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

POISON
COMING THIS EID UL ADHA

বাজি
NOW STREAMING

IN CINEMAS
EID-UL-AZHA
ময়ূরাক্ষী

EID BLOCKBUSTERS

Top films, songs, and OTT hits steal the show

TOOFAN
THIS EID UL ADHA

Apart from 'Toofan', other Eid releases include 'Agantuk', 'Dark World', 'Moyurakkhi', and 'Revenge', offering diverse choices for cinema enthusiasts during the festive season.

ZAHID AKBAR

Several movies, songs, and OTT content have hit the screens and digital platforms during Eid ul-Azha, garnering significant attention and applause from audiences. Among them, the spotlight has prominently shone on the movie ***Toofan***, directed by Raihan Rafi.

Since its release on Eid day, ***Toofan*** has premiered in approximately 123 theatres across the country. Post-release, Star Cineplex has expanded its showings from 21 to 47 daily screenings, while Jamuna Blockbuster is screening the film 14 times a day, a record for any Bengali film prior to this Eid.

Shakib Khan starrer ***Toofan*** also includes Tollywood's Mimi Chakraborty, Masuma Rahman Nabila, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Gazi Rakayet, Misa Sawdagar, Salahuddin Luvlu, and Chanchal Chowdhury, among others. The production companies behind ***Toofan*** are Alpha-i Studios and Chorki.

The film's title song, ***Laage Ura Dhura***, composed by Pritom Hasan with vocals by Pritom Hasan and Debosrie Antara, has particularly caught fire, trending on YouTube and further fueling interest in the movie. The song's chorus is derived from the late musician Rajjak Dewan's renowned piece ***Morar Kokiley***, blending nostalgic appeal with contemporary flair. The first part of this specific version is penned by Shorif Uddin, while Rasel Mahmud wrote the rest.

13 JUN
hoichoi
ZIAUL FARUQ APURBA

A bongo Orig
FeMal
KAJAL AREFIN OME
STREAMING NOW bongo

Additionally, the title song from ***Toofan***, composed, arranged, and programmed by Naved Parvez, with vocals by Arif Rahman Joy, lyrics by Tahsan Shuvo, and rap by Rapsta Dadu, is also a favourite among listeners.

Apart from ***Toofan***, other Eid releases include ***Agantuk***, ***Dark World***, ***Moyurakkhi***, and ***Revenge***, offering diverse choices for cinema enthusiasts during the festive season.

In addition to cinemas, several OTT platforms have also debuted a variety of content. Notable mentions include web series like ***Golam Mamun***, ***Female 4***, ***Baaji***, and ***Poison***.

Golam Mamun, featuring Ziaul Faruq Apurba in a new avatar and directed by Shihab Shaheen, has garnered praise for its storyline, acting, and action sequences, receiving positive reviews across social media. Apurba's performance, appearance, and action scenes have been particularly appreciated by audiences both domestically and internationally.

Female 4, directed by ***Bachelor Point*** famed director Kajal Arefin Ome and produced by Bongo, has also captured audience interest. The series saw over 200,000 subscribers paying to watch it within 24 hours of its release, accumulating 15 million minutes of paid watch time from over 100 countries.

The cast of ***Female 4*** includes Ziaul Hoque Polash, Marzuk Russell, Saraf Ahmed Zibon, Pavel, Shimul, Sumon Patwary, Shiblu Mridha, Iresh Zaker, and Neelanjona Neela, among others.

Alka Yagnik suffering from hearing loss

Popular playback singer Alka Yagnik has recently announced on her Instagram account that she has been diagnosed with a rare hearing disorder.

"To all my dear fans, friends, followers, and well-wishers: A few weeks ago, as I stepped off a flight, I abruptly found myself unable to hear. It took some time to gather the courage, but I now want to address my absence for those who've been wondering," read her post.

"My doctors have identified it as a rare sensorineural hearing loss brought on by a viral infection," she shared in her post.

Alka Yagnik, the iconic voice behind several Bollywood hits, shared a cautionary note with her followers. "To my fans and younger peers, I urge you to be mindful of exposing yourselves to very loud music and frequent use of headphones," she wrote.

SXSW
slack
SXSW

Ben Affleck, Matt Damon to reunite for crime thriller

Ben Affleck and Matt Damon are set to share screen again with a crime thriller called ***RIP***. Affleck and Damon will also produce the film through their Artists Equity banner.

The duo recently produced and starred in the Air Jordan movie ***Air,*** which Affleck also directed. Artists Equity recently struck a deal with Lionsgate to distribute the drama ***Small Things Like These***, starring Cillian Murphy, which premiered at the Berlin Film Festival.

Matt Damon and Ben Affleck have been close friends since childhood and founded Artists Equity in 2022, promising to focus on smaller dramas rather than the "assembly line process" of filmmaking used by corporations like Netflix.

COUNTRYWIDE

Rescue boat in dire need of rescue

MINTU DESHWARA

At a time when a life-saving equipment is so much in need, a rescue boat worth several lakhs has just been lying neglected in Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila for nearly two years.

Local people, however, pointed to a lack of monitoring to the vehicle by the authorities concerned.

Aiming to deploy in the remote areas where rapid relief is crucial, two rescue boats, including Tangua-Sunamganj-1, was handed over to Sunamganj district in 2022.

But sadly, one of those vital resources Tangua-Sunamganj-1 is currently facing destruction due to mishandling of the authorities concerned.

In 2021, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief built 60 such rescue boats for haor areas and different coastal districts.

Of those, eight boats were handed over to different districts the same year.

The following year, the other 52 rescue boats were handed over to different upazila and district headquarters, including two in Sunamganj Sadar and Tahirpur upazila.

During the flood in 2022, rescue boat Tangua-Sunamganj-1 was used for various purposes like distributing public and private relief among the flood affected and displaced people.

But since the recession of the flood water, the important life-saving equipment has been left abandoned in utter neglect.

While talking, a number of locals said after the flood in 2022 the boat was first anchored in the Boulai river in front of Shah Arefin Auto Rice Mill for a few days and then shifted to opposite to Tahirpur Police Station.

The rescue boat, which remained abandoned at the same place since then, went under water after the recent rainfalls.

The huge canopy of the 54-feet-long and 12.5-feet-wide boat has been torn down, while most part of its body, including the engine, is submerged under water.

Moreover, rusts have covered various metal parts of the boat due to prolonged exposure under the open sky.

One of the local residents Sadikur Rahman said though bought at a significant cost rescue boat Tangua-Sunamganj-1 is being destroyed due to the carelessness of the authorities concerned.

Tahirpur Sadar Union Parishad Chairman Junab Ali said during the flood in 2022 the rescue boat was used to send relief materials to thousands of flood-affected people in haor areas.

But it is so sad that such an important state resource is being squandered due to carelessness of the concerned people. Tahirpur Upazila Project Implementation Officer (PIO) Muhibur Rahman said maintenance work of the rescue boat will be very done soon.

This life-saving equipment is on the verge of ruin, thanks to the negligence of the authorities concerned. The photo was taken from in front of Sunamganj's Tahirpur Police Station.

PHOTO: STAR

Impactful Sakib needs

FROM PAGE 12

according to ESPNcricinfo.

Be it through words or his actions, Sakib has not made a secret of how he wants to operate in this tournament.

"I just want to be aggressive and execute my plans," Sakib had said after the Nepal win -- a game in which the right-arm quick was rewarded with the player of the match award for his career-best figures of four for seven and was also levied a 15 percent fine for code of conduct violation, relating to the confrontation he had with Nepal skipper Rohit Paudel during a fiery opening spell.

Interestingly, the inclusion of Sakib, who has now turned into one of the main heroes behind the Tigers' progression to Super Eight, was the major talking point following the T20 World Cup squad announcement. He was left out of the main 15 in the initial squad submitted to ICC, but a bold call from the Gazi Ashraf Hossain-led selection panel saw him make the cut ahead of Mohammad Saifuddin.

And even though he has not been majorly used in the death overs -- a phase where the selectors had predicted Sakib to be much more effective than Saifuddin – the youngster rose to the task of accepting the challenge of bowling with the new ball, something he has not done very often in white-ball cricket.

Generally, a skiddy customer for his slightly slingy action, Sakib has made use of the slow and turning surfaces in the Caribbean and the USA during this World Cup. The way he had two of the Nepal batters caught at point, and castled Quinton de Kock after trapping South Africa opener Reeza Hendricks in front of his stumps showed how his skiddy deliveries, getting slightly lower-than-usual bounce off the surface, can be a lethal weapon for the Tigers throughout the tournament.

Sakib was made to bowl four overs at a stretch against Nepal, and he ended up bowling 21 dots -- the highest number of dots in a T20 World Cup game till that point -- while giving away just one extra to give Bangladesh exactly the type of start they desperately needed in a game where they had to defend a paltry 106-run total.

What augurs well for Bangladesh is that Sakib is not having to do it all on his own -- with Mustafizur Rahman doing his job of bowling miserly at the death while also taking crucial wickets, Taskin Ahmed living up to his reputation, and young leggie Rishad Hossain setting the stage alight with his turn and control. And Bangladesh will hope for it to be the case for the remainder of the tournament, starting with the encounter against title contenders Australia in Antigua tomorrow.

EPIC Group

FROM PAGE 12

and enhancing resource efficiency. Together with IFC, we are paving the way for a more resilient textile sector."

The partnership between IFC and EPIC Group will help the latter reduce its environmental footprint significantly, targeting a 65 percent reduction in GHG emission per garment produced by 2030 compared to the 2019 benchmark.

The textile sector contributes around 6-8 percent of total carbon emissions annually, out of which Asia accounts for about 60 percent.

At the same time, the sector is a critical source of growth in Bangladesh, generating around 85 percent of its export earnings, and is the second-largest employment generator in India, accounting for approximately 18 percent of the manufacturing jobs.

In addition to financing, IFC is providing EPIC Group with advisory support to help the company develop its environmental, social, and corporate governance capacity, as well as to meet its gender targets.

"IFC is committed to supporting a robust textile and apparel value chain across Asia," said Riccardo Puliti, IFC vice president for Asia and the Pacific.

The investment announced on June 17 builds on IFC's existing relationship with EPIC Group. IFC previously supported EPIC Group with advisory services on greener production and decarbonisation through the Global Trade Supplier Finance programme.

EPIC Group has been a pivotal force in the apparel industry with facilities in Bangladesh, Jordan, Ethiopia, Vietnam, and soon India, IFC said in the statement.

Established in 1985, EPIC Group is a trusted manufacturer and supplier to global retailers, offering advanced manufacturing, design, creativity, replenishment, and inventory management solutions.

Nvidia eclipses

FROM PAGE 12

Nasdaq to record highs, some investors worry that unbridled optimism about AI could evaporate if signs emerge of a slowdown in spending on the technology.

"It's Nvidia's market; we're all just trading in it," said Steve Sosnick, chief market strategist at Interactive Brokers.

Nvidia has also become by far the most traded company on Wall Street, with daily turnover recently averaging $50 billion, compared to around $10 billion each for Apple, Microsoft and Tesla, according to LSEG data. The chipmaker now accounts for about 16 percent of all trading in S&P 500 companies.

Nvidia's stock has nearly tripled so far this year, compared with a rise of about 19 percent in Microsoft shares, with demand for its top-of-the-line processors outpacing supply.

Tech giants Microsoft, Meta Platforms and Google-owner Alphabet are competing to build out their AI computing capabilities and add the technology to their products and services.

An insatiable appetite for Nvidia's AI processors, viewed as far superior to competitors' offerings, has left them in tight supply, and many investors view Nvidia as the greatest winner to date from surging AI development.

Israel may have violated

FROM PAGE 12

Witnesses and the civil defence agency in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip reported Israeli bombardment in western Rafah, where medics said drone strikes and shelling killed at least seven people, reports AFP.

The Israeli military has announced a daily humanitarian "pause" in fighting on a key road in eastern Rafah, but a UN spokesman said days later that "this has yet to translate into more aid reaching people in need".

The Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt has been shut since Israeli troops seized its Palestinian side in early May, while nearby Kerem Shalom on the Israeli border "is operating with limited functionality, including because of fighting in the area", said UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq.

"Fighting is not the only reason for being unable to pick up aid ... The lack of any police or rule of law in the area makes it very dangerous to move goods there," he said.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 37,396 people have been killed in the territory during more than eight months of offensive. The toll includes at least 24 deaths in the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

The offensive has sent tensions soaring across the region, with violence involving Iran-backed Hamas allies, reports Reuters.

The Israeli military, which has traded near-daily cross-border fire with Lebanon's Hezbollah since October, said late Monday that "operational plans for an offensive in Lebanon were approved and validated".

Yesterday, the military said its warplanes had struck Hezbollah sites in southern Lebanon overnight, while reporting a drone had infiltrated near the border town of Metula.

Russia ups attacks after 'lull': Kyiv

AFP, *Kyiv*

Russian forces have escalated attacks near Toretsk, a frontline town in eastern Ukraine that has remained relatively calm over recent months of fighting, officials said yesterday.

Ukrainian forces lacking critical manpower and arms have struggled to hold the line in the eastern Donbas region, which the Kremlin claims is part of Russia.

The military said in a briefing late Tuesday that Russia had "intensified" its assaults near Toretsk and "launched five assault operations at once," targeting surrounding towns and villages.

Military analysts reported Russian advances towards Toretsk.

One resident of the town, 67-year-old Oleksandr told AFP journalists by telephone that he had experienced an uptick in Russian bombardments, corroborating official reports.

India floods, heatwaves kill 11 people

Four buried alive in landslide

REUTERS, *Guwahati*

India was battling extreme weather yesterday that caused severe heatwaves, landslides and floods, killing at least 11 people this week, among them a woman and her three daughters buried alive in a northeastern state, officials and media said.

The capital, New Delhi, sweltered through its hottest night in six years on Tuesday, with hospitals in the city of 20 million reporting at least five deaths from heatstroke this week, the Times of India newspaper said.

Floods and landslides triggered by incessant rain in the northeastern state of Assam killed at least six people on Tuesday night, officials said.

"A landslide buried a woman and her three daughters alive," a disaster management official said.

"Their house was on a slope, and they died on the spot around midnight," he said, adding that the bodies were retrieved after a three-hour search operation by rescuers. "A three-year-old was killed too."

Billions across Asia are grappling with extreme heat this summer, in a trend scientists say has been worsened by human-driven climate change.

Palestinians rush during Israeli bombardment in the area of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. Israeli tanks backed by warplanes and drones advanced deeper into the western part of Rafah, killing eight people, according to residents and Palestinian medics. PHOTO: **AFP**

Israel ready for 'all-out war' in Lebanon

Say officials after Hezbollah releases threatening drone footage of the Israeli port city of Haifa

AGENCIES

Israel is ready for an "all-out war" in Lebanon and has plans approved for an offensive targeting Hezbollah, officials said.

The claims from Israel's foreign minister and military late on Tuesday followed Hezbollah's release of threatening drone footage. The climbing tension conflicts with United States efforts to avert an escalation amid months of low-level hostilities across the Israel-Lebanon border.

The nine-minute drone footage of the Israeli port city of Haifa filmed in daytime, showed civilian and military areas, including malls and residential quarters, in addition to a weapons manufacturing complex and missile defence batteries.

More than 400 people have been killed in Lebanon over the past eight months, with 25 deaths in Israel.

Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz responded vehemently in a post on X, calling out Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah for boasting about filming the ports of Haifa, which are operated by foreign companies from China and India.

"We are very close to the moment of decision to change the rules against Hezbollah and Lebanon. In an all-out war, Hezbollah will be destroyed and Lebanon will be severely hit," he wrote.

Later, the Israeli military said in a statement that Ori Gordin, head of its Northern Command, which includes the front line with Hezbollah, has approved plans to mount a ground assault across Israel's northern border, reports Al Jazeera online.

"As part of the situational assessment, operational plans for an offensive in Lebanon were approved and validated, and decisions were taken on the continuation of increasing the readiness of troops in the field," it said.

Israel and Hezbollah have been engaged in border fighting since the start of the offensive on Gaza on October 7. The confrontation is increasingly expanding, with both sides saying they are ready to go to war. Nasrallah has said in the past that Hezbollah will only stop its attacks if Israel halts its invasion of Gaza.

Hezbollah recently said that it has carried out more than 2,100 military operations against Israel since October 8 in what it says is an effort to support Palestinians.

More than 400 people have been killed in Lebanon over the past eight months, with 25 deaths in Israel. At least 90,000 people have been displaced in Lebanon, and more than 60,000 have been forced from their homes in northern Israel.

Taiwan 'won't bow' to China's pressure

Says President Lai

AFP, *Taipei*

Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te said yesterday that China was attempting to force the self-ruled island into submission but that it would not bow to pressure.

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has said it will never renounce the use of force to bring it under Beijing's control.

In recent years, Beijing has upped military and political pressure on the Taipei government, with the latest show of force coming three days after Lai's inauguration, when China conducted war games around the island.

Speaking at a press conference marking his first month in office, Lai said: "The annexation of Taiwan is a national policy of the People's Republic of China".

"In addition to military force, they have increasingly employed non-traditional methods of coercion to try to force Taiwan into submission," he said.

"However, Taiwan will not bow to the pressure. The people of Taiwan will resolutely defend national sovereignty and uphold the democratic and free constitutional way of life," he added.

US lawmakers meet Tibet's Dalai Lama

Pressure China on talks

REUTERS, *Dharamsala*

A group of US lawmakers who met the Dalai Lama in India yesterday said they would not allow China to influence the choice of his successor, comments expected to anger Beijing, which calls the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader a separatist.

The remarks come as Washington and Beijing seek to steady rocky ties while India pushes China to secure lasting peace on their disputed Himalayan frontier, four years after a military clash strained ties.

The lawmakers also signalled that Washington would pressure Beijing to hold talks with Tibetan leaders, stalled since 2010, to resolve the Tibet issue, with a bill they said President Joe Biden would sign soon.

Although Washington recognises Tibet as a part of China, the bill appears to question that position and any change would be a major shock to Beijing, analysts said.

The bipartisan group of seven, led by Michael McCaul, a Republican representative from Texas, who also chairs the House foreign affairs committee, met the Nobel peace laureate at his monastery in the northern Indian town of Dharamsala.

"It is still my hope that one day the Dalai Lama and his people will return to Tibet in peace," McCaul told a public reception after the meeting.

SHIPWRECK OFF COAST

Italy coastguard recovers six migrant bodies

Over 60 reported missing

AFP, *Rome*

Italy's coastguard said yesterday it had recovered six bodies after a migrant boat sank this week off the southern coast with more than 60 people reported missing, including many children.

Twelve people were rescued after the sailing boat sank around 120 nautical miles off the coast of Calabria overnight Sunday-Monday, although one of them died after disembarking.

GUARDIA COSTIERA

Italy's ANSA news agency reported that she was a 25-year-old woman of Iraqi origin.

The coastguard said yesterday it continued to search the area around the semi-submerged boat, which is still visible, on sea and in the air.

"Following the searches carried out so far, six lifeless bodies have been recovered," it said.

ANSA said they were four men and two women.

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has been helping the survivors, who reported that 66 people had been missing after the shipwreck, "including at least 26 children, some of them a few months old".

Shakilla Mohammadi, cultural mediator for the medical charity, on Tuesday said those rescued were "traumatised, their pain tangible".

"I talked to one young man who had lost his girlfriend," she said.

"Entire families from Afghanistan are believed to have died. They left Turkey eight days ago and had been taking on water for three or four days," she added.

Biden relaxes visa rules in election-year move

REUTERS, *Washington*

US President Joe Biden on Tuesday announced a sweeping effort to provide a path to citizenship to hundreds of thousands of immigrants in the US illegally who are married to US citizens, an election-year move that contrasts sharply with Republican rival Donald Trump's plan for mass deportations.

At a White House event, Biden criticised Trump for separating migrant families at the US-Mexico border and using incendiary language about immigrants in the US illegally, including comments that they were "poisoning the blood of our country."

"It's hard to believe it's being said, but he's actually saying these things out loud. And it's outrageous," Biden said. "I'm not interested in playing politics with the border or immigration. I'm interested in fixing it."

The new Biden program will be open to an estimated 500,000 spouses who have lived in the US for at least 10 years as of June 17, officials said on Tuesday. Some 50,000 children under age 21 with a US-citizen parent also will be eligible.

Biden, a Democrat seeking a second term in the November 5 presidential election, took office vowing to reverse many of Trump's restrictive immigration policies. But faced with record levels of migrant arrests at the US-Mexico border, Biden has toughened his approach.

Earlier this month, the president barred most migrants crossing the US-Mexico border from requesting asylum, a policy that mirrored a similar Trump-era asylum ban and drew criticism from immigration advocates and some Democrats.

Local residents look at damage at the site of a Russian drone attack, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, on the outskirts of Lviv, Ukraine yesterday. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Chad ammo depot blaze kills nine

Dozens hurt

AFP, *N'Djamena*

A fire that tore through a huge military ammunition depot in Chad's capital N'Djamena killed at least nine people and wounded dozens more, officials said yesterday, warning the toll could rise.

The blaze, which started late on Tuesday, sent powerful blasts into the night sky and exploding ordnance shook buildings miles away.

Chad's Health Minister Abdelmadjid Abderahim told journalists that the toll was in danger of rising as many of the 46 wounded were in an "extremely serious" condition. A visit to the scene yesterday revealed unexploded shells and other munitions scattered on the ground.

Government spokesman Abderaman Koulamallah said the cause was not "criminal" but an investigation was under way.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Fast-moving floods in Sylhet raise alarm

Tens of thousands plunged into a crisis as flooding intensifies

The Eid holiday has not been the joyful experience that people in Sylhet and neighbouring areas had probably expected it to be thanks to the evolving flood situation there. The region was just beginning to recover from the flash flood that hit on May 29 and lasted until about June 8. But any relief experienced was short-lived, as a second wave of flooding has hit the region amid Eid celebrations after torrential rains combined with onrush of water from upstream India. Reportedly, large parts of Sylhet and Sunamganj districts have been inundated, affecting lakhs of residents. With a forecast of continued rainfall over the next two days, the situation is likely to worsen further.

Sylhet is particularly vulnerable. According to the district administration, 21 out of the 42 wards in the city have been flooded. Additionally, floodwaters have entered 102 unions in all upazilas of the district, inundating a total of 1,323 villages. The situation in Sunamganj is no better, as major rivers in the two districts continue to swell. With many vital roads submerged, and neighbourhoods under knee-to-waist-deep water, life has come to a standstill. Power outages and communication disruptions could further complicate the situation. Many are predicting a repeat or even exacerbation of the devastating flood Sylhet had experienced in 2022. Driving this fear is the fact that in the first 18 days of this June, Sylhet recorded more rainfall than the entire month of June in 2022. The total rainfall by the end of this month might exceed 2,000 millimetres, according to an estimate, setting a new record.

We don't need a reminder of the sufferings that this may result in. The authorities are doing what they can to help the affected but, clearly, they need to do more, both short-term and long-term. Beyond Sylhet, there are risks of flooding in a number of districts in Rangpur, Mymensingh, Barishal and Chattogram divisions. June, thus, is increasingly becoming a month of hardship caused by rains and mountain runoff. This is a challenge that goes beyond regular flood preparations, and with typical safeguards like embankments and polders too prone to damage, we must consider our long-term future. There is an argument, increasingly pertinent, about whether relying on what worked in the pre-climate-change era can stand up to the more intense flooding seen these days. Should we continue to try containing the formidable rivers and deltaic nature of Bangladesh through often-fragile structural defences, or should we go for a blended approach that balances the restorative and destructive powers of floods through proper adaptations?

We must explore these questions, and pursue solutions, with a more open mind. Right now, the priority is to respond properly to the fast-moving floods, particularly in Sylhet division, and minimise damage and suffering. The authorities must ensure that those stranded by water receive shelter, food, and drinking water.

We can't afford to lose UAE labour market

Govt must deal with irregularities in overseas recruitment

After the recent freezing of recruitment of Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia, the possibility that job opportunities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) might also be shrinking for our citizens is quite worrying. Losing a market like the UAE, from where we received the highest amount of remittance in the first 10 months of the ongoing fiscal year, would deal a severe blow to our remittance inflow, not to mention the many thousands whose lives rely on it.

According to a report by *Prothom Alo*, after Saudi Arabia, the UAE has the largest base of Bangladeshi migrant workers. In fact, more than 17 percent of our migrants are employed in the UAE, as per an estimate by the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET). Between July 2023 and April 2024, we received more than $3.65 billion in remittance from the UAE—the highest from any destination country. Meanwhile, workers in Saudi Arabia sent $2.16 billion during the same period.

However, employers in the UAE are reportedly growing reluctant to recruit Bangladeshi workers due to fraudulent activities on our end, raising the chances of us losing a strong source of foreign currency. According to industry insiders, some unscrupulous manpower agents and agencies have been abusing a post-Covid provision enforced by the Gulf country that allows workers to enter the country on a tourist visa and then convert it to work visa through the recruiters. This has led to many workers getting cheated and stranded in the UAE with no work. Employers, too, don't want to risk getting fined for recruiting illegal workers.

It is a familiar story: fraudulent activities by agencies led to Malaysia freezing recruitment of Bangladesh workers, too. Over the past several years, many issues regarding overseas recruitment have been flagged and irregular activities regularly reported, with demands for appropriate remedies, yet the authorities have done little in this regard. Their inertia is leading us towards the potential loss of another key labour market, especially at a time when we need the precious dollars to replenish our dwindling reserves. It is, therefore, high time the authorities stopped dilly-dallying, and did what's necessary to overhaul our overseas employment sector by getting rid of rampant corruption and mismanagement.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

'Jaws' released in theatres

On June 20, 1975, Steven Spielberg's thriller Jaws was released in theatres, and it was a huge success, essentially creating the genre of summer blockbusters.

Is the budget just another attempt at 'youthwashing'?

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M NIAZ ASADULLAH

The recently proposed budget has been disappointing for job seekers, especially the youth. People expected allocations favouring jobs and quality education for young people, yet the announced national budget fell short in both aspects.

According to a recent citizen survey entitled "New Government, National Budget and Citizens' Aspirations" conducted by the Centre for Policy Dialogue, three top priorities were decent jobs (22 percent), quality education (17.5 percent) and social protection (12 percent). Among those who prioritised decent jobs, almost half wanted reduced unemployment, while one-third wanted increased job opportunities. This year's budget didn't reflect these priorities.

This is all the more surprising considering that the Awami League's 2024 election manifesto listed "ensuring job-oriented education and employment for youth" as the second most important focus. Moreover, one of this year' election campaign slogans was "The Power of Youth—Prosperity of Bangladesh." A decade ago, the 2014 Election Manifesto of Awami League also made bold claims that, "..illiteracy will fade away, educated and trained human resources will abound, [and] unemployment will be reduced to zero with crores of young people getting employed."

In fact, in the last 15 years, more than a dozen plans, policies, acts and rules have been introduced concerning the youth. The National Youth Policy 2017, National Skills Development Policy 2011, the Seventh Five Year Plan 2016-2020, the Expatriate and Overseas Employment Policy 2016, and the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013—all have acknowledged and addressed the issue of youth employment. The A2i project has promoted the idea of the smart youth of Smart Bangladesh while the Department of Youth Development of the Ministry of Youth and Sports also has published a supplementary report entitled "Smart Youth, Prosperous Country, Bangabandhu's Bangladesh." Since January 2020, we have also adopted a specific plan of action for the implementation of the National Youth Policy 2017.

So why does a pro-youth budget still remain elusive? One explanation might be "youthwashing."

তারুণ্যের শক্তি,
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VIUSAL: **TEENI AND TUNI**

Speech writers and political event organisers are more than happy to make lofty pro-youth promises and encourage youth participation for the sake of good publicity and annual reports. Yet when it comes to delivering on promises, they are missing in action.

Youthwashing is on the rise. Take for instance the 2024 election manifesto of the Awami League. It painstakingly catalogued the government's achievements in youth development—over 13 million young individuals were provided with skill development training and close to a million young people are engaged in self-employment. We are told that, owing to various motivational programmes, training, self-employment projects, youth loan schemes, and poverty alleviation initiatives, there is a sharp decline in the unemployment rate from 6 percent in 2009 to 3.6 percent in 2022.

Yet, the reality is that the majority of our unemployed population is between 15 and 24 years old. Not only does Bangladesh have a double-digit youth unemployment rate of over 10 percent, the rate of people not in education, employment, and training (NEET) is also nearly double the global average of 21.7 percent.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics data, the share of youth aged 15 to 24 years who fall into the NEET category has increased from 28.9 percent in 2017 to 39.88 percent in 2022. Paradoxically, university degree holders also continue to suffer from a high rate of unemployment. But this is not a new phenomenon. A 2014 comparative study jointly conducted by theBritish Council and the Economist Intelligence Unit reported that nearly five out of every 10 graduates in Bangladesh were unemployed against approximately three out of 10 in India and Pakistan. Given the high NEET rate, Bangladesh's youth labour force is shrinking.

Therefore, an editorial in this paper from June 9, 2024, rightly concluded that the proposed budget for FY 2024-25 offers no hope or way out for the Bangladeshi youth.

Just like "greenwashing"—a practice by large corporations and governments to market their activities as sustainable or environmentally friendly, when in reality they do more harm than good—youth concerns in our national policy agenda have become increasingly tokenised for narrow political gains. Each year, we're presented with new empty slogans like "The power of youth, the prosperity of Bangladesh" (Tarunner shokti, Bangladesh er shomriddhi).

Various youth forums and groups have also proliferated, and our government has given space to these groups and forums in various national events. On paper, youth concerns are well-recognised in government policy and planning documents. Yet, they are not met with concrete actions, at least in the decisions that matter. Youth inclusion is yet to bring meaningful changes when it comes to employment and skills.

The so-called "youth inclusion" in planning documents on the one hand, and implementation failure of these plans and budgetary exclusion of youth concerns on the other raises serious questions about the true priorities of our lawmakers. Does the youth agenda have any value beyond serving as cheap ingredients for political campaigns?

Or is youthwashing only a symptom? Perhaps the broken interlinkage between education and employment despite the propaganda of youth power as the driver of prosperous Bangladesh is reflective of a more fundamental gap in policy making, i.e., the lack of credible and accountable political leadership.

That said, youthwashing is not unique to Bangladesh. Similar to exploiting the green agenda for popular publicity and rhetoric, politicians in authoritarian regimes are increasingly exploiting young people's voices but doing so in a performative way while de facto paying little attention to them, or failing to act on concerns raised by this group. But this practice is likely to be particularly costly for Bangladesh given that our first demographic dividend window will close between 2030 and 2042. Youthwashing must be resisted as a strategy for political elites to cover up underinvestment in education and employment.

Globally, the youth has had a long legacy of facilitating social transformation processes through active involvement in democratic uprisings. Future-focused movements such as fighting climate change have also attracted young voices who are collectively campaigning to save the planet and protect their future. Recognising their transformative potential, international development partners are also supporting concrete measures for youth policy development to facilitate young people's access to rights and social opportunities. The UN, too, recognises youth action as key to SDGs such as Quality Education, Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Reduced Inequalities. Given this recognition, young people must collectively bargain for their future and hold governments accountable for delivering jobs and quality education.

Bangladeshi policymakers, therefore, must not underestimate the youth's ability for public action, as evidenced in the nationwide protests demanding fair, quota-free access to public sector jobs in 2018. At a time of gradual democratic backsliding worldwide, the growing practice of using young people as popular propaganda tools must be challenged. Politicians must be held accountable for their election-time promises of reducing youth unemployment. We must not forget that young people are the main stakeholders of the Smart Bangladesh Vision 2041 as well as the Delta Plan 2100. It is time for them to take charge of the public campaign for the formulation of a "national youth budget" as well as a national strategy for youth employment.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

A call for true solidarity with the Rohingya community

Hasina Rahman
is country director of The International Rescue Committee.

HASINA RAHMAN

This month, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, published its flagship Global Trends Report, which has not brought any immediate hope to the world.

The report published on June 12 in Geneva found that forced displacement rose to 120 million in May 2024, marking the 12th consecutive annual increase—a result of ongoing crises and newly emerging and evolving conflicts. The figure would make the global displaced population equivalent to the 12th largest country in the world, around the size of Japan. One in every 69 people, or 1.5 percent of the entire world's population, are now forcibly displaced.

This is nearly double the one in 125 people who were displaced a decade ago. The increase to 117.3 million at the end of 2023 constitutes a rise of 8 percent, or 8.8 million people compared to the end of 2022—and is a continuation of the year-on-year increases over the last 12 years.

When every day, more people are facing forced displacement globally, the world's attention is rapidly shifting from one crisis to another. And unfortunately, globally, the focus on the Rohingya crisis is fading.

It has been seven years since the massive influx happened in 2017 and the Rohingya community was forced to flee their homes and leave their country—Myanmar—to come to Cox's Bazar for safety and survival. Since then, they have been enduring dire conditions in the camps. The entire population depends on relief and food aid. Young people are facing challenging situations, spending their time idly without quality life experiences. We can't imagine how their lives are in the camps.

In the last couple of months, around one million Rohingya have endured extreme heat waves, two fire incidents, and a cyclone. During the fires, many lost their shelters and had to live under the open sky. During the heat wave, they lived in tarpaulin shelters.

Besides these disasters, women and adolescent girls are experiencing difficult day-to-day realities. More than 80 percent of them face gender-based violence by their intimate partners. Child marriage is prevalent. They have limited access to justice and very often do not seek it. The safety and security situation in the camps is inadequate. Women and girls constantly live in fear.

A few days ago, I met Ramicha, a young girl in the Rohingya camps who loves creating henna art. When her neighbours ask her to apply henna, she feels happy to adorn the hands of young girls and women. She loves being appreciated for her art. Like Ramicha, over 400,000 children are living in the Rohingya camps. Despite the lack of things to do, children have found many ways to continue to laugh and live.

The Rohingya camps are examples of how, despite significant efforts from the Bangladesh government and international community, it is still far from sufficient to meet the basic needs of displaced people. The global scenario is not any better than this.

This is the situation in which the world will observe World Refugee Day on June 20, 2024. This year's theme, "Solidarity with Refugees," calls for actionable support beyond mere words. Solidarity means keeping our doors open, celebrating their strengths and achievements, and reflecting on the challenges they face.

We urge the global community to truly demonstrate solidarity with the Rohingya community, who are facing very difficult challenges every day in refugee camps.

International stakeholders, the philanthropic community and private sector actors should increase financial aid to these people so that more sustainable and impactful support can be provided.

While food, health care, safety, and fundamental rights must be provided, we must prepare them for the next phase of their lives. Education, livelihoods and skills development are crucial now to develop the young Rohingya population so that when they voluntarily return to their country, they will have the suitable skill sets to contribute economically and socially.

Recently, the conflict inside Myanmar has reached a new height. These conflicts are bringing countless human tragedies, and it must be brought to an end. The global community should put more effort into ending this conflict and bringing peace to Myanmar so that all the displaced people can return to their homes and live safe and dignified lives.

By taking these tangible steps, the global community can move beyond rhetoric to enact meaningful changes, embodying true solidarity with refugees and honouring their resilience and contributions.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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Advertisement: 01711623910
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Subscription:
01711623906

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The stakes are too high for the world to fail Palestine

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RUBY AMATULLA

Martin Luther King Jr said that injustice anywhere threatens justice everywhere. That warning has never been so relevant as today, when the global powers are themselves violating the rule-based world order established after the Second World War, with goals to avoid wars, maintain peace, uphold human rights, and assure security and justice to every nation-state and every people in this global society.

The horrible genocide in Gaza has slaughtered over 37,000 people—two-thirds of them women and children, injured over 85,000, and buried alive countless people under the 220,000 collapsed buildings in the tiny strip of land just 25 miles long and about five miles wide. This ethnic cleansing, and the crimes against humanity are being carried out with the full military and political support of none other than the US—once the architect, founder, and supposedly the de facto defender of the international rule of law. Such a monstrous injustice to a defenceless and long-persecuted people who endured ethnic cleansing by the settler colonial state, Israel, for the last 75 years under the patronage of the West, especially of the superpower of our time, is undoubtedly giving messages to the entire world that the "might is right" policy of the dark ages is back, and no one is safe.

The Rohingya genocide in 2017 occurred in Myanmar while global powers watched. Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022 and inflicted scorched earth destruction, mass murders, and inhuman atrocities. There are other examples of massive human rights violations by global powers. If the global community does not take measures to hold them accountable, the ultimate victim of this dangerously irresponsible pattern will be humanity in its entirety.

Washington's polished mask is removed, and its ugly and rotten state is exposed to the world as it repeatedly counters and vetoes resolutions at the UN General Assembly and the Security Council, cares little about world opinion, undermines the verdicts of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and opposes the International Criminal Court's requests for arrest warrants against top Israeli officials including the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. These actions are sending alarms to the rest of the world that the world order based on universal principles is becoming dysfunctional. It is utterly disgraceful that the US Congress has invited Netanyahu to speak before a joint session.

Realising the stakes of the failure to address the current Gaza genocide, millions of people are coming to the streets to protest. They know that politicians and decision-makers operate in a socio-political environment that must be changed by the people.

It is a dangerous signal to many states and non-state actors who struggle peacefully and within the law because they believe the international community will effectively address their issues. However, as they see the present hopeless state of affairs, these people and organisations often resort to illegal and violent means, abandoning peaceful resistance.

On the other hand, authoritarian regimes and predatory elites all find encouragement in a lawless world in which they can promote their vested interests by exploiting, subjugating, and victimising countless people. The alarming rise in authoritarian regimes and dysfunctional democracies in the world is an outcome of vicious geopolitics created by the global and regional powers under the heavy influence of predatory elites.

The US President John F Kennedy warned the world, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable."

This explains the desperate events of October 7, when Hamas attacked Israel. All peaceful means have been systematically blocked for decades.

A man gestures as Palestinians search for casualties a day after Israeli strikes on houses in Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip, on November 1, 2023. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

As Ilan Pappe, a renowned Israeli historian, clearly exposed in his work: terrorism did not exist among the Arabs in the Middle East. Terrorism was introduced to the region by the Zionist forces by creating fierce organisations like the Hagenah in 1920, the Irgun in 1930, the Stern Gang, and others later, all to terrorise the Palestinians to drive them out of their homes and homeland, where their forefathers had lived for centuries. The project of establishing a settler colonial state started more than one hundred years ago when the Palestinians were persecuted as these Jewish terrorist organisations were trained and armed by Britain and funded by the wealthy Zionist elites of Europe. Arabs were no match for the Zionist forces.

Israel was created in 1948 after destroying half of Palestine, perpetrating 31 massacres, and driving 750,000 Palestinians—then half of the population of the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea—out of their homes and homeland to make space for the immigrant Jews from Europe.

Four decades later, after the Hagenah was created to terrorise the Palestinians, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was created in the mid-1960s. The Palestinians waited patiently and peacefully, hoping the international community would address their issues. When the oppression continued, violent resistance started its course from the state of utter hopelessness and frustrations for which the inaction or inadequate actions of the global community were responsible.

During the last few decades, especially since 9/11, the "War on Terror"—a two-decade-long Western military onslaught without addressing the root causes of grievances and inhuman sufferings of countless people of the region—has been enormously painful, deadly, unjust, and in the end most counterproductive.

These are all tactics and agendas of transnational predatory elites to exploit, subjugate, and vilify targeted people to serve their mutual vested interests. The Palestinians are the worst and longest victims of this heinous agenda.

The people in the top positions of the military-industrial complex of Western powers and big businesses are the strongest allies of the pro-Israel elites, who all collude with each other to consolidate their collective power, establishing "strangleholds" on many Western governments, most dangerously on the US government. It's not only the Palestinian people, but the whole world—directly or indirectly—who is a victim of this corrupt and repugnant state.

Today, the world is again at a crossroads. The enormously powerful transnational elites and their alliances are hijacking Western democracies and the international rule of law. On the other hand, the people of this global society are ever more determined to establish their rights and dignity. Two mega-confrontational forces are dangerously approaching each other—one for the rule of law and justice and the other for authoritarianism, exploitation, and subjugation of the masses.

Europe's might-right policy caused the two most devastating wars of the 20th century, bringing the world to its knees. That is why, right after WWII, the world leaders reached a consensus to establish the new world order in 1945. The international rule of law recognises the equal rights of all nation-states with respect to their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security. Since the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 to mandate each member-state to uphold the rights, new optimism and vigour swept the world. As a result, 36 countries became independent during the post-WWII period, ending the colonial era.

The global rule of law ensures our collective well-being, freedom, and dignity. We, the people, are threatened when these universal ideas are undermined or trampled. The people of this global society are the stakeholders, and consequently, we all must fight to preserve, protect, and defend the world order that aims to help us achieve justice and peace.

Israel's fanatic and extremist government has already conflagrated the Middle East, a region where the global powers and the regional powers are increasingly getting entangled, each moving in their own way, failing to see the bigger picture and pushing the world "sleepwalking" into World War III.

A people-to-people global movement to restore the rule of law, reclaim democracies from the mouth of monstrous forces, and establish good governance that upholds human rights and sustains stability worldwide is the paradigm shift that is needed now, an imperative necessity for a healthy global community.

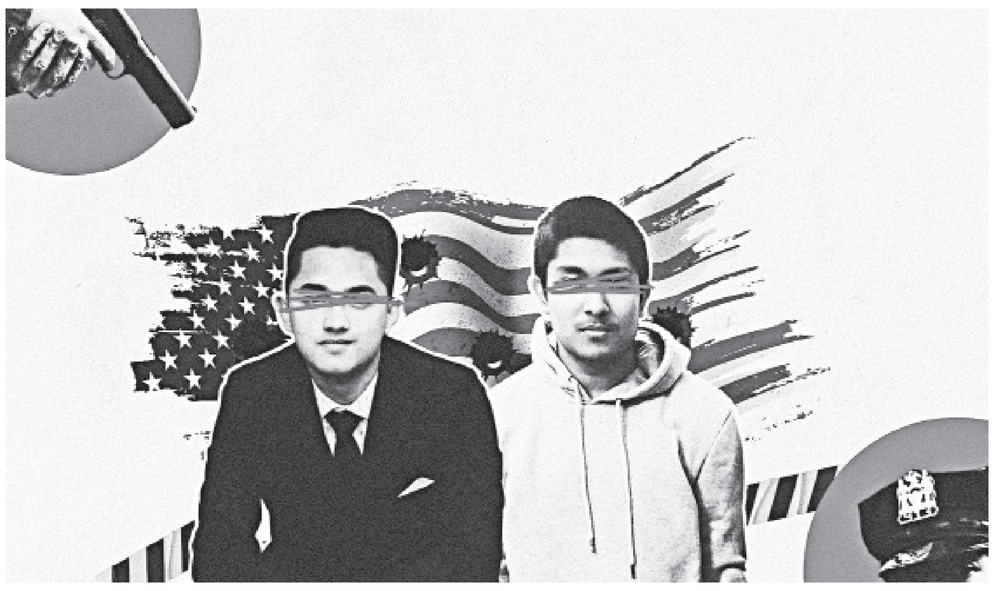
When violence hits home

Death of Bangladeshi youth in America

Sarzah Yeasmin
is a Boston-based Bangladeshi writer. She works at Harvard Kennedy School and is currently pursuing a micro-master's in data and economics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

SARZAH YEASMIN

The police killings of Win Rozario and Sayed Faisal, Bangladeshi American youth, have been devastating for the diaspora. In both incidents, killing came as a response to a mental health crisis. Both Faisal and Win were shot as a response to non-criminal calls, when they needed help. The instances of non-criminal domestic disturbance calls ending in police killings are numerous. The American Public Health Association posits that police violence limits the minority community's ability to achieve good health outcomes. The rampant and poignant crisis of police killings is a case of double jeopardy for the Bangladeshi American community: the Bangladeshi community's help seeking behaviour is limited as mental health and help seeking are generally discouraged and stigmatised in a system that is disinclined to provide social support and health services particularly to communities living on the margins.



VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

Shahana Hanif, the first Bangladeshi American member of New York City Council and a leading progressive voice in the community, mentioned how there are many Bangladeshis serving the law enforcement establishment at different levels and before police killed Win, there was a dearth of critical discourse on police violence on minority communities. She mentioned that police officers are trained to de-escalate but they continue to harm communities of colour. The crisis for the community is intensified further when the city continues to cut funding for social services and go above and beyond to fund the police.

Bangladeshi Americans make up one of the fastest growing low-income communities in cities like New York. The long history of documented immigration of Bangladeshis goes way back but the recent profile of the Bangladeshi migrant community is defined by the migration pattern starting in during the third wave of Bangladeshi immigration post 1981, when more working-class Bangladeshis started migrating to major urban centres. This community experiences acute health disparities and neglect, coupled with high rates of discrimination and low social support—added to the stressors of being in a recently settled immigrant household. Lack of meaningful access to resources also derails help seeking in the community. Win's and Faisal's deaths should not be moments of reckoning for the Bangladeshi community only, but for the whole of America as the processes that led to these heartbreaking outcomes sit on matrix of systemic bias, neglect, discrimination, inequality, and model minority mindset where "positive" stereotypes of Asians as hardworking, docile and apolitical migrants pushes the South Asian and Bangladeshi diaspora in the United States to excel at the expense of meeting their needs.

The negative verdict on Faisal's case is not surprising: a Massachusetts judge found that the officer was justified in shooting Faisal. Oftentimes the rationale of self-defence, police being responsive to their training rules, overvaluation of police witness and narrative over non-police witness play pivotal roles in decision making. Bringing a criminal charge resulting in an ultimate criminal conviction in cases of police killings is an uphill battle—with bottlenecks on every step of the legal system that confirm systemic bias and provide broad impunity to the police.

Police also receive privilege under criminal law as they have special justification for use of deadly force. There are also broader political and cultural issues around law enforcement, guns and safety advanced by special interest groups, police unions and politicians that need to be considered to comprehend the intricacies around police violence. If the police officer "reasonably" believes that use of lethal force must be used to prevent harm to self or others, then that is seen as enough of a justification for violence resulting in death. The cost of police killing is not as well documented, but it is mainly borne by the victim's family and the health care system, in some cases the city government if the case reaches a settlement—very small percentage of claims ever reach settlement. Killing comes at a minimal cost to the police department as many cases are squashed in the administrative reviews and procedures. The officers responsible for killing are usually put on paid administrative leave or modified duty and are eventually reassigned. If there are any sanctions on the police officer, they are usually recorded as disciplinary expenditure on the police department budget—not categorised as cost related to the use of lethal force.

Law enforcement officers can only use life threatening force when responding to a threat or use of deadly force. Win had a pair of scissors and Faisal had a knife. Would holding a knife or a pair of scissors in the presence of police officers armed with high calibre weapons count as using deadly force? What relative capacity of harm do these weapons possess compared to a gun used by a trained police officer with far more capacity for harm and damage? Knife is considered to be a weapon of deadly force under the twenty-one-foot rule which posits that the holder of a knife can cover a distance of 21 feet in the time it takes to fire two shots. All such minute technicalities and rules stand in favour of the police officer who decides to use force. Did Win's and Faisal's reaction triggered through unaddressed mental health issues constitute grave danger for the police? Did the victims substantially provoke police's use of lethal force?

Pointing a weapon or something that reasonably looks like a weapon is seen as one of the most common triggers for the police to use their firearm. One detail about police misconduct is important to note: any police misconduct is counted as a single act of applying deadly force—if the first shot from the police's gun is seen as justified, then that covers all subsequent shots and use of force and justifies any additional aggression. Liam McMahon shot Faisal a total of six times—and regardless of how many times the police would shoot, if the first shot is concluded as a justified shot, so are all the shots, even though death rate is much higher in cases where multiple shots are fired. Number of gunshots has a predictive value for death. Therefore, there is no disincentive for the police officer to use additional force or shoot additional times that lead to deaths.

> **Bringing a criminal charge resulting in an ultimate criminal conviction in cases of police killings is an uphill battle—with bottlenecks on every step of the legal system that confirm systemic bias and provide broad impunity to the police.**

Recent innovations in monitoring police conduct are only making incremental and gradual changes. In my conversation with Tanvir Chowdhury, President of Bangladesh Association of New England, he mentioned how pleading for justice for Faisal pushed the Cambridge police to improve their policies, wear body cameras and led the city to consider alternate social service for emergency response. Regardless of minor innovations, issues of poor governance remain unaddressed, and the police continue to have major control over visual evidence. Public who film violence also put themselves at risk of being subjected to police misconduct—ultimately undermining non-police public witness narrative.

According to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, the main reasons for the police wearing body cameras is to improve officer safety and reduce liability of police departments. However, small scale experimental studies have shown that the use of body cameras has the potential to improve police conduct. Video evidence has been pivotal for garnering public reaction, but it does not guarantee ease in bringing criminal charges or prosecution. Evidence would also not weigh in as much in instances where there are irregularities in disclosure. The bone chilling last moment of Win's life is recorded, the public can hear his mother repeatedly pleading to the police not to shoot her son. It is yet to be seen how public reaction and the video evidence of violence shapes the investigation and verdict in Win's case, but it has the potential to boost and prolong the campaign for justice. It was only in 2020 that Section 50-a of New York City's Civil Rights Law, which kept disciplinary records of police officers hidden from the public, was repealed after almost a decade-long fight. Any change is hard-won. While the avenue for criminal prosecution might be exhausted with the ruling in Faisal's case, Tanvir sees possibilities in civil litigation. The way Faisal was portrayed in the media in the aftermath of his undue death, caused his family severe distress. It is critical to pursue justice in the face of this gridlock to continue to honour and humanise our people.

Should the police be left out of the public safety plan then? Officers receiving training in de-escalation are quick to resort to lethal force, would calling the police for help entail an inevitable deadly outcome? Police violence, brushed off as a non-issue for the Asian and Bangladeshi community in America, has hit hard and hit home this time. For now, the only promise of change can be found in Win's and Faisal's families and communities that continue to fight for justice.

THE SHELF

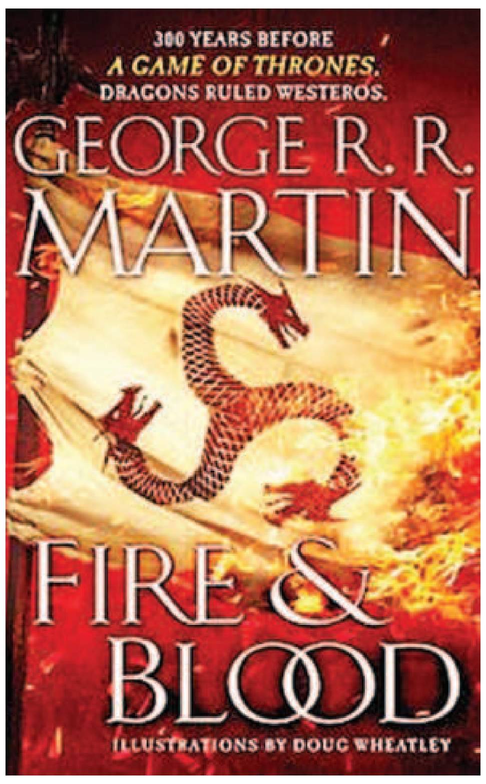
Book-to-screen adaptations to look forward to in the second half of 2024

‘The Lord of the Rings: The War of Rohirrim’ will revolve around Helm Hammerhand, the legendary king who ruled Rohan about 183 years before the events of the ‘LotR’ trilogy, and focus on his struggle against the Dunlendings.

ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

The first half of this year has treated us with some truly amazing book-to-screen adaptations like *Feud: Capote vs. The Swans*, *A Gentleman in Moscow*, and *Ripley*. The second half is also unlikely to disappoint. Here are some book-to-screen adaptations to pack the rest of your year with.

House of the Dragon **(Season 2)**
HBO, 2024
The first season of *House of the Dragon* left us in the thick of the brutal succession wars, the Dance of Dragons, that eventually led to the disastrous downfall of House Targaryen. The second season is set to pick up with the two warring sides scrambling to secure the alliances of the different noble houses in an attempt to solidify their positions. The final season of *Game of Thrones* and, in many ways, the first season of *House of the Dragon* (parts of the latter based on *Fire & Blood* by George R.R. Martin) left much to be desired. One can only hope this iteration will plunge fans back into the enthralling, gory world that we have come to know and love.



The Lord of the Rings: The War of Rohirrim
Warner Bros. Pictures, 2024
Peter Jackson’s *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, based on the books by J.R.R. Tolkien, was revolutionary. It paved the way for fantasy adaptations in contemporary film media. Now, more than two decades later, we are about to be immersed back into Middle-earth by means of an animated film. *The Lord of the Rings: The War of Rohirrim* will revolve around Helm Hammerhand, the legendary king who ruled Rohan about 183 years before the events of the *LotR* trilogy, and focus on his struggle against the Dunlendings. The movie will expand upon events touched upon in Tolkien’s *The Two Towers*. An exact release date has not been announced yet.

The Uglies
Netflix, TBA
Scott Westerfeld’s *Uglies* series has had a cult following for nearly two decades. Set in a future, dystopian world where the government mandates cosmetic surgery on every citizen when they turn 16 to transform them into “Pretties”, *Uglies* explores themes of autonomy, individualism, societal segregation, and appearances. After years spent in development hell, the film has finally been announced to be released some time this year.

The Watchers
Warner Bros. Pictures, 2024
The best sort of horror, in my opinion, is always the claustrophobic kind. That was the primary appeal of John Krasinski’s *A Quiet Place*. *The Watchers*, adapted from A.M. Shine’s eponymous novel, promises a similar brand of horror. The film follows a group of people stranded in a bunker in the middle of a forest in Ireland, trying to keep themselves safe from mysterious creatures dubbed “The Watchers” as the tensions within the group edge towards boiling over. The movie was released on June 7, 2024.

The Sandman **(Season 2)**
Netflix, TBA
Based on the comic book series by Neil Gaiman, the first season of *The Sandman* was a masterful demonstration of how to adapt a story to a different media without compromising the integrity of its source material. The series follows Morpheus, the personification of Dream, and his adventures across various realms and his interactions with different characters. Unlike many other comic-based media, *The Sandman* does not indulge in the villain-of-the-week trope. It has a rich universe packed with fascinating characters and intricate lore that keeps the viewers wanting more. Season 2 is sure to follow in that same vein. A release date has not been announced yet.

Adrita Zaima Islam *is a local workaholic who deals with her emotions by deprecating traumatised literary characters. Send her your sympathies at zaima2004adrita@gmail.com.*

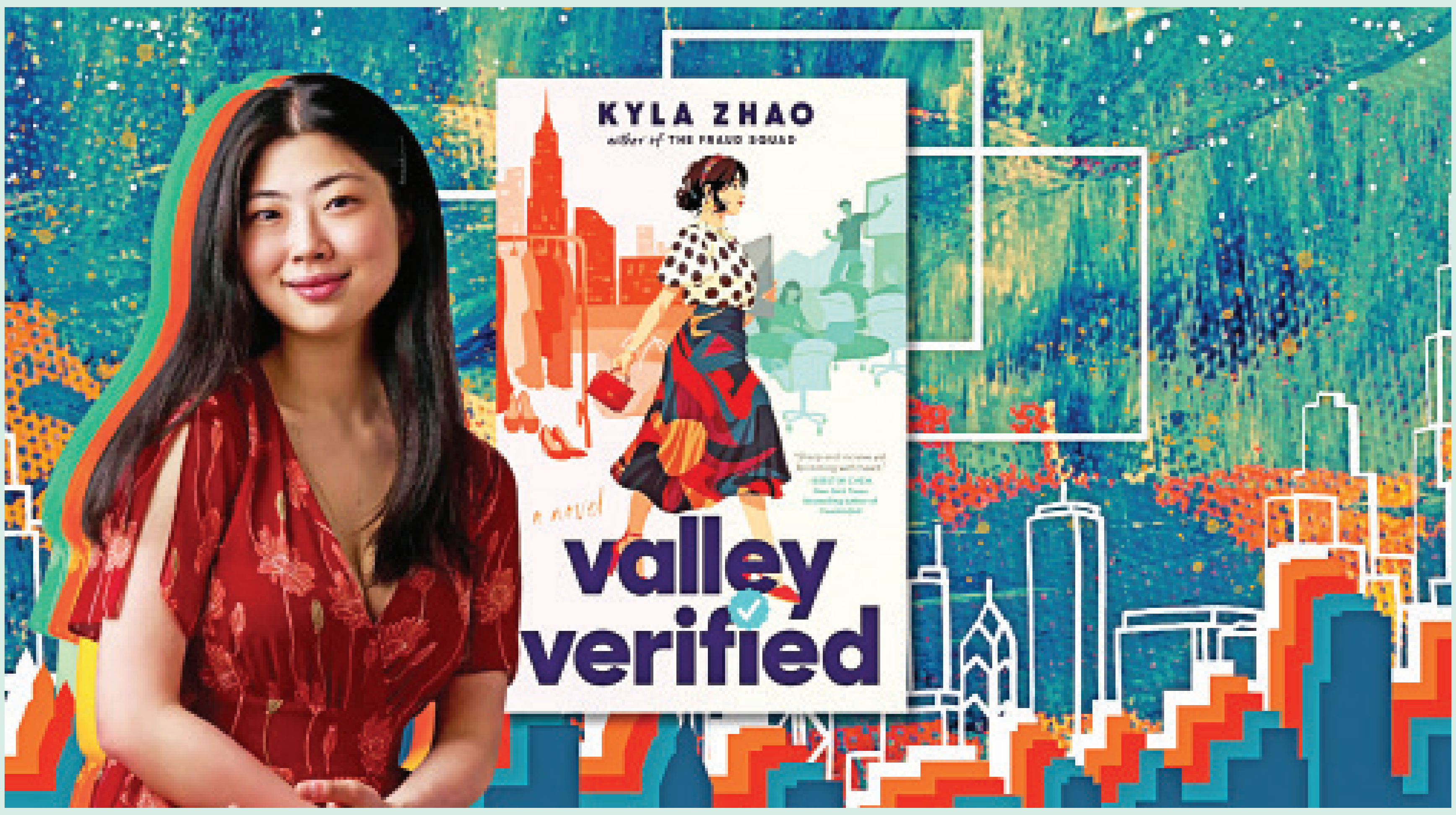


ILLUSTRATION: **AMREETA LETHE**

INTERVIEW

A LOOK AT AAPI representation in tech with Kyla Zhao of ‘Valley Verified’

TASHNUVA SUMAIYA ISLAM

This week, Kyla Zhao, the author of *Valley Verified* (Penguin Random House, 2024), graced us with an exclusive interview to give us insights into the changing trends in Asian American literature. It follows the story of Zoe Zeng, a modern Gen Z woman navigating career challenges when she switches from being a high-end fashion columnist to a tech employee in Silicon Valley. As the story unfolds, the readers get to know more about women in the tech industry and the difficulties they face behind the glitz of Silicon Valley.

As a woman in the tech industry herself, Kyla shared her experience as a young employee and the challenges many women face in the workplace and the changing tides in Asian American books.

In this part of the world, a lot of people don’t know about the Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) Month. Can you brief our readers on this event and its significance?
This lasts throughout the month of May, and is more of a concept in America. I’m not sure if it’s much of a concept in other western countries. Basically, it celebrates the AAPI community, our contributions to the world, and representation in the media. There wasn’t a lot of diverse representation in the past, and whilst it’s still not an ideal situation, we are starting to see a lot more coverage in the media of the AAPI community. That’s really heartwarming.

Has the statistics for Asian representation changed over the years or is it still lacking in many ways?
We’re definitely still in the minority. I think there has been a slight improvement in the numbers over the past decade, but we’re nowhere close to where we should be yet.

However, one thing I’ve started to see is that we are creating a variety of AAPI stories. In the past, one well-known work of Asian-American literature was *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) by Amy Tan. I adore the book and think everyone should read it. But many people started to think that’s the only kind of Asian story that could be told–it has to be an immigrant story which is quite sad and focuses on family trauma. For sure, those stories are valid because they speak about a very important part in a lot of Asian people’s lives. But we’re seeing Asians can also be part of joyful, uplifting, and upbeat stories. I think having variety in representation is incredibly important.

A lot of your audiences are Gen Z right now. How is the Gen Z female reader diaspora different from the readerbases we used to see while we were growing up?
I think Gen Z has invented the phenomenon of ‘girl boss’. Right now, there’s a trend on TikTok and social media to reclaim your girlhood. There’s a lot more willingness to move past the traditional roles of what women are supposed to look like and what they’re supposed to do. It’s still far from the ideal situation because I think a lot of Gen Z feminism is eurocentric. But, I think we’re starting to realise women can do whatever they want. If they want to go into the workforce, they can. If they want to be the girl boss, they can. They also can stay home and be a homemaker. Each approach is equally valid.

This is an excerpt. Read the full interview on *The Daily Star* and DS Books’ websites.
Tashnuva Sumaiya Islam*, when not reading, loves to paint, write, and share her photography on Instagram! Follow her @tea_tae93 or email her at tasnuva.i93@gmail.com.*

REFLECTIONS

Literature or sadism: The bleak picture of trauma in ‘A Little Life’

ALIFA MONJUR

There are few novelists as cruel as Hanya Yanagihara—and in *A Little Life* (Doubleday, 2015), her pen draws blood. Nine years on, the controversy of the 800-page character study of an irreparably broken protagonist is still ablaze with accusations that it sadistically exploits trauma for profit.

A Little Life begins deceitfully enough, with four friends moving to New York after graduating university but as it tracks their lives for the next several decades, Jude St. Francis emerges as the black-hole centre of the story. At first, Jude is reserved and distant, a darkness amidst the friend group’s cosmic kaleidoscope of buzzing parties, dingy apartments, and bloodthirsty ambition. An enigma who divulges nothing, his friends know nothing about him, not even his ethnicity or how he really got the injury which frequently debilitates his legs.

But soon, with a growing ferocity, the reader is pulled into a horrific truth about Jude. Marred by an inconceivable childhood trauma that is he is unable to process, let alone confess or heal from, Jude sinks deeper into disturbing self-harm and self-hatred over the decades.

Yanagihara, a former *Condé Nast Traveler* editor, is a travel writer. She trades in storytelling that is so richly descriptive that the reader is transported to the deepest, darkest depths of Jude’s mind.

Jude’s character is written in such excruciating detail that you can practically feel him bleeding into the ink on the page; your own head echoes each self-loathing thought, every twisted conclusion. You sit powerlessly beside him on the bathroom floor as he slashes his own skin; you are locked in the room with his monstrous abusers as he relives childhood trauma.

A LITTLE LIFE
HANYA YANAGIHARA

ILLUSTRATION: **MAISHA SYEDA**

The intense connection that Yanagihara successfully creates between Jude and the reader is a rare literary feat. Written almost completely in third person, the reader does not become Jude but becomes someone who deeply cares and worries for him. And it is precisely this written excellence that earns *A Little Life* its controversy. At what point is writing so expressive, so raw, that it makes a dangerous spectacle of human suffering?

Equipped with a powerful reader-protagonist union, Yanagihara plays a cruel game. She dangles the hope of Jude’s recovery temptingly, only to snatch it away each time.

In the end, nothing will save Jude—not success, money, friendship, romance, not even parental love. He will fear those who love him unconditionally and will never believe he is worthy of genuine human connection. Being adopted at age 30 will not console the pain of being an orphan and the terrifying power he commands as an eminent lawyer has no strength against the demons at home.

Of course, I would’ve liked it better if the book ended just one chapter earlier, but literature is more than fan service, and Yanagihara intended, for better or for worse, to elicit the reader’s misery. A happy ending would have meant closing the book with a satisfied smile; it would not have left the reader with a mass of emptiness and pure anger for how Jude’s life turned out. That is why she not only wrote an ‘unfixable’ character but did so with brute maximalism.

Make no mistake, however, of reducing Yanagihara’s graphic writing to mere profit-seeking. Different literary representations of trauma, no matter how ugly or painful, are important. As philosophy professor Eliss Marder puts it, literature is how we communicate aspects of the human experience that exceed ordinary expression and may even exceed human understanding. Similarly, Cathy Caruth, a pioneer in trauma theory, has long considered literature a vehicle for witnessing what cannot be completely known. We cannot reject pain from public comprehension because it is difficult to stomach. For some, trauma is not a backstory from which they can turn away. For some, the world is relentless, unforgiving, and there is no greater purpose nicely weaved throughout to make it all worthwhile.

A Little Life is a tormenting read, but it is so much more than its brutality. Between the lines, Yanagihara sketches an exquisite portrait of human compassion and empathy. She writes most strikingly of friendship as unconditional love, selflessness, chosen family, and a deeply transformative human connection. Undoubtedly, Jude encounters vicious adversaries throughout his life that permanently scar him but the friendship he finds is exceptional. The fact that it still could not completely “save” him does not change the love and compassion he found in so many.

There is a reason why several chapters are invested for the development of secondary characters, and why the only time Yanagihara employs a first-person perspective is from someone who loved Jude unconditionally. These characters’ humanity rises above all and their stories regale the reader with a subtle warmth unlike any other: friends and readers alike end up considering it a privilege to help carry any part of Jude’s burden he allows, even when it is extremely taxing.

Much like *A Little Life* shows, all-consuming connection is not healthy, but it is profoundly human.

Alifa Monjur *is studying commerce and law in Sydney.*

Star SPORT
DHAKA THURSDAY JUNE 20, 2024, ASHAR 6, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV AND STAR SPORTS 1,2,3
West Indies v England
Live from 6:30 am
Afghanistan vs India
Live from 8:30 pm

T SPORTS
Euro
Slovenia vs Serbia
Live from 7:00 pm
England vs Denmark
Live from 10:00 pm
Italy vs Spain
Live from 1:00 am (Friday)

Can Tigers' batting thrive as a unit?

Australia have six wins to their name against Bangladesh's four in 10 T20Is. All four of the Tigers' victories came in Mirpur.

Bangladesh have never beaten Australia in the T20 World Cup, losing in five meetings.

Average first innings total at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium is 118. Pacers and spinners have had similar experiences at the venue as both have conceded runs at less than seven an over. In this T20 World Cup, however, spinners have conceded more, 8.45 runs an over, than pacers (7.74).

Bangladesh pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib has taken seven wickets in the Powerplay, joint-most with Afghanistan Fazalhaq Farooqi for most scalps taken in the first six overs in the tournament. Meanwhile, Mustafizur Rahman's 67 dot balls is the joint-most in the group-stage of the tournament alongside New Zealand's Lockie Ferguson.

At the batting front, Marcus Stoinis (10) and Travis Head (9) both are in the top five for most sixes hit in the edition so far. Towhid Hridoy is in the top 10 with six maximums.

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib, who will be on a hattrick whenever he comes to bowl against Australia, needs one wicket to become the first player to take 50 wickets in T20 World Cup history. He is also two wickets away from becoming only the second player after Tim Southee (164) to take 150 scalps in the format.

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh are set to step into the Super Eight stage against Australia on Friday at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua, in what will be their biggest test so far in this T20 World Cup.

The bowlers have carried the Tigers through to this round, but from here on the batting will have to turn the tide of disappointments as the Najmul Hossain Shanto-led team look to make a case against far stronger opponents.

Australia, winners of the 2021 edition, have come to the Super Eights with a perfect record of four wins on the trot. They have largely not come under a great deal of pressure, and with Antigua providing some of the bouncier pitches in the Caribbean, the wicket may suit the Aussies against the slower cutters of Mustafizur Rahman, who has been incredibly difficult to hit so far in this tournament.

However, some rain has reportedly seeped into the proceedings, leading to an expected drop in zip from the surface than is the norm there. Yet, it doesn't provide much room for optimism for Bangladesh's batting, which has been in dire straits, often stretched too thin.

Despite having encountered two Associate teams in four matches, the top order is still looking for runs, with Tanzid Hasan Tamim showing some resistance on one occasion. Liton Das has not been in his elements, even though he looked good against Sri Lanka, while skipper Shanto remains entangled in a torrid run of batting form.

On top of that, Shakib Al Hasan's batting contributions have been sporadic. The onus thus falls too hard on the likes of Towhid Hridoy and Mahmudullah Riyad, who have often had to bat to stage rescue acts rather than playing their natural game.

Bangladesh's bowling plans have worked out magnificently, but the cue now begins for the batters to share the burden of responsibility. Up against one of the best in the business, what can Shanto and company do to leave a mark?

ASSESS CONDITIONS QUICKLY

If Bangladesh bowl first, there will be enough time for the struggling batting unit to come up with a plan, but the same cannot be said if they bat first. The Tigers have lost 10 wickets in the Powerplay across four games, making them wary of a collapse at the very top. Therefore, the opening pair needs to put on a more solid effort to keep the Australian pace attack at bay in the Powerplay. The Aussies have played all their games in the Caribbean and may assess conditions better than any other side, which does not exactly play into Bangladesh's hands.

BETTER SHOT SELECTION CAN BUCK TREND

The wicket is not the only issue behind batting failures. The Tigers also need to look at some of their shot selections. Bangladesh batters repeatedly played poor shots against Nepal, leading to a score of just 105. Shanto himself reverse-swept a delivery to slip against the Netherlands, while Hridoy was also at fault against Nepal, going for a slog sweep when the ball was not there for that particular shot. On these wickets, the batters need to show resilience and game awareness to maximize impact.

SOMEONE NEEDS TO CARRY THE BAT

Just how Shakib carried the bat against the Netherlands, one from the top order must put a heavy price tag on their wicket once they get set.

MORE LOWER-ORDER MOJO

Both Netherlands and Nepal fixtures showcased some beneficial mojo from the Bangladesh lower order. While being cautious with shot selection, the Tigers cannot forego aggression when required. Rishad Hossain got some crucial hits against Nepal, and so did Jaker Ali in the Netherlands game, but Bangladesh will hope that the frontline batters take the lion's share of responsibility against the mighty men from Down Under.

TIGERS' SUPER 8S FIXTURES

Date / Match	Time / Venue
JUNE 21	06:30 AM
Bangladesh vs Australia	ANTIGUA
JUNE 22	08:30 PM
Bangladesh vs India	ANTIGUA
JUNE 25	06:30 AM
Bangladesh vs Afghanistan	ST. VINCENT

Foden promises 'improved' Bellingham partnership

REUTERS, BLANKENHAIN

After a shaky start to England's European Championship campaign that had critics questioning his starting spot, Phil Foden insists his partnership with Jude Bellingham will only flourish.

England, who sit atop Group C, face Denmark on Thursday in Frankfurt before closing out the group stage against Slovenia on June 25.

Foden was a headliner this past Premier League season, pouring in 27 goals for Manchester City across all competitions to win Premier League Footballer of the Year honours.

But lining up on the left of a front three in England's 1-0 win over Serbia, with Jude Bellingham occupying the central No. 10 position in which Foden has thrived with City, he drifted out of the game.

"Jude's obviously an exceptional talent," Foden said in a Football Association video. "He's a leader now, I think he's turning into a leader. I think our link-up play is good at times and I think it's improving as well, and can keep getting better. So he's an exciting talent and I enjoy playing with him."

While some chalked up Sunday's performance as just a bad game for Foden, it drew criticism from some pundits.

Former Spain midfielder Cesc Fabregas said players with Foden's talent have the quality to hold the ball anywhere on the pitch.

Spain and Italy face off to extend record Euro rivalry

REUTERS, DORTMUND

When Italy and Spain meet in Gelsenkirchen on Thursday, they will write a new chapter in what has developed into the most intense head-to-head rivalry in European Championship history.

No two countries have met more often at Euro tournaments than the Azzurri and La Furia Roja - the Red Fury - who will line up against one another for the eighth time since 1960.

It will also be the fifth edition in a row that the two heavyweights have met head-to-head at a European Championship.

- Italy have lost just one match in their last 10 meetings against Spain in Euros and the World Cup (W4 D5). The sole defeat came in the 2012 Euro final.
- This will be the 11th encounter in major events between Spain and Italy - Euros (8) and World Cup (3) – a record between two European sides.
- Alvaro Morata, with 10 goals, became Spain's second-highest goalscorer at major international tournaments (Euros/World Cup combined), behind only David Villa (13). The 31-year-old also netted his seventh goal at the Euros and only Cristiano Ronaldo (14) and Michel Platini (9) have netted more in the competition.
- Morata also scored against Italy in the semi-final of the previous edition.

Over much of the country's sporting history, Spain's fans looked enviously across the Mediterranean Sea as Italy racked up four World Cup titles and the Azzurri battled for European supremacy with the mighty Germans.

But of the three Euro crowns won by the two countries over the last four tournaments, two have gone to Spain, underscoring their rise as a soccer superpower that also saw them crowned world champions in 2010.

In the most recent European Championship showdown, Italy defeated Spain in a nail-biting Euro 2020 semifinal that went to penalties at Wembley.

In a last-16 encounter in 2016, Italy were again victorious when defender Giorgio Chiellini scored from close range and Graziano Pelle volleyed home in the dying moments for a 2-0 win.

But in their most important meeting in all competitions, Spain triumphed in the final of Euro 2012 when Vicente del Bosque's all-conquering team thrashed Italy 4-0 in Kyiv which remains the biggest win in a European Championship final

The stakes will not be as high in Thursday's Group B game at the Arena AufSchalke. Spain and Italy both won their opening matches against Croatia and Albania, respectively, and look well-placed to advance into the knockout rounds.

But if they finish first and second in the group, they could be on course for another meeting, this time in the final in Berlin on July 14.

SHORT CORNER

Williamson steps down as New Zealand

Kane Williamson has stepped down as captain of New Zealand's white-ball teams and opted out of a national contract for the 2024/25 season following the Black Caps' early exit from the T20 World Cup. Williamson's decision marks the end of an era for a New Zealand team which made the semi-finals of the previous three T20 World Cups and the 2021 final but ultimately missed out on a maiden white-ball title.

Suryakumar happy to temper aggression on slow tracks

Suryakumar Yadav has proved time and again the kind of havoc he can wreak with the bat but India's lynchpin believes being able to control that aggression is equally important on the slow pitches in the ongoing T20 World Cup. The group stage of the 20-team tournament, especially its U.S. leg, proved a low-scoring affair with no batter managing to score a hundred.

Junior AHF Cup Hockey: Men's team in semifinals

Bangladesh men's U-21 team continued their winning streak in Junior AHF Cup to ensure their semifinal berth with a 4-2 win over Thailand but women's U-21 side tasted their first defeat in a 3-0 loss to Chinese Taipei in Singapore yesterday. The three wins from as many matches means the Men in Red and Green topped Pool A with nine points, which also made sure of their place in Junior Asia Cup.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website*

-CONMEBOL-
COPA AMERICA
USA 2024
21
10
10
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BRAZIL, ARGENTINA FIXTURES

Keeping in mind the massive fan following of Brazil and Argentina in Bangladesh, the two teams' group-stage fixtures, according to Bangladesh time, are as follows:

BRAZIL			ARGENTINA		
June 25	Brazil vs Costa Rica	7:00 am	June 21	Argentina vs Canada	6:00 am
June 29	Paraguay vs Brazil	7:00 am	June 26	Chile vs Argentina	7:00 am
July 03	Brazil vs Colombia	7:00 am	June 30	Argentina vs Peru	6:00 am

GROUPS		
	A. Argentina, Peru, Chile, Canada	**C.** USA, Uruguay, Panama, Bolivia
	B. Mexico, Ecuador, Venezuela, Jamaica	**D.** Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Costa Rica

Spotlight on Messi, Endrick IN 48TH COPA AMERICA

AFP

World champions Argentina get an expanded Copa America under way on Friday morning with Lionel Messi looking to add a second continental title in what is almost certainly his final appearance in the tournament.

The 108-year-old competition is being held in the United States with the host nation among six teams from the CONCACAF region joining the 10 South American nations looking for a place in the July 14 final in Miami.

Whether this is Messi's goodbye to elite international football remains to be seen, but what is certain is that the eight-times Ballon d'Or winner would relish the chance to win a third straight major tournament with his country, having won the last Copa America in 2021 which featured 10 teams and the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

"It's great to have records and continue to achieve things but I won't take part in a World Cup just to say I've done six," Messi told ESPN last week.

After facing Canada, Argentina have Chile and Peru to deal with, but they know that tough opposition awaits in the knock-out stage with rivals Brazil and Uruguay the two expected challengers for the title.

Brazil have struggled in CONMEBOL qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup having won just two of their opening six games and they currently sit in sixth place in the standings having lost to Uruguay, Colombia and Argentina.

There are several familiar names missing from Dorival Junior's Brazil squad with Casemiro, Gabriel Jesus and Thiago Silva left out while Richarlison and Neymar are both missing due to injury.

The pressure will be on the Real Madrid attacking pair of Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo to translate their club form into success for the Selecao while there is much excitement around the senior tournament debut of 17-year-old talent Endrick, who is set to join Real next month from Palmeiras.

Meanwhile, 15-time winners Uruguay have impressed under 68-year-old coach Marcelo Bielsa, who has infused his high-energy style, raising expectations with wins over Argentina and Brazil.

Colombia, unbeaten in over two years, boast Liverpool's Luis Diaz and a rejuvenated James Rodriguez, making Nestor Lorenzo's team formidable.

The USA aim to regain momentum after a World Cup last-16 finish, while Mexico, Copa finalists in 1993 and 2001, look below par but enjoy strong support in the USA.

While FIFA will be looking closely at the organization of the event, two years out from the World Cup which will be co-hosted by the USA, Canada and Mexico, the tournament's rich history and prestige means it is much, much more than a 'trial event'.

- Copa is the oldest active international football tournament, having started in 1916, with Uruguay winning the first edition of the tournament.
- Argentina and Uruguay are the most successful teams in the Copa America, with 15 titles each while Brazil, another South American giant and the most successful team in the FIFA World Cup (with five titles) is second with nine titles.
- The Copa América which was held in the United States in 2016 to celebrate 100 years of the tournament, was the first edition of the competition that took place outside the South American territory and had featured 16 teams.
- The 48th edition of the tournament will be held in 14 cities across the United States, with each location hosting 2 or 3 games.

The Daily Star

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Russia, N Korea sign mutual defence pact

Putin says the deal will protect both countries from aggression; Kim hails new ties as 'alliance'

Russia's President Vladimir Putin and North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un pose for a photo during a signing ceremony following bilateral talks in Pyongyang, North Korea, yesterday.
PHOTO: AFP

REUTERS, *Seoul*

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday signed a deal with North Korea's Kim Jong Un that included a mutual defence pledge, one of Russia's most significant moves in Asia for years that Kim said amounted to an "alliance".

Putin's pledge overhauls Russia's entire post-Soviet policy on North Korea just as the United States and its Asian allies try to gauge how far Russia could deepen support for the only country to have tested a nuclear weapon this century.

On his first visit to Pyongyang since July 2000, Putin explicitly linked Russia's deepening of ties with North Korea to the West's growing support for Ukraine and said Moscow could develop military and technical cooperation with Pyongyang.

After talks, they signed a "comprehensive strategic partnership" pact, which Putin said included a mutual defence clause in the case of aggression against either country.

"The comprehensive partnership agreement signed today provides, among other things, for mutual assistance in the event of aggression against one of the parties to this agreement," Putin said.

He said Western deliveries of advanced, long-range weaponry including F-16 fighters to Ukraine for strikes against Russia breached major agreements.

"In connection with this, Russia does not exclude for itself the development of military-technical cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Putin said.

Kim praised Russia for making what he cast as an enormously significant strategic move to support North Korea, which was founded in 1948 with the Soviet Union's backing.

Putin's courting of Kim, which has included gifts of limousines and a tour of Russia's new space launch centre, has alarmed the United States and its Asian allies.

Putin was greeted by cheering crowds lining the streets of Pyongyang along with children waving Russian flags and a military salute. Kim, 40, greeted Putin at the airport.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

4 arrested over double murder in Bogura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogura*

Law enforcers arrested four people in Bogura town yesterday over the murder of two men two days ago.

The arrestees are Kabir Ahmed Mithu, 60, general secretary of Bogura Motor Workers' Union, Azbeen Rifat, 19, a Chhatra League activist, Naim Hossain, 28, and Sheikh Sourav, 26.

They are among the 13 named accused in the murder case filed with Bogura Sadar Police Station by Hena Begum, mother of Noman Ahmed Sharif, one of the deceased.

Noman and Rumman Ahmed were hacked to death in Bogura town's Chakarpara area around 12:30am on Tuesday.

The two were killed following an altercation over a trivial matter, said police.

Hena Begum also accused 15 unnamed people of the murder.

Hossain, a friend of the deceased, sustained bullet wounds in the incident. He

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

EPIC Group to get $100m loan from IFC

The company will spend funds on expansion in Bangladesh, new manufacturing facility in India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Finance Corporation (IFC) will provide EPIC Group with a $100 million debt financing package to support its expansion in Bangladesh and the construction of a new manufacturing unit in India.

The package includes a $70 million sustainability-linked loan and a $30 million green loan.

Additionally, EPIC Group will use the proceeds to upgrade its washing and wastewater treatment plant and to invest in technology and equipment that will reduce energy and water use in Bangladesh, IFC said in a statement on Monday.

IFC's funding, which includes its first green loan with sustainability-linked features in the manufacturing sector, is expected to help EPIC Group create over 10,500 direct jobs and 17,000 indirect jobs in the two countries.

The loan is structured with three ambitious corporate sustainability performance targets, including reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emission intensity, decreasing freshwater intensity, and increasing the representation of women in junior and middle management.

"Partnering with IFC is a significant step for EPIC Group in pursuit of a more sustainable and innovative textile manufacturing industry," said Ranjan Mahtani, executive chairman of EPIC Group.

"This collaboration not only allows us to expand our operations in Bangladesh and India but also reinforces our commitment to reducing our environmental footprint

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Israel may have violated laws of war in Gaza

Says UN rights office; 24 more Palestinians killed as Israeli forces bombard western Rafah

- UN rights office calls for investigations into attacks
- Lawlessness in Gaza impedes aid via Kerem Shalom crossing: UN
- Tensions soar on Israel-Lebanon border
- Gaza death toll rises to 37,396

AGENCIES

Israeli forces may have repeatedly violated the laws of war and failed to distinguish between civilians and fighters in the Gaza conflict, the UN human rights office said yesterday.

Separately, the head of a UN inquiry accused the Israeli military of carrying out an "extermination" of Palestinians.

In a report on six deadly Israeli attacks, the UN human rights office (OHCHR) said Israeli forces "may have systematically violated the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precautions in attack".

"The requirement to select means and methods of warfare that avoid or at the very least minimise to every extent civilian harm appears to have been consistently violated in Israel's bombing campaign," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said.

Israel's permanent mission to the United Nations in Geneva characterised the analysis as "factually, legally, and methodologically flawed". "Since the OHCHR has, at best, a partial factual picture, any attempt to reach legal conclusions is inherently flawed," it said.

Meanwhile, Israeli air strikes and clashes between troops and Hamas fighters rocked Gaza yesterday, as Israel's army warned it had readied an "offensive" against the Lebanese Hezbollah movement on the country's northern front.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Nvidia eclipses Microsoft as most valuable company

REUTERS

Nvidia became the world's most valuable company on Tuesday, dethroning tech heavyweight Microsoft as its high-end processors play a central role in a scramble to dominate artificial intelligence technology.

Shares of the chipmaker climbed 3.5 percent to $135.58, lifting its market capitalisation to $3.335 trillion, just days after overtaking iPhone maker Apple to become the second most valuable company.

Microsoft's stock market value was $3.317 trillion as its shares dipped 0.45 percent. Apple's stock slipped over 1 percent, leaving its value at $3.286 trillion.

Nvidia's stunning surge in market value over the past year has become emblematic of a Wall Street frenzy driven by optimism about emerging AI technology.

While Nvidia's rally has lifted the S&P 500 and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Impactful Sakib needs to carry on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was an easy presumption to put Bangladesh's bowling as their main weapon ahead of the T20 World Cup, especially since the batters have provided very little to be excited about in recent times.

But, very few could have predicted Tanzim Hasan Sakib to be the Tigers' lead pacer in this tournament -- he is currently occupying the joint-second spot in the top wicket-takers' list alongside New Zealand's Trent Boult, Windies' Akeal Hosein, and South Africa's Anrich Nortje with nine wickets in four games.

However, what sets Sakib apart from the rest is the impact he has had with the new ball -- the 21-year-old has been the most impactful bowler in the tournament so far, with a bowling impact of 251.54

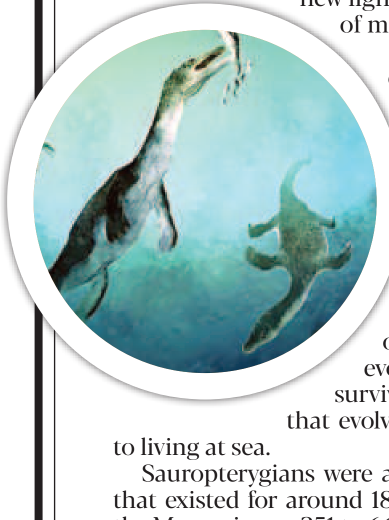
SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

South Africa opener Quinton de Kock plays a shot on the leg side during their Twenty20 World Cup Super Eight match against USA at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in North Sound, Antigua and Barbuda yesterday. De Kock's 40-ball 74 helped the Proteas post 194 for four and eventually win the match by 18 runs.
PHOTO: AFP

Reptile fossil shines new light on early marine evolution

CNN ONLINE

Scientists have discovered a 246 million-year-old marine reptile fossil, the oldest of its kind to be found in the Southern Hemisphere, shining a new light on the early evolution of marine mammals.



The greatest mass extinction event in the fossil record – known as "The Great Dying" – occurred some 252 million years ago, wiping out some 95 percent of species on land and sea.

What followed was the emergence of new creatures that evolved from those that survived, including reptiles that evolved from living on land to living at sea.

Sauropterygians were ancient aquatic reptiles that existed for around 180 million years during the Mesozoic era, 251 to 66 million years ago.

Nothosaurs were a type of Sauropterygian that lived on Earth during the Triassic period, the first period of the age of dinosaurs, 251 million to 200 million years ago.

However, their early evolution had only been known from fossils found in the Northern Hemisphere, according to the study published in the journal Current Biology Monday.

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Sylhet floods worsening

Five lakh more affected

DWOHA CHOWDHURY *and* **MINTU DESHWARA**

The flood situation in Sylhet has been deteriorating fast with the rivers inundating vast tracts of land and upending the lives of millions.

An additional 500,000 people were affected yesterday as large parts of Moulvibazar and Habiganj got flooded.

Hundreds of neighbourhoods in Sylhet and Sunamganj districts were inundated the night before Eid.

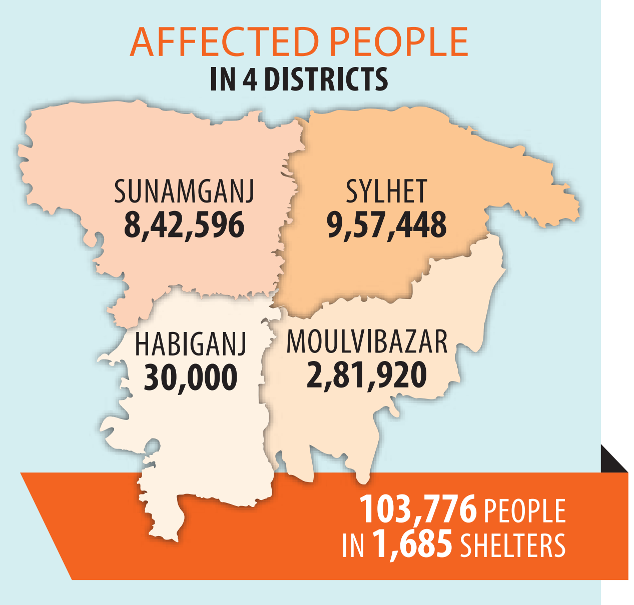
The number of people affected by the floods rose to 2.1 million, and 103,776 moved to 1,685 shelters.

According to Bangladesh Water Development Board, water level of the Surma, a major river in the region, fell a bit, but was still above the danger level yesterday while the Kushiyara swelled fast, crossed the danger level, and then started to fall slowly.

In Moulvibazar, the Manu, Dhalai and Juri rivers swelled fast and were flowing above the danger levels, while the Khowai in Habiganj and the Sari and Gowain in Sylhet were below danger levels.

Debojit Singha, additional divisional commissioner of Sylhet, said, "More areas are being inundated. Our focus is on relief efforts to ease people's sufferings."

Thousands of people in the districts were eating dry food as cooking was not an option in the flooded villages.



Balai Malakar, who took refuge at Dighli Govt Primary School in Chhatak upazila of Sunamganj, said his four grandchildren were refusing to eat flattened and puffed rice.

"The children are crying. They have not eaten a proper meal since early Monday. Besides, there is an acute shortage of drinking water," he said, adding that there was waist-high water in his village.

Officials said the government has provided adequate amounts of rice, dry food, baby food, and cash for people.

Sylhet City Corporation yesterday fed 32,000 people khichuri twice at the shelters.

In Moulvibazar's Shyamerkona area, Sadi Miah, 8, and Hridoy Miah, 17, drowned in flood water yesterday, said Akther Uddin, chairman of Chandnighat Union Parishad.

Zahid Faruk, state minister for water, told reporters in Sunamganj that the government had a project to dredge 20 rivers in Sunamganj to reduce flooding. The Surma is being dredged and all the broken dykes will be repaired by next monsoon.

The government postponed four Higher Secondary Certificate examinations in Sylhet until July 8.

Houses of an Ashrayan project are almost submerged in floodwater in Islampur area of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila. A large part of the upazila was flooded over two weeks ago due to downpours and an onrush of upstream waters. The photo was taken on Wednesday afternoon. PHOTO: **SHEIKH NASIR**

Primary students drop by over eight lakh

Govt census cites Covid-19 fallout, declining birth rate and removal of duplicate student data as reasons

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The number of students in all primary-level educational institutions has decreased by over 8.32 lakh in 2023 from the previous year, a government report reveals.

According to the Annual Primary School Census (APSC) 2023, prepared by the Department of Primary Education (DPE), the number of students at just government primary schools dropped by over 10 lakh.

YEAR	PRY SCHOOLS	STUDENTS
2019	1,29,258	2,01,22,337
2020	1,33,002	2,15,51,691
2021	1,18,891	2,00,90,057
2022	1,14,539	2,05,46,091
2023	1,14,630	1,97,13,685

SOURCE: DIRECTORATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

On the contrary, the number of kindergarten and Ebtedayee madrasa students rose by around 2.56 lakh and 36,000 respectively, said the census, which came out this week.

Farid Ahmed, secretary of the primary and mass education ministry, said a dip in the country's birth rate and the DPE's new software, which removed duplicate student data, were two of the main reasons behind the drop in the numbers.

He added that some students moved to Qawmi madrasas after the Covid-19 pandemic due to financial struggles – another reason for the decreased number of students at primary schools.

The APSC-2023 data shows there were 1,97,13,685 students in 1,14,630 government and non-government primary schools, kindergartens, Ebtedayee madrasas and others last year.

In 2022, there were 2,05,46,091 students in 1,14,539 primary-level educational institutions, it added.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

PM leaves for Delhi today on 2-day visit

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to leave Dhaka for New Delhi today on a two-day visit aimed at advancing the bilateral relationship following the general elections in both countries this year.

During the state visit, Bangladesh and India are likely to sign about a dozen agreements, memorandums of understanding and letters of intent in the areas of economy, power,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Dhaka, Delhi may sign rail transit deal

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh and India are likely to sign a memorandum of understanding for using each other's railway lines to boost cross-border connectivity.

The deal is expected to be inked during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's two-day India visit starting today, Bangladesh Railway (BR) officials said.

As per the MoU, India will have access to BR tracks and Bangladesh will be able to use Indian Railways (IR) lines to operate passenger and freight trains up to Nepal and Bhutan borders, they said.

"An MoU on railway transit and transshipment is expected to be signed," BR Director General Sardar Shahadat Ali told The Daily Star yesterday.

Railways Secretary Humayun Kabir will accompany the prime minister to the signing ceremony, he said.

With the transshipment facility, Indian trains currently carry goods and passengers up to the India-Bangladesh border. From there, BR locomotives pull the coaches into Bangladesh and drop off passengers or unload goods before taking the coaches back to the border.

If India is allowed rail transit through Bangladesh under the new MoU, its trains will be operated from one part of India to another via Bangladesh.

The move comes at a time when India is set to develop an alternative railway network through

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

GRAFT CLAIMS

Discussions on former DMP chief speculative

Says home boss

STAR REPORT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said the discussions about former Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia's graft allegations appeared to be based on speculation.

"As far as I know, the discussions are speculative. No formal allegations have been brought against him yet. Regarding the claims about his illegal properties, he hasn't been summoned yet. If he's summoned, we'll understand, and he'll definitely have some explanation," UNB reported him as saying while speaking to journalists at the Secretariat.

About ex-IGP Benazir

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Rickshaws were seen neatly parked on the roadside in the capital's Tejgaon industrial area yesterday, as many rickshaw-pullers, along with other Eid holidaymakers, have not yet returned to Dhaka from their village homes. PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Israeli forces pound central Gaza camps

Deepen invasion of Rafah in south; 35 more Palestinians killed

REUTERS, *Cairo*

- Hamas fighters battle Israeli forces with anti-tank rockets
- Israeli authorities free 33 Palestinians detained during past months
- Gaza death toll rises to 37,431

Israeli forces pounded areas in the central Gaza Strip overnight, killing three people and wounding dozens of others, according to medics, while tanks deepened their invasion into Rafah in the south, residents said yesterday.

Israeli planes struck a house in Al-Nuseirat camp, killing two people and wounding 12 others, while tanks shelled areas in Al-Maghazi and Al-Bureij camps, wounding many other people, health officials said. Nuseirat, Maghazi, and Bureij are three of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps.

In Deir al-Balah, a city packed with displaced people in the central Gaza Strip, an Israeli air strike killed one Palestinian and wounded several others yesterday, medics said.

The Israeli military said on Wednesday forces were continuing their operations across the enclave targeting Hamas and military infrastructure in what it described as "precise, intelligence-based" activities.

More than eight months into the offensive in Gaza, Israel's advance

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

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CYBER SECURITY ACT

Man sent to jail over FB post

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

A man was sent to jail yesterday after being arrested under the Cyber Security Act over a Facebook post in Dinajpur's Hakimpur upazila.

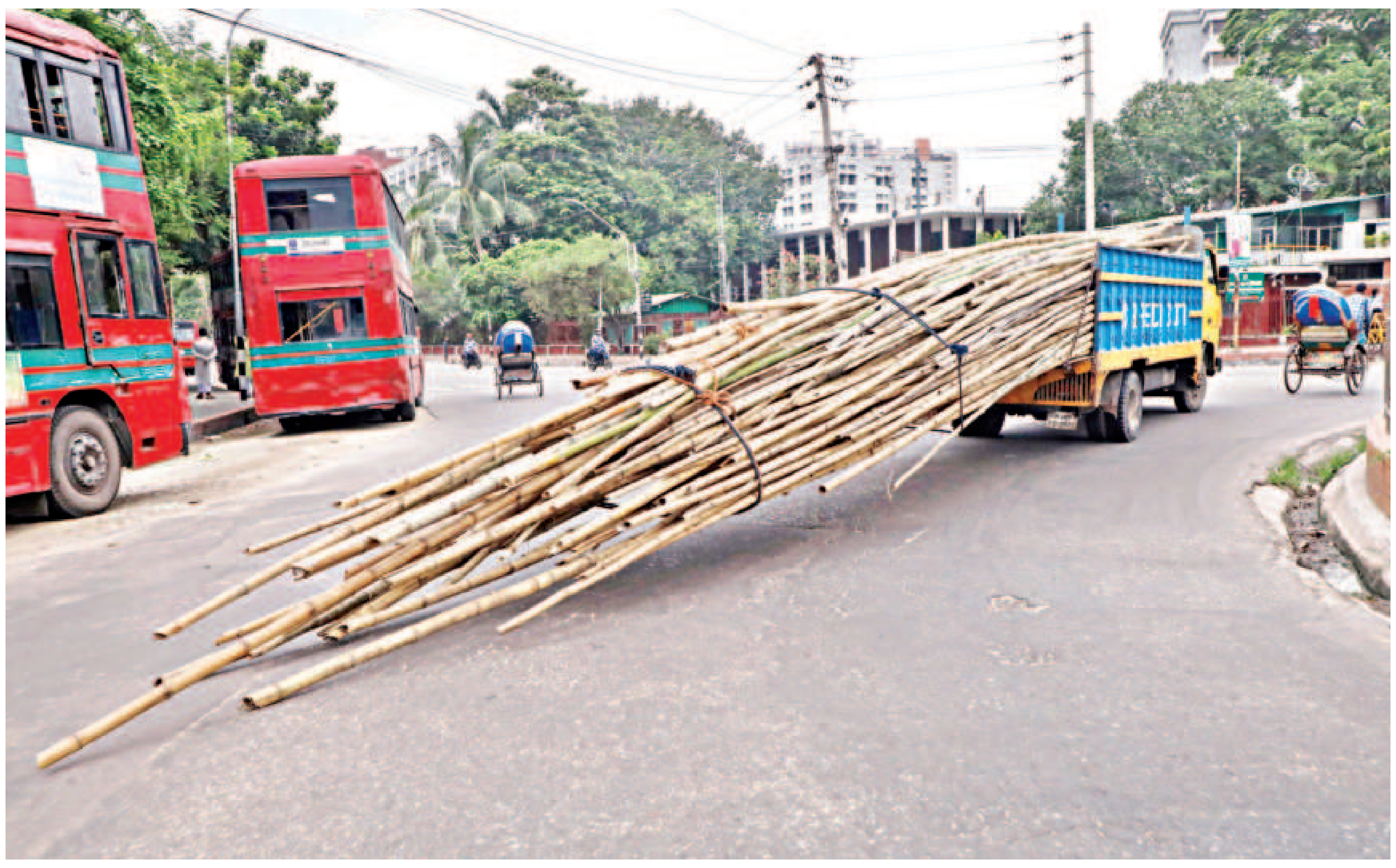
The post was about the 30 percent quota for government jobs for children of freedom fighters.

Zahangir Alam, 43, a former employee of Hili Land Port, was arrested from his home in the upazila after Liakat Ali, former commander of the upazila's Muktijoddha command, filed the CSA casewith Hakimpur Police Station on Wednesday afternoon.

Dulal Hossain, officer-in-charge of the police station, confirmed that Zahangir was produced before a court, whichsent him to jail.

According to the case statement, his post, made on June 17, "belittled freedom fighters and their children" with regard to the quota system for government jobs.

It sparked widespread criticism and protests on social media, prompting Liakat Ali to file the case, the statement added.



An overloaded truck on the road near Doyel Chattar on the Dhaka University campus yesterday morning. Bamboos sticking out could cause a major accident as they hide the vehicle's tail lights.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

HSC, equivalent exams deferred under Sylhet division

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to defer the upcoming Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent examinations under the Sylhet division in light of the prevailing flood situation in the northeastern part of the country.

All exams scheduled up until July 8 have been postponed under the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Sylhet, Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board, and Bangladesh Technical Education Board, reads a press release issued by the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee yesterday.

The exams on July 9 and subsequent exams will be held as per schedule, added the release signed by Prof Tapan Kumar Sarkar, chairman of the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee and chairman of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka.

The schedule for the deferred exams will be announced later, the release also added.

The HSC and equivalent exams set to begin on June 30 will proceed as planned elsewhere in the country, the press release mentioned.

In 2022, the government similarly postponed the SSC and later the HSC exams under the Sylhet division due to a worsening flood situation in the northeastern part of the country.

EXTREME HEAT

Hajj death toll tops 1,000

AFP, *Riyadh*

The death toll from this year's hajj has exceeded 1,000, an AFP tally said yesterday, more than half of them unregistered worshippers who performed the pilgrimage in extreme heat in Saudi Arabia.

The new deaths reported yesterday included 58 from Egypt, according to an Arab diplomat who provided a breakdown showing that of 658 Egyptians who passed away, 630 were unregistered pilgrims.

All told, around 10 countries have reported 1,081 deaths during the annual pilgrimage, one of the five pillars of Islam.

The figures have come via official statements or from diplomats working on their countries' responses.

The hajj, whose timing is determined by the lunar Islamic calendar, fell again this year during the Saudi summer.

The national meteorological centre reported a high of 51.8 degrees Celsius (125 Fahrenheit) this week at the Grand Mosque in Makkah.

According to a Saudi study published last month, temperatures in the area are rising 0.4 degrees Celsius each decade.

Each year tens of thousands of pilgrims attempt to perform the hajj through irregular channels as they cannot afford the often costly official permits.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Russia strikes Ukraine energy sites in 'mass' attack

4 killed; Romania to send Patriot missile system to Kyiv

AFP, *Kyiv*

Russian attacks overnight damaged a Ukrainian power plant and several energy facilities, Kyiv said yesterday, the latest in a series of bombardments that have pushed its power grid to the brink.

In the eastern Donetsk region, meanwhile, Russian cluster munitions and glide bombs killed four civilians and wounded four more in separate attacks, the regional governor said.

Targeted missile and drone attacks over recent months have crippled Ukraine's electricity generation capacity, and forced Kyiv to impose blackouts and import supplies from European Union states.

"The enemy attacked a number of energy infrastructure facilities," the energy ministry said, adding that the Russian projectiles targeted sites in four regions, including near Kyiv.

The largest private energy company in Ukraine, DTEK, said the attacks caused "serious damage" at one of its plants, without disclosing its location.

"This is already the seventh mass attack on the company's thermal power plant in the last three months," the company said.

Meanwhile, Nato member Romania announced yesterday that it would send a Patriot missile system to Ukraine, which Kyiv has requested to help its fight against Russia's invasion.

Ukraine's DTEK's CEO Maxim Timchenko echoed the calls for more military aid, and said the power plant struck early yesterday had already been damaged in a previous attack.

"We urgently need to close our skies or Ukraine faces a serious crisis this winter. My plea to allies is to help us defend our energy system and rebuild in time," he said.

Traffic collisions claim two lives in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two unidentified persons lost their lives in separate road accidents in the capital's Paltan and Jatrabari areas early yesterday.

Police said the victims, both middle-aged males, were likely vagrants.

A man, believed to be in his 30s, who was sleeping near the road divider at Paltan intersection was run over by a truck around 5:30am, said Abdul Aziz, sub-inspector (SI) of Paltan Police Station.

He was taken to the emergency department at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital at 6:20am, where doctors pronounced him dead, Aziz said.

"We have detained the truck driver and impounded the vehicle," he added.

In a separate incident, another man, believed to be in his 40s, was killed after being hit by an unidentified vehicle on the Jatrabari Flyover, said Sub-inspector Hiraman Biswas of Jatrabari Police Station.

On information, police recovered his body around 1:30am and sent it to the DMCH morgue.

Necessary legal steps are being taken regarding the accident, he added.

Cruise ship rescues 68 migrants off Spain's Canaries

AFP, *Barcelona*

A cruise ship rescued 68 migrants from a fishing boat spotted adrift south of Spain's Canary Islands with five bodies on board, Spanish authorities and the ship's operator said yesterday.

Rescuers were alerted on Wednesday afternoon to the vessel drifting in the Atlantic some 800 kilometres (500 miles) south of the island of Tenerife.

The cruise ship, the Insignia, was sailing in the area and was called on to head to the boat's location to pick up the survivors, Spain's maritime rescue service said in a statement.

It took on board 68 sub-Saharan African migrants, including three women and three minors, and recovered three bodies from the fishing boat. However, "bad weather" prevented it from collecting the other two bodies, the statement said.

Discussions on former DMP chief speculative

FROM PAGE 1

Ahmed, he said, "The value of land has increased significantly. Benazir Ahmed was on a mission for a long time. He might have an explanation. If he doesn't, then questions of corruption will arise."

Benazir has recently come under the spotlight due to reports of his unusually large amounts of property, including land, houses, and apartments, which are beyond his known sources of income.

Former DMP commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia has now come into discussion regarding his assets following a newspaper report published the day before Eid-ul-Azha.

It said the former senior police official's wife owns a house and two apartments in Dhaka, while his son owns a house and his daughter an apartment.

Additionally, his wife and children have 67 decimals of land in Dhaka, Gazipur, and Narayanganj. His family members collectively own another 166 decimals of land in these three districts, according to the report.

In response, Asaduzzaman Mia claimed in various interviews said all his assets were acquired through legal means and emphasised that his children are capable of acquiring the properties with their own lawful earnings.

Dhaka, Delhi may sign rail transit deal

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh to connect its Northeastern states with the rest of the country.

India plans to reduce reliance on the existing rail route through the Siliguri Corridor, commonly known as "Chicken's Neck", according to the Times of India.

The 22-km-wide strip, hemmed in by Nepal to the north and Bangladesh on its south, connects the seven northeast Indian states to the rest of the country.

According to a repot run by Times of India online on June 16, the planned project will feature 14 new routes connecting Bangladesh, spanning 861km, and alternative routes to the Northeast, bringing the total length of sanctioned tracks to 1,275.5km.

The initiative will involve gauge conversion of existing tracks and construction of new ones in Bangladesh, reads the report.

In November 2010, India and Bangladesh for the first time signed a transit agreement for waterways.

The two neighbours in 2015 inked a protocol allowing India to use four river routes via Bangladesh. The routes would link Kolkata and Murshidabad to Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya.

RAIL TRANSIT

Before the partition of India in 1947, there was seamless railway communication between different regions of India and Bangladesh through eight interchanges. Five of them -- Benapole-Petrapole, Darshana-Gede, Rohanpur-Singabadh, Biral-Radhikarpur and Chilahati-Haldibari -- have been revived in recent years.

During a high-level meeting with a BR delegation in April 2022, an Indian delegation discussed rail transit issues. Both sides agreed to work out the finer details and obtain necessary approvals from the authorities concerned, show documents.

Besides, the Indian authorities placed the transit proposal during then Bangladesh railways minister Nurul Islam Sujan's meeting with his Indian counterpart in New Delhi in June that year and the Bangladesh side agreed to examine the proposal.

Last year, Indian Railways put forward a proposal to the BR for carrying out trial runs of a freight train from West Bengal's Gede to Haldibari via Bangladesh.

The proposed route is Gede (West Bengal)-Darshana-Ishwardi-Abdulpur-Parbatipur-Chilahati-Haldibari (West Bengal).

Following an inter-ministerial meeting in May last year, BR sent a letter to Indian Railways seeking a comprehensive proposal with clarification. Indian Railways clarified saying it wants transit facility.

This year, IR has once again sent the proposal, through the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, for trail runs of empty freight trains. India this time proposed extending the route up to Dalgaon, a station near Bhutan border, from Haldibari of West Bengal.

WHAT BR SAYS

BR DG Shahadat said apart from Dalgaon, Bangladesh have sought access up to Hasimara railway station at Bhutan border.

This would enable BR to transport goods and passengers to and from Bhutan, he said.

At present, Bangladesh Railway can use Indian rail transit routes to Nepal only for transporting goods. Under the MoU, BR seeks to operate both freight and passenger trains, a BR official said seeking anonymity.

Replying to a question, Shahadat said a committee will be formed to finalise the modalities, routes, charges and other issues related to the railway transit.

"Making the railway transit routes operational will take more time."

He said both BR and the Bangladesh government would be benefited from the transit.

Asked whether BR infrastructures would be able to accommodate additional trains from India once the transit facility would be available, he said there would be no big problem.

There may be some problems regarding passenger trains as the Abdulpur-Parbatipur track is a single line. "However, the transit will be mainly for freight trains."

PM leaves for Delhi today on 2-day visit

FROM PAGE 1

port, railway, and digital technology.

Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi may also discuss the key issues on the Teesta management project, renewal of the Ganges water sharing treaty, trade and tariff, Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), Myanmar conflict and regional and sub-regional cooperation.

"This visit will give a vision for the bilateral relationship in the years ahead as well as how the two countries can work together amid new global geopolitical shift," said a foreign ministry official informed with the proceedings.

This will be Hasina's second trip to the Indian capital in less than 15 days. She attended Modi's swearing-in ceremony on June 9.

Hasina's visit, which is the first by any foreign head of government to India after the formation of the new government, takes place before her scheduled trip to Beijing on July 9-12.

Hasan Mahmud, foreign minister; Salman F Rahman, prime minister's adviser on private industry and investment; Ahsanul Islam Titu, the state minister for commerce; Zunaid Ahmed Palak, the state minister for posts, telecommunications and information technology; Abdur Rouf Talukder, Bangladesh Bank governor; Lt Gen Mizanur Rahman Shameem; Armed Forces Division principal staff officer; secretaries of Power Division, Economic Relations Division and railway ministry will accompany Hasina.

"The presence of the ministers and officials indicates the type of deals that might be signed during the visit," said a diplomatic source in New Delhi.

Hasina will depart Dhaka for New Delhi on a chartered flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines at 2:00pm and reach the Indian capital at 4:00pm.

S Jaishankar, India's minister of external affairs, will call on Hasina at her place of residence in the evening.

On Saturday morning, Modi will host a reception at the Rashtrapati Bhavan for Hasina. After that, she will go to Raj Ghat to pay tribute to the father of the Indian Nation Mahatma Gandhi by placing a wreath at his Samadhi.

Later, Hasina will hold a one-to-one meeting with Modi followed by delegation-level talks at the Hyderabad House.

The two leaders will witness the signing of the MoU and agreements and then deliver press statements.

Hasina will then attend a banquet luncheon hosted by Modi.

In the afternoon, she will call on Indian President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar at his Secretariat.

She will depart New Delhi for Dhaka at 6:00pm. The premier is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka at 9:00pm tomorrow.

Primary students

FROM PAGE 1

The census further said that over the years, Bangladesh has experienced a gradual decline in its population growth rate. In the 2011 census the population growth rate was at 1.46 percent, which dropped to 1.22 in 2022.

With the decline in population growth, the enrollment of students in primary schools began slowing down, it added.

The DPE's software -- Integrated Primary Education Management Information -- is a data storage and monitoring process that manages school management, teacher management, student management, annual census of primary schools, stipend management and annual book distribution activities.

It has significantly improved the cross-checking of multiple data, reducing the possibility of wrong or duplicate data entry of students.

"Due to this, the total number of enrollments declined in the APSC-2023 compared to APSC-2022," the census stated.

According to DPE sources, government primary schools saw a huge drop in the number of students in 2023, when there were 1,09,85,815 students in 65,567 government primary schools. The year before, there were 1,19,95,222 students in 65,565 of them.

On the other hand, the number of students shot up to 48,73,375 in 26,461 kindergartens in 2023, which was 46,08,679 in 26,478 kindergartens in 2022.

KM Enamul Hoque, advocacy adviser of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in the Asia South Pacific, said the number of students in mainstream primary schools dropped as many guardians opted for Qawmi madrasas and English medium schools.

"Many families, especially from the lower socio-economic groups, suffered financial hardships due to the Covid-19 pandemic and so they shifted their children to Qawmi madrasas as the education expenses there are significantly lower."

DPE officials said that as Qawmi madrasas are not under any government authority regulation, they do not have much information in this regard.

Meanwhile, though the number of primary level institutions decreased in 2021 and 2022 owing to the Covid-19 fallout, it saw a slight rise again in 2023.

Last year, there were 1,14,630 government primary schools, kindergartens, NGO-run schools, Ebtedayee madrasas and other private schools in the country.

The number was 1,33,002 in 2020; 1,18,891 in 2021; and 1,14,539 in 2022.

Israeli forces

FROM PAGE 1

is now focused on the two last areas its forces had yet to storm: Rafah on Gaza's southern edge and the area surrounding Deir al-Balah in the centre. The operations have forced more than a million people to flee since May, the vast majority already displaced from other parts of the enclave.

In Rafah, near the border with Egypt, Israeli tanks stationed deep in the western and central areas of the city stepped up bombardment, forcing more families living in the far coastal areas to flee northward. Some residents said the pace of the raid has been accelerated in the past two days.

Rafah housed over half of Gaza's 2.3 million people until May 7 when Israeli forces began the ground offensive into the city. Fewer than 100,000 are now believed to be left behind.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 37,431people have been killed in the territory during more than eight months of offensive. The toll includes at least 35 deaths in the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

There has been no sign of let-up in the fighting as efforts by international mediators, backed by the United States, have failed to persuade Israel and Hamas to agree to a ceasefire.

The armed wings of Hamas and Islamic Jihad said fighters battled Israeli forces with anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs, and have in some areas detonated pre-planted explosive devices against army units.

Yesterday, Israeli authorities freed 33 Palestinians who had been detained during the past months by Israeli forces in different areas of the enclave. The freed detainees were admitted into Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip after they complained of torture and mistreatment by Israeli jailers.

Israel denies mistreatment of Palestinian detainees. Palestinian and international human rights groups have criticised what they say is Israel's ill-treatment of Gaza detainees and repeatedly demanded it disclose their whereabouts and information about their well-being.

Monsoon triggers landslide threat

The risk of landslides looms large for thousands living on foothills in Sylhet, Cox's Bazar and Chattogram amid the ongoing monsoon rain. Unabated hill razing has heightened the danger. Experts have warned that the situation resembles a ticking time bomb and anything can happen at any time if people living on foothills are not evacuated immediately.

6,558 families live illegally on Ctg hills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

At least 6,558 families are still living on 26 hills in various parts of Chattogram city, violating the law and endangering the hills, according to the Hill Management Committee of Chattogram.

The committee revealed the data at its 28th meeting at the Circuit House in the port city yesterday.

At the meeting, Tofayel Islam, convener of the committee and divisional commissioner of Chattogram, asked the authorities concerned, including Power Development Board, to disconnect utility services within the next 15 days.

Over 20,000 people currently reside on these hills, which are being subjected to indiscriminate hill razing, said Abul Basar Mohammad Fakhruzzaman, deputy commissioner of Chattogram.

According to documents revealed in the meeting, most of the families live on seven hills owned by Bangladesh Railway.

When asked, Sujan Chowdhury, estate officer (east) of BR, claimed that they have removed over 1,700 illegal structures from these hills in the past two years, but no action has been able to deter grabbers, as people just return to the hills following evacuation drives.

Fakhruzzaman claimed that they evacuated grabbers from three state-owned hills recently. "We fenced these hills to protect them from grabbers," he added.

At the meeting, participants demanded that the administration make life imprisonment the sentence for hill-cutting.

CAMPAIGN ONGOING TO EVACUATE HILL RESIDENTS TO SAFETY

Meanwhile, the Chattogram district administration has started a publicity campaign in different hills to raise awareness among people about hillslides during the monsoon. A total of six teams, led by executive magistrates, have been campaigning through loudspeakers and asking people living on risky hill slopes to evacuate their homes and come to the shelter centres.

Campaigns were conducted in the hills near Akbar Shah Jheel areas, Bijaynagar Hill, Shantinagar Hill, Tankir Pahar, Paharika, Ambagan, Debarpar, and Railway Hill areas in the city.

Tanvir-al-Nasif, additional deputy commissioner (land acquisition) of Chattogram District Administration, said according to the forecast, heavy showers will continue for the next two to three days, so we have taken preparations to evacuate the people living on risky hill slopes."

The schools, colleges, and madrasa buildings are ready to be used as shelter centres in the respective areas.

Yusuf Hasan, executive magistrate of AC Land (Chandgaon circle), said the district administration has allocated dry food for the people taking shelter there.

Dwelling in death trap

Thousands living in landslide fear in Moulvibazar, Habiganj

MINTU DESHWARA

Suleman Ali, a resident of Dahpara village in Juri upazila, Moulvibazar, lives in fear after parts of his house were damaged by a recent landslide from a nearby hill.

"We are living in constant fear amid the looming threat of landslides. The persistent rainfall and flooding are exacerbating the situation further. We are desperately seeking a way out of this situation," he said.

Jashim Uddin, 35, from Saheb Tila village in Rajnagor upazila, echoed Suleman's concerns. Like them, thousands of residents in the hilly areas of Moulvibazar and Habiganj districts fear landslides amid the inclement weather.

The Met office issued a landslide warning for the hilly areas of Chattogram and Sylhet.

Rafiq Uddin, chairman of North Shahbazpur Union Parishad in Barlekha upazila, advised people to avoid foothill areas for safety.

On June 18, a hillock collapsed on Nirala Punjee road in Sreemangal upazila, Moulvibazar, following a daylong downpour and onrush of hilly torrents, halting vehicular movement. Earlier, three of a family died in a landslide in Majortila Chamelibag of Sylhet on June 10.

Besides, a female tea worker named Gita Kahar, 30, died and three others were injured in a landslide in Kamalganj on May 31.

Tofazzal Sohel, coordinator of Habiganj Sankhubdo Andolon, said hilly soil, saturated with rainwater, is turning into loose mud, increasing the risk of sudden collapses.

Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon's Sylhet chapter, said, "This is the fourth round of flooding in Sylhet within 20 days. Low-lying areas are submerged, and continuous downpours worsen the flood situation and raise the threat of landslides."

He called for strict enforcement of laws and effective local authority vigilance to curb hill razing.

Shah Shaheda Akhter, coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association in Sylhet, echoed him.

Badrul Huda, assistant director of the Department of Environment in Sylhet, said, "Over 30 percent of Sylhet's hills have been razed in the last two and a half decades. Due to recent heavy showers and indiscriminate hill cutting, landslides may occur at any time."

Najratun Naeem, UNO of Barlekha upazila, said the administration has been alerting residents living on foothills to move to safety as incessant rain increases the likelihood of landslides.

We are living in constant fear amid the looming threat of landslides. The persistent rainfall and flooding are exacerbating the situation further. We are desperately seeking a way out of this situation.

DEATHS IN ROHINGYA CAMP

Safety fences not repaired in two years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

Unmaintained safety fences led to loss of lives from landslides in Rohingya camps on Wednesday, said Refugee, Relief, and Repatriation Commissioner Mohammad Mizanur Rahman yesterday.

Due to a fund crisis, the agencies concerned did not repair the safety fences and sandbags in place to protect the camps from landslides for two years, he added.

Ten people -- including eight Rohingyas -- were killed in Camp 1 West, Camp 8, Camp 9, and Camp 14 in Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar due to the landslides caused by torrential rain on Wednesday.

A total of 233 makeshift shelters were completely damaged while 702 shelters were partly damaged in those incidents. More than 1,300 Rohingyas were evacuated, while a total of 1,500 people are at risk of landslides, said Mizanur Rahman.

The RRRC feared that more such incidents would happen in the future if protection measures are not repaired regularly.

A total of 543 landslides occurred in the camp on Wednesday due to the heavy rain, according to the RRRC office.

A total of 233 makeshift shelters were completely damaged while 702 shelters were partly damaged in those incidents. More than 1,300 Rohingyas were evacuated, while a total of 1,500 people are at risk of landslides, said the RRRC.

Most of the Rohingyas living under landslide risk were sent back to their houses since there was no rain yesterday, according to some of them. "We have no place to relocate the 1,500 Rohingyas living under threat, providing them new shelters. They will be transferred to safer places when the risk of landslides rises," said Mizanur Rahman.

AL gears up for grand 75th founding anniv

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League has planned a series of events, including rallies, processions, discussions, and food distribution across the country in the lead up to its 75th founding anniversary on June 23.

Special programmes like seminars, art exhibitions, discussions, and documentary screenings are also planned. Cultural programmes at Rabindra Sarobar, a boat race, and a cycle rally at Hatirjheel are also scheduled.

The theme of this year's celebration is "Green World".

Various banners, festoons, placards, and arches will be displayed across Dhaka. To save power, the party will not illuminate streets or infrastructure.

The anniversary celebrations will kick off today with a procession that will start from the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh and end at Dhanmondi 32.

On June 23, Prime Minister and party President Sheikh Hasina will officially inaugurate the anniversary programme in front of Bangabandhu Bhaban after returning from New Delhi on June 22.

A discussion meeting and cultural event will be held at Suhrawardy Udyan on the same day, with Hasina addressing as the chief guest.

A boat-shaped stage has been constructed at Suhrawardy Udyan for the event.

Later, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy will organise a light and sound show, followed by a cultural programme at the Rose Garden.

Political parties from neighbouring countries, development partners, and supporters of the Liberation War have been invited to the event, according to the Awami League sources.

The AL has also invited the BNP and other opposition parties to the celebrations.

Besides, a nationwide tree plantation campaign, "Sabuj Dharithri", will also be inaugurated on June 23.

AL Joint General Secretary AFM Bahauddin Nashim said, "This year's celebration will highlight aspects of Awami League's long history, tradition, movement, birth of Bangladesh, independence, Liberation War, and struggle."

Vendors sit idle in front of closed shops at AGB colony in Motijheel. With the capital still not returning to its usual state due to many leaving the city on Eid vacation, shops and markets are seeing fewer customers. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

NARSINGDI SHOAL

Youth initiative fuels socio-economic change

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narsingdi*

In 2019, 16 young people from remote shoal areas of Alokbali union under Narsingdi Sadar upazila founded a platform to ease the plight of the impoverished shoal residents.

Now with around 600 members, the Alokbali Union Human Welfare Association runs programmes to distribute Eid materials, provide treatment costs, build makeshift bridges for better access to schools and health complexes, provide stipends to meritorious students, conduct tree plantation drives, arrange free medical camps, and distribute goats for rearing among the poor shoal residents.

Most of the members of this platform are migrants in the Middle East, whose donations are used to run its social welfare programmes.

Saiful Islam, one of the founding members, is an expatriate of Saudi Arabia and works as a technician at a company there.

Talking to this correspondent, Saiful said, "We started our activities with 16 members. Now there are about 600 members. Most members participate and donate from the Middle East. We have six branches -- in Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia, and Bangladesh."

Another member, Al Amin, said, "Our main focus is on education and social development in our area. We are also working to broaden our scope and serve for the betterment of the shoal residents."

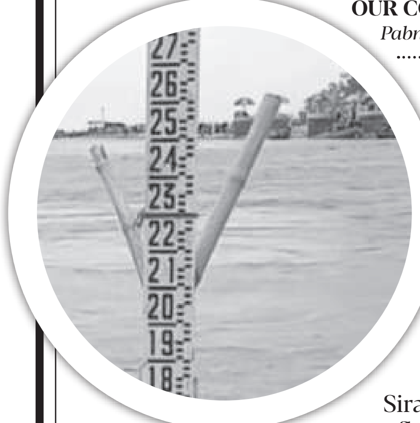
Md Yousuf Ali, 37, a local resident, said, "I received a goat from them last year priced at Tk 12,000. The goat recently gave birth to two kids."

Contacted, Delwar Hossain Dipo, chairman of Alokbali Union Parishad, said, "We appreciate their activities for the welfare of residents. We cannot take on all kinds of projects due to fund limitations and issues with the government's approval. However, I will personally donate to their cause."

FLASH FLOOD THREAT

Jamuna swelling up rapidly

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*



Water level has been increasing rapidly in Jamuna river, which may cross the danger level within next three to four days, according to Sirajganj Water Development Board (WDB).

According to Sirajganj WDB, Jamuna was flowing at 11.77-metre at Hardpoint, 1.13m below the danger level, and at 13.45m at Kazipur point, 1.35m below the danger level, yesterday morning.

"Water level has been increasing rapidly in Jamuna in the last couple of days, and by 30 to 35cm every 24 hours in the last two days," said Md Najmul Hossain, sub-divisional engineer at Sirajganj WDB.

Due to the flow upstream, Jamuna is swelling rapidly and may cross danger level in Sirajganj within the next three to four days, he added.

"Due to rising water levels, at least 2 to 2.5 lakh people of low-lying areas and shoal areas of 25 unions in five upazilas of the district are facing the threat of flash flood," said Md Aktaruzzaman, district relief and rehabilitation officer in Sirajganj.

"We have made adequate preparations to tackle the crisis," he said.

At least 180 flood shelters have been prepared in the areas that are likely to be affected.

Besides, nearly 695 tonnes of food, cash and other necessary relief materials are in reserve, he added.

Prioritising pre-paid meters to address the 'ghost bills'

Says Nasrul Hamid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken various steps to ensure around 4.71 crore customers of six electricity distribution companies are billed accurately, said State Minister for Power and Energy Nasrul Hamid yesterday.

The ministry has priortitised installation of pre-paid and smart meters in this regard, he added.

He was responding to concerns regarding "ghost or abnormal" electricity bills in parliament.

"Investigations into specific complaints of ghost bills are conducted promptly, with administrative actions taken accordingly," the minister said in response to queries raised by Noakhali-3 MP Mamunur Rashid Kiran.

Regarding the electricity sector subsidy for the 2023-24 fiscal year, Nasrul said Tk 31,833 crore of the Tk 35,000 crore allocation has already been distributed.

He said dynamic pricing based on international fuel markets eliminates the need for additional subsidies in fuel pricing.

Responding to inquiries from Independent MP Mohammad Hushamuddin Chowdhury, Hamid said load shedding occasionally occur at rural areas due to supply-demand imbalances and necessary maintenance shutdowns.

In response to a separate question, he said electricity lines are disconnected following rules in cases of illegal connections and outstanding dues

FLOOD IN NORTH

Govt's flawed policies, unplanned dev to blame

Says Rizvi

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday blamed the government's "flawed" policies and "unplanned" development for the worsening flood situation in northeastern regions, including Sylhet.

Speaking at a press briefing at BNP's Nayapaltan central office, he called upon the leaders and activists of the party to stand beside the flood-affected people by extending their helping hands.

He said widespread devastation from floods continues unabated every year due to the government's indifference, which is alarming.

According to experts, Rizvi said unplanned activities are ongoing in haor areas of Sylhet in the name of development. "The incidence of floods has increased due to obstruction of the normal water flow of the river by constructing dams."

WHITENING BLACK MONEY

Provision needs to be reviewed: Momen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Taxpayers have been disappointed with the budgetary provision for whitening black money, former foreign minister AK Abdul Momen told parliament yesterday.

"Honest taxpayers have become frustrated with the provision of whitening black money just by paying a 15 percent tax. I feel the provision needs to be reviewed further," he said.

Corruption is now the main barrier to maintaining growth, he said. The government's image is being tarnished because of corruption, he added.

Momen said the projects are not getting implemented in time due to corruption, which ultimately causes a rise in project costs.

"A portion of bureaucrats has become corrupt, which is intensifying harassment of the people. The entire bureaucracy is blamed due to a handful of corrupt bureaucrats," said Momen.

He said this while participating in the general discussion on the proposed national budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

The price hike of daily essentials, alongside the rise in taxes, corruption, and extortion, is a matter of great concern for the country's people, Momen said.

Loans to raise debt

FROM PAGE 5

but it was not mobilised. Then, in the UN climate conference in Glasgow in 2021, the world committed to mobilise $40 billion by 2025 for adaptation.

However, it remains $20 billion and is going down because development partners are reducing their development budget for various emergencies like the Ukraine and Palestine crises.

"What about those who are in a climate crisis? The GCA comes in to support the countries at the forefront of the crisis," Verkooijen said.

He said the GCA provides adaptation expertise to the projects funded by the development partners like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Much of the focus for the last two years was on Africa, with the development partners investing $9 billion over the last two years.

The GCA last year adapted the model from Africa to Bangladesh and is working with the WB and ADB to climate proof their development.

"It would be a wasted development project if you build a road and it gets washed away the next year. So, as we climate proof the project, it becomes sustainable," he said.

He said traditionally, development projects are taken on top-down approach, but Bangladesh is the only country where Peoples' Adaptation Plan is being adopted. It means incorporating the knowledge of local communities in development planning.

"Locals know when the rain comes, when there is flooding or when the temperature goes high. So, they identify the problems and solutions... we then link their plan to the global funding institutions for funding," he said.

This model of Bangladesh is now being rolled out in other parts of the world including Liberia and Kenya, Verkooijen added.

Trial begins

FROM PAGE 5

from Tipu's driver Munna, who was driving the car when her husband was shot dead on March 24, 2022.

Of the accused, 26 people were present at the courtroom yesterday.

On March 24 of 2022, Tipu, 55, former general secretary of Motijheel AL, was returning home in his microbus from his restaurant in Motijheel AGB Colony area. The vehicle was at a traffic light in Shahjahanpur when attackers arrived at the scene on a motorcycle and opened fire.

College student Prity, 22, who happened to be in a rickshaw next to the vehicle, also got shot. The two were declared dead after being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Tipu's driver Munna got shot in his hand.

On June 5 last year, Investigation Officer Md Yasin Sikder, a DB inspector, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka, accusing 33 people, including nine members of AL and its associate bodies.

On April 29 this year, the same court framed charges against them.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 21

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-30	5-00	6-52	8-17
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

বসুন্ধরায় বারিধারায় প্লট বিক্রয়

বসুন্ধরা বারিধারা আবাসিক এলাকায় এন-ব্লকে ১০কাঠা, প্লট নং- ৭৮৪২, পি-ব্লকে ৬কাঠা, প্লট নং- ৪০১৫, পি-এক্সটেনশনে ২০কাঠা কমার্শিয়াল, প্লট নং- ৬০৫, ৬০৬, সবগুলো প্লটই বিক্রয় করা হইবে। প্লটগুলো রেজিস্ট্রেশন, মিউটেশন এবং বাউন্ডারী সম্পন্ন করা আছে।

যোগাযোগ: ০১৭১১ ৫৪৬৬৮৭, ০১৭১১ ৫৪৯৫৩১

Date Extension of Request for Quotation: CRM Solution

BRAC Bank PLC delivers complete banking services to individuals and business entities with a network of 187 Branches, 374 ATMs, and 456 SME Unit Offices nationwide. The bank is seeking vendor(s) to provide the CRM solution.

We issued a Request for Quotation (RFQ) for Technical Offer Submission for the CRM solution on 28 April 2024. The proposal submission date has been extended to 11 July 2024. The RFQ, along with details of the bidding process, can be found on the bank's website: **https://www.bracbank.com/en/information/e-tender**

We invite all interested and eligible bidders to submit their Technical offers by the new deadline of 11 July 2024. Please ensure to follow the bidding process as outlined in the RFQ.

BRAC BANK
আস্থা অবিচল

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
AZIMPUR PWD DIVISION, NEWMARKET, DHAKA.
Phone No: 02-223360276
e-mail: ee_ajmpr@pwd.gov.bd

Corrigendum of e-Tender Notice

Memo No-25.36.2600.142.07.009.24-1630
Dated: 1431 Bang.
20/6/ 2024 Eng.

This is to notify all concern that Corrigendum has been published through national e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following works.

Tender ID No.	Tender Documents Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Documents Closing/Opening Date & Time
994652	03-July 2024 17:00	04-July 2024 13:00
993991	03-July 2024 17:00	04-July 2024 13:00
993990	03-July 2024 17:00	04-July 2024 13:00
993977	03-July 2024 17:00	04-July 2024 13:00
995577	03-July 2024 17:00	04-July 2024 13:00
993992	03-July 2024 17:00	04-July 2024 13:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd). Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Mohammad Moniruzzaman)
Executive Engineer,
Azimpur PWD Division.
Newmarket, Dhaka.

GD- 1015

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
তথ্য ও সম্প্রচার মন্ত্রণালয়
বাংলাদেশ ফিল্ম সেন্সর বোর্ড
তথ্য ভবন (লেভেল ১৩ ও ১৪), ১১২, সার্কিট হাউজ রোড, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জাতীয় চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কার-২০২৩ এর জন্য আবেদনপত্র আহবান

নং-১৫.৫৯.০০০০.০০৫.২৩.০০১.২৪-২৫৫
তারিখ: ০৭ আষাঢ়, ১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ
২১ জুন, ২০২৪ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ

জাতীয় চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কার-২০২৩ প্রতিযোগিতায় অংশগ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রযোজকগণের নিকট হতে নিম্নোক্ত শর্তাবলির আলোকে চলচ্চিত্র জমা দেয়াসহ আবেদনপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে:

১। শর্তাবলি:
(ক) কেবলমাত্র বাংলাদেশি নাগরিকগণ জাতীয় চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কারের জন্য বিবেচিত হবেন;
(খ) আজীবন সম্মাননা পুরস্কারের জন্য জীবিত ব্যক্তিদেরকে বিবেচনা করা হবে;
(গ) যৌথ প্রযোজনায় নির্মিত চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কারের জন্য বিবেচিত হবে। তবে যৌথ প্রযোজনা চলচ্চিত্রের বিদেশি শিল্পী এবং কলা-কুশলীগণ পুরস্কারের জন্য বিবেচিত হবেন না;
(ঘ) জাতীয় চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কারের বিবেচনাযোগ্য চলচ্চিত্রকে অবশ্যই বাংলাদেশ ফিল্ম সেন্সর বোর্ডের ছাড়পত্রপ্রাপ্ত এবং বিবেচ্য বছরে প্রেক্ষাগৃহে মুক্তিপ্রাপ্ত হতে হবে। স্বল্পদৈর্ঘ্য ও প্রামাণ্য চলচ্চিত্রের ক্ষেত্রে প্রেক্ষাগৃহে মুক্তির কোনো বাধ্যবাধকতা থাকবে না, তবে তা ২০২৩ সালে সেন্সর সনদপত্র প্রাপ্ত হতে হবে;
(ঙ) পুরস্কারযোগ্য প্রতিটি শাখায় গুণগত ও শৈল্পিক মানে শ্রেষ্ঠত্বের ভিত্তিতে পুরস্কারের জন্য বিবেচনা করা হবে;
(চ) দেশীয় প্রেক্ষাপট, পরিচালকের মৌলিকত্ব ও সৃজনশীলতার স্বাক্ষর বহনকারী চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কারের জন্য বিবেচিত হবে;
(ছ) জুরি বোর্ডের বিবেচনার জন্য প্রতিটি নৃত্যের জন্য পৃথকভাবে নৃত্য পরিচালকের নাম উল্লেখ করতে হবে। একইভাবে প্রতিটি গানের (পুরস্কার পাওয়ার সম্ভাবনা রয়েছে এমন) জন্য পৃথকভাবে গায়ক, গায়িকা, গীতিকার, সুরকার ও সংগীত পরিচালক-এর নাম উল্লেখ করতে হবে;
(জ) কাহিনির ক্ষেত্রে দেশি বা বিদেশি লেখক/প্রকাশক এর অনুমতি (কপিরাইট) নিয়ে নির্মিত চলচ্চিত্র জাতীয় চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কারের জন্য বিবেচিত হবে;
(ঝ) বিদেশি চলচ্চিত্রের কপিরাইট নিয়ে নির্মিত চলচ্চিত্র এবং রিমেক (Remake) চলচ্চিত্রের কাহিনী জাতীয় চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কারের জন্য বিবেচিত হবে না;
(ঞ) জাতীয় চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কারের জন্য অংশগ্রহণকারী কোনো চলচ্চিত্রে সেন্সরবিহীন কোনো দৃশ্য সংযোজন এবং সেন্সরকৃত কোনো অংশ বিয়োজন করা হয়েছে বলে প্রমাণিত হলে চলচ্চিত্রটি পুরস্কারের জন্য বিবেচিত হবে না;
(ট) সংশ্লিষ্ট চলচ্চিত্রের প্রধান প্রধান দৃশ্য/সংলাপ সংবলিত বিষয়বস্তুর ওপর ৫ মিনিটের (কম/বেশি) একটি পেনড্রাইভ জাতীয় চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কারের জন্য জমাকৃত চলচ্চিত্রটির সাথে জমা দিতে হবে;
(ঠ) সংশ্লিষ্ট চলচ্চিত্রের প্রযোজক কর্তৃক যে সকল শিল্পী ও কলাকুশলীকে পুরস্কারের জন্য মনোনয়ন দেওয়া হবে, তাদের নাম চলচ্চিত্রের টাইটেলে উল্লেখ থাকতে হবে।

২। পুরস্কারের ক্ষেত্রসমূহ:

০১	আজীবন সম্মাননা	১৫	শ্রেষ্ঠ নৃত্য পরিচালক
০২	শ্রেষ্ঠ চলচ্চিত্র	১৬	শ্রেষ্ঠ গায়ক
০৩	শ্রেষ্ঠ স্বল্পদৈর্ঘ্য চলচ্চিত্র	১৭	শ্রেষ্ঠ গায়িকা
০৪	শ্রেষ্ঠ প্রামাণ্য চলচ্চিত্র	১৮	শ্রেষ্ঠ গীতিকার
০৫	শ্রেষ্ঠ চলচ্চিত্র পরিচালক	১৯	শ্রেষ্ঠ সুরকার
০৬	শ্রেষ্ঠ অভিনেতা প্রধান চরিত্রে	২০	শ্রেষ্ঠ কাহিনিকার
০৭	শ্রেষ্ঠ অভিনেত্রী প্রধান চরিত্রে	২১	শ্রেষ্ঠ চিত্রনাট্যকার
০৮	শ্রেষ্ঠ অভিনেতা পার্শ্ব চরিত্রে	২২	শ্রেষ্ঠ সংলাপ রচয়িতা
০৯	শ্রেষ্ঠ অভিনেত্রী পার্শ্ব চরিত্রে	২৩	শ্রেষ্ঠ সম্পাদক
১০	শ্রেষ্ঠ অভিনেতা/অভিনেত্রী খল চরিত্রে	২৪	শ্রেষ্ঠ শিল্প নির্দেশক
১১	শ্রেষ্ঠ অভিনেতা/অভিনেত্রী কৌতুক চরিত্রে	২৫	শ্রেষ্ঠ চিত্রগ্রাহক
১২	শ্রেষ্ঠ শিশু শিল্পী	২৬	শ্রেষ্ঠ শব্দগ্রাহক
১৩	শিশু শিল্পী শাখায় বিশেষ পুরস্কার	২৭	শ্রেষ্ঠ পোশাক ও সাজ-সজ্জা
১৪	শ্রেষ্ঠ সঙ্গীত পরিচালক	২৮	শ্রেষ্ঠ মেক-আপম্যান

৩। প্রতিযোগিতায় অংশগ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক প্রযোজকদেরকে নির্ধারিত ছকে আবেদন করতে হবে। আবেদনের ফরম/ছক বিনামূল্যে বাংলাদেশ ফিল্ম সেন্সর বোর্ড কার্যালয় থেকে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। আবেদনের ফরম সেন্সর বোর্ডের ওয়েবসাইট www.bfcb.gov.bd থেকে ডাউনলোড করেও ব্যবহার করা যাবে।
৪। প্রত্যেক আবেদনপত্রের সাথে সংশ্লিষ্ট চলচ্চিত্রের যথাযথ মানসম্পন্ন পেনড্রাইভ জমা দিতে হবে। কোনো পেনড্রাইভ মানসম্মত না হলে, তা বিবেচনা না করার ক্ষমতা জুরি বোর্ড সংরক্ষণ করে।
৫। পুরস্কারের জন্য প্রস্তাবিত শিল্পী/কলাকুশলী/ব্যক্তিদের ৪ (চার) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজ ছবি (প্রযোজক কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত), জীবন-বৃত্তান্ত (বাংলা), জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের ফটোকপি/পাসপোর্টের ফটোকপি (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে)/শিশু শিল্পীদের ক্ষেত্রে জন্মনিবন্ধন সনদের ফটোকপি (১ম শ্রেণির গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত) আবেদনের সাথে অবশ্যই জমা দিতে হবে। যাদের অনুকূলে জীবন-বৃত্তান্ত (বাংলা), জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/পাসপোর্ট/জন্মনিবন্ধন সনদের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি জমা দেয়া হবে না, তাদের আবেদন জুরি বোর্ড কর্তৃক বিবেচিত হবে না।
৬। জাতীয় চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কার-২০২৩ এর জন্য চলচ্চিত্রের আবেদনপত্র ৩১ জুলাই, ২০২৪খ্রি. তারিখ রোজ বুধবার, বিকাল ৫:০০টা পর্যন্ত গ্রহণ করা হবে।
৭। জাতীয় চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কার-২০২৩ সম্পর্কিত যে কোনো বিষয়ে সংশ্লিষ্ট জুরি বোর্ডের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে বিবেচিত হবে।

অংশগ্রহণকারী প্রযোজকগণকে তাঁদের নিজ নিজ চলচ্চিত্রের ২টি উন্নতমানের পেনড্রাইভ এবং প্রধান প্রধান দৃশ্য/সংলাপ সংবলিত বিষয়বস্তুর ওপর ৫ মিনিটের (কম/বেশি) ১টি পেনড্রাইভ, নির্ধারিত ছকে প্রযোজক, পরিচালক এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট শিল্পী ও কলা-কুশলীদের নাম, প্রত্যেকের ৪ (চার) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজ ছবি (প্রযোজক কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত), ঠিকানা, টেলিফোন, মোবাইল নম্বর, ই-মেইলসহ জীবন-বৃত্তান্ত (বাংলায়), চলচ্চিত্রের কাহিনি সংক্ষেপ, শিল্পী ও কলাকুশলী তালিকা ও গানের কথা সংবলিত ১৫ (পনের) সেট ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান, বাংলাদেশ ফিল্ম সেন্সর বোর্ড ও সদস্য-সচিব, জুরি বোর্ড, জাতীয় চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কার-২০২৩, তথ্য ভবন (১৪ তলা), ১১২, সার্কিট হাউজ রোড, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০ এই ঠিকানায় নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে পৌঁছাতে হবে।

মো. আবদুল জলিল
ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান
বাংলাদেশ ফিল্ম সেন্সর বোর্ড ও
সদস্য-সচিব, জুরি বোর্ড, জাতীয় চলচ্চিত্র পুরস্কার-২০২৩
ফোন: ৮৩০০৬২০

GD- 1014

Siam bought meat grinder to dispose of body: India CID

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *New Delhi*

A meat grinder, suspected to have been used to dispose of the body of murdered Awami League MP Anwarul Azim, was purchased by the assailants from a shop in Kolkata's New Market, West Bengal CID sources have claimed.

MP AZIM
MURDER

Investigators said Siam Hossain, one of the suspects, bought the grinder for Rs 2,200. Siam is in the custody of West Bengal CID after being brought from Nepal following his arrest in the Himalayan country.

CID sources claimed since the entire lump of flesh could not be minced with the grinder, small pieces were flushed into the septic tank of the New Town apartment where the MP was suspected to be killed.

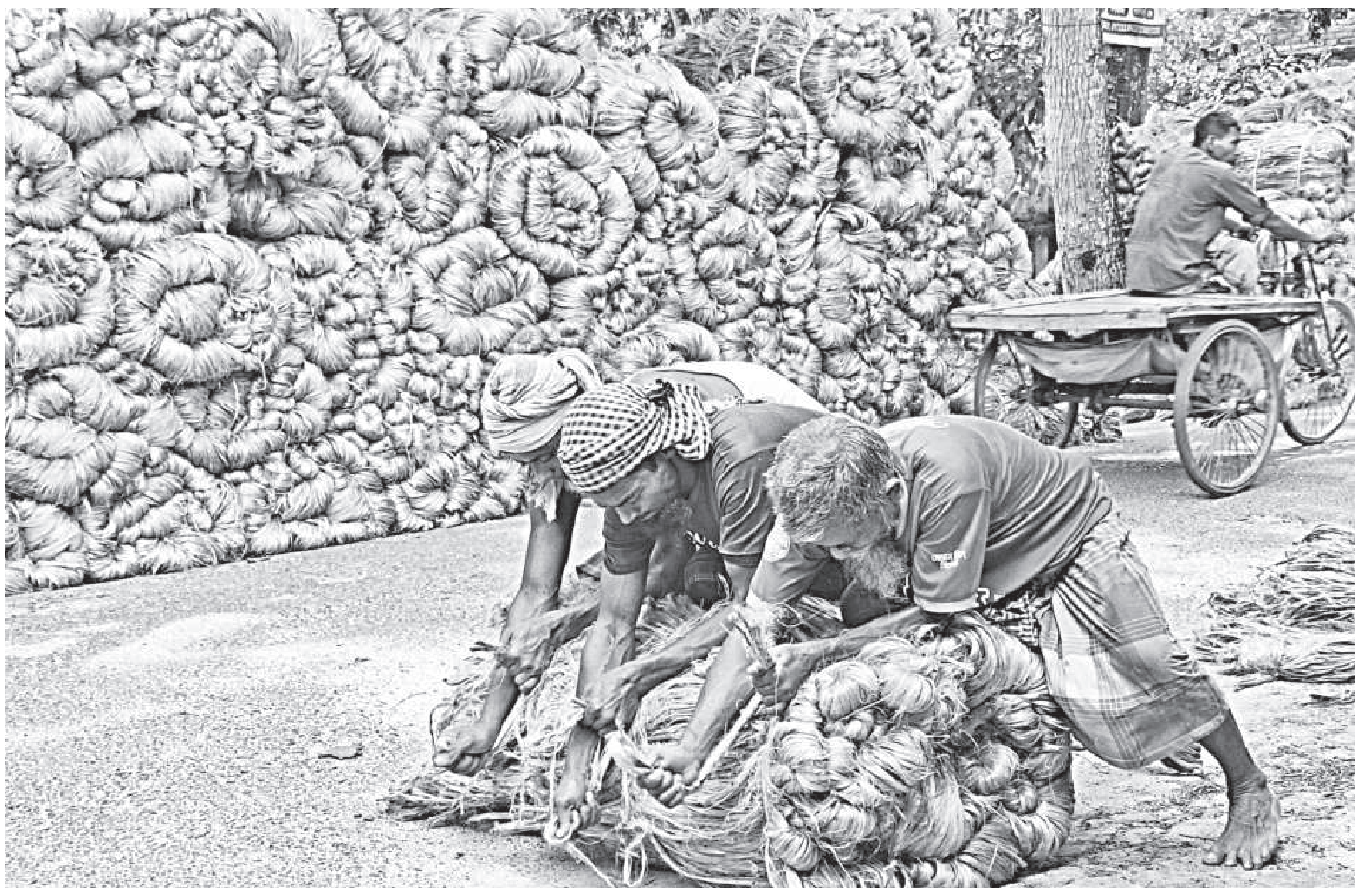
CID recovered flesh from the septic tank. The forensic test has established that the flesh was that of a man.

CID is trying to ascertain the exact places from where the murder weapons were procured so that they can collect corresponding CCTV footage and build a case using electronic evidence in the court.

The investigators have recovered the entire conversation between the lawmaker and Celesty Rahman, who is suspected of having lured him to the New Town flat, and found out that it was Siam who handled the MP's WhatsApp messages after his murder.

Sources said West Bengal CID has decided to request Dhaka Metropolitan Police to track down another woman who had reportedly accompanied Azim on his visit to Kolkata in either January or March this year. The questioning of this woman, who was found to be sharing messages with Celesty, may help reveal the extent of the criminal conspiracy behind the murder, claimed the sources.

Lawmaker Azim went to Kolkata on May 12. Nine days later, India and Bangladesh police said he was murdered at a Kolkata flat.



At the break of dawn, these workers start the process of rolling jutes manually. After a day's hard work. the labourers make Tk 700. The photo was taken in Barishal's Babuganj yesterday.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Loans to raise debt distress

Says CEO of Global Center on Adaptation

PORIMOL PALMA

It is an injustice when countries like Bangladesh that are not responsible for the climate crisis have to take loans for adaptation programmes, said Prof Patrick Verkooijen, CEO of Global Center on Adaptation (GCA).

"The countries like Bangladesh, Kenya and Senegal of the Global South do not cause climate crises. They don't want loans for climate adaptation as it increases their debt distress. This is a profound climate injustice in the system," he told a selected group of journalists at a Dhaka hotel on Monday during his three-day visit to Bangladesh.

He also met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban on Wednesday.

Previously, Verkooijen helped shape the climate agenda of the World Bank Group in his role as the special representative on climate change.

> **The countries like Bangladesh, Kenya and Senegal of the Global South do not cause climate crisis. They don't want loan for climate adaptation as it increases their debt distress. This is a profound climate injustice in the system.**
>
> PROF PATRICK VERKOOIJEN

Verkooijen said Bangladesh will be graduating out of LDC by 2026, which is great, but there are also risks that the development partners may decrease financial support for adaptation.

"So, what we at the GCA can do is to ensure that the developed countries provide adaptation funds despite the LDC graduation. A country does not want a loan for climate adaptation," he said.

At the moment, Bangladesh is the only country that is yearly investing $1.2 billion of the taxpayers' money in adaptation whereas the need is $8.5 billion.

The GCA head said as per the Paris Agreement on climate, the world committed to mobilise $100 billion for the Global South,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

GHOST LOANS!

Krishi Bank issues loans in name of 4 persons who died before 1971

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

Zainal Howlader, a resident of Kalikapur village under Patuakhali's Bauphal upazila, died in 1969.

In 2014, 45 years after his death, an agricultural loan of Tk 50,000 was issued to his name with Bangladesh Krishi Bank. Recently, the bank's Keshabpur branch sent a notice to Zainal's family asking for repayment of that loan, leaving the family members shocked.

"I recently received a notice from Krishi Bank saying that my father had taken a loan of Tk 50,000 in 2014 from the bank. But my father died in 1969, how could he take the loan in 2014? I urge the government to conduct a fair investigation and take action over this matter," said Zainal's son Abul Bashar, 64, a retired policeman.

This is not a standalone incident. The bank's Keshabpur branch recently issued notices regarding repayment of loans taken in 2014 to 14 persons. Of them, four passed away even before independence.

According to the bank's notices, three sons of Ketab Uddin Howladar of the village -- Javed Ali, Hazrat Ali and Raham Ali -- took agriculture-related loans from that branch in 2014.

Among them, two loans of Tk 25,000 and Tk 30,000 were in the name of Javed Ali, and one each of Tk 45,000 and Tk 50,000 in Hazrat Ali and Raham Ali's names respectively, according to documents.

However, Javed Ali passed away in 1960, Hazrat Ali in 1963 and Raham Ali in 1966, said family members.

"The notices from the bank were in the name of my grandfather and his brothers. But all of them died during the Pakistan period. We are shocked!" said Bajlu Howladar, grandson of Javed Ali.

Abul Mridha, 75, of the village, said, "Javed, Hazrat and Raham Ali died long before independence. I was surprised to hear about loans issued to their names in 2014. The issue should be investigated properly to find out the reasons behind this fraudulence."

Anwar Hossain, chairman of Suryamoni Union Parishad, raised questions about how the deceased could have taken loans.

He demanded exemplary punishment for those involved.

According to sources at the bank, a field officer checks the borrower and reviews his documents before approving any loan as per rules.

If everything goes well, he recommends the loan to the branch manager, who then verifies and approves the loan in presence of the borrower taking his signature or fingerprint in this regard.

> **I recently received a notice from Krishi Bank saying that my father had taken a loan of Tk 50,000 in 2014 from the bank. But my father died in 1969, how could he take the loan in 2014?**
>
> **ABUL BASHAR**
> A retired policeman

Contacted, Md Taif Hossain, current manager of Keshabpur branch of the Krishi Bank, said he joined the branch on February 20 this year and came to know of the matter after some of the victims' families informed them of this.

"Upon receiving the complaints, we found that the loans were approved in 2014. The then field officer, Md Shafiur Rahman, has been summoned in this regard," he said.

However, Noor Hossain, the then branch manager, is unavailable, he added.

Noor Hossain is currently staying abroad and could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts.

Mohammad Shafiur Rahman, who retired in 2019, claimed that he did not recommend giving loans to any person using the addresses of the deceased men.

Contcated, Ashfakur Rahman, chief regional manager of Krishi Bank, said they are looking into the matter seriously.

"Necessary action will be taken after a thorough investigation," he told this correspondent.

TIPU MURDER

Trial begins with deposition of complainant

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The trial of the case filed over the murder of Awami League leader Jahidul Islam Tipu and college student Samia Afran Jamal Prity began at a Dhaka court with deposition of the complainant yesterday.

Judge Muhammad Ali Hussain of the Special Judge Court-3 of Dhaka recorded the statement of Farhana Islam Dolly, wife of Tipu and also complainant of the case.

During the deposition, the complainant sought justice for her husband.

After that, defence for accused Kamruzzaman Bablu, also an AL leader, cross-examined the witness, Farhana.

As the defence could not complete cross-examining the witness, the court set July 18 for the next hearing.

The complainant narrated what she had heard

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Upazila chairman sent to jail over domestic violence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *N'ganj*

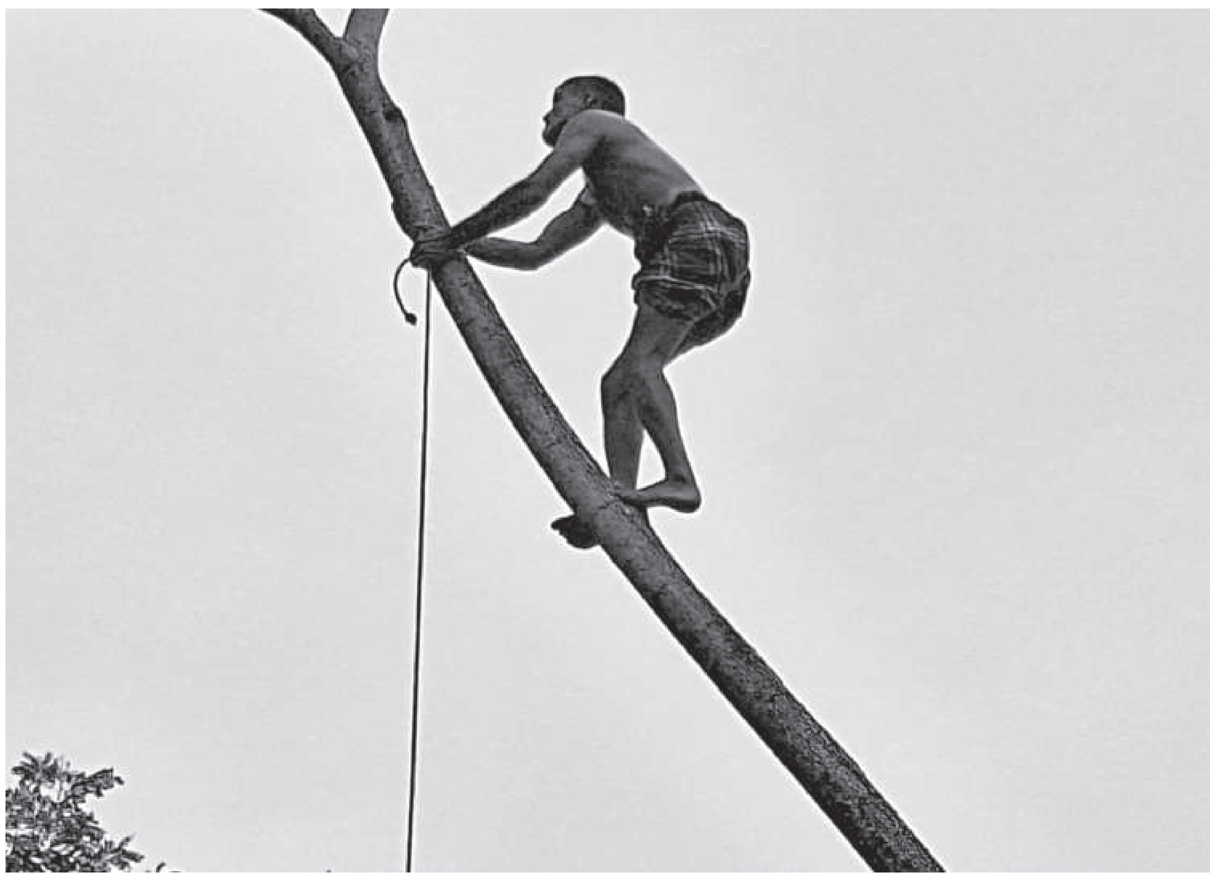
A Narayanganj court yesterday sent an upazila chairman to jail in a case filed by his second wife over domestic violence.

It passed the order after rejecting the bail petition of Maksud Hossain, Bandar upazila chairman, said Public Prosecutor Rakibuddin Ahmed.

Maksud appeared in court as his eight-week anticipatory bail expired, he said.

On April 23, his second wife Sultana Begum filed a petition with a tribunal, alleging that her husband demanded dowry and tortured her.

After hearing the petition, the court ordered Bandar police to investigate the matter after recording the case. Later, the case was recorded with the police station.



Abdur Rashid, 45, risks his life cutting a 60 feet high tree branch without safety gear in Moddho Karpur of Barishal. He works from dawn till dusk and makes around Tk 800-1,000 daily. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট
Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute
সংগ্রহ ও ভান্ডার শাখা
গাজীপুর-১৭০১।

কৃষিই সমৃদ্ধি

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Memo No. 12.21.0000.007.03.086.24.5466
Date: 13 June 2024

e-GP: Tender Notice No. 39 (2023-2024)

e-Tender is invited in the e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following goods. Details are given below:

Sl No.	Package No.	Tender ID & Ref No.	Description of goods	Tender documents last selling (date & time)	Tender closing date & time	Tender opening date & time
01.	PN-GD-01	998604 & IRN: 086	Research Materials (Office Equipment) 06 (Six) Items.	27.06.2024 14:30	27.06.2024 15:30	27.06.2024 15:30

The interested persons/firm may visit the website www.eprocure.gov.bd to get the details of the tender.
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal is required.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).
Project Name: Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition Entrepreneurship and Resilience in Bangladesh (BARI Component) Revenue Budget.

Md. Younus Ali
(BARI-0663)
Deputy Director (In-Charge)
On behalf of Director General

GD- 1016

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

‘Golam Mamun’: A compelling spin-off of crime, betrayal, and societal reflections

SAEED KHAN SHAGOR

Shihab Shaheen’s first spin-off series, *Myself Allen Swapan*, garnered significant attention with its original character creation. The director has crafted yet another spin-off, this time centred on Golam Mamun– a character from Tanim Rahman Angshu’s *Buker Moddhye Agun*.

The web-series ***Golam Mamun*** has recently premiered on the OTT platform Hoichoi. Despite being a spin-off, the series is not a typical character-driven story. In Ayan Chakrabarty’s plot, police officer Golam Mamun is accused of murdering a delinquent named Nasir. Concurrently, Mamun’s colleague Sakib and Sakib’s wife, journalist Tania, are murdered, with all fingers pointing at Mamun. While on duty, Mamun is presented in court but escapes, becoming a fugitive who investigates the connections between these murders. He eventually discovers a link to his brother-in-law’s murder, another police officer.

In his quest to uncover the mysteries, Mamun faces betrayal, distrust, and the disguised faces of those around him. Can he rise above these challenges, or will his astute colleague, officer Robin, catch him? Are Robin and Mamun rivals or allies? The series answers these questions.

The screenplay, written jointly by Shihab Shaheen and Mezbah Uddin Shumon, opens with a tragic scene: a little girl narrates her deceased mother’s condition over a phone call, setting a gloomy tone. The series interweaves numerous events, maintaining a cohesive pattern without becoming irrelevant. Shaheen aimed to present this story on a wide scale, introducing peripheral issues through brief dialogues. Some parts were effective, but not all. For instance, the attempt to address national issues like power outages through dialogues was commendable, but the absence of a generator in such a flat seemed unrealistic

The attempt to introduce the narrative of domestic violence in the marital relationship of Mamun’s brother-in-law and sister was praiseworthy. Shaheen avoided the common trope of unnecessary smoking and drinking to make the characters relevant to violence, instead telling a different story.

Ziaul Faruq Apurba reprises his role from ***Buker Moddhye Agun*** and portrays the character Golam Mamun in this spin-off. He maintains his signature style, delivering a performance free from overacting, and shines in action scenes—a genre his fans haven’t seen him tackle before. This fresh portrayal is a delightful surprise for his die-hard fans. However, outside the action and thrilling moments, Apurba appears somewhat subdued.

Imtiaz Barshon plays the role of police officer Robin. With the addition of this latest series, Barshon has now appeared in three consecutive series, including ***Sharey Showlo***, and ***Kaalpurush***, as a cop – each time portraying a distinct character with different roles, appearances, and nuances. His versatility leaves no room for doubt. In ***Golam Mamun***, he matches Apurba’s performance, creating a compelling antagonist whose ruthlessness contrasts sharply with the protagonist Mamun, garnering audiences’ sympathy for Mamun.

Sabila Nur plays police officer Rahi, an intriguing role in this series. She seamlessly transitions from a temperamental officer to a soft-spoken assistant, and then to an unknown identity at critical moments, showcasing her professionalism. Her urban Bengali accent adds an attractive touch.

Nazmus Sakib portrays tourist police officer Milon. Though Sakib acts regularly, he seldom gets ample screen space. In this series, he has that space, and the role of Milon has the potential to add a new dimension to the story, enhancing its excellence. However, he needs to pay more attention to clichéd dialogue delivery and forced comedy.

Masum Basher delivers an impeccable performance as the chief. Rashed Mamun Apu and Sabrin Azad also make strong appearances. However, Sharlin Farzana fails to make a significant breakthrough after a long hiatus.

Even though ***Golam Mamun*** is a spin-off series, Shihab Shaheen uses it to reflect our current socio-political realities through fiction and brief dialogues, highlighting numerous inconsistencies in our surroundings. However, we should question his portrayal of everything under an invisible shadow, or ‘hukumat’. This ‘invisible’ aspect implants a spectral reality in our minds, which eventually seems insurmountable. The ruling apparatus takes full advantage of this, becoming more active in masking their failures.

Storytelling plays a significant role in creating such narratives, leading to a gradual decline in the audience’s tendency to question authority. This decline is certainly not beneficial for any governance system or the state itself.

PHOTOS: COLLECTED

Warfaze’s Tipu named official artiste for Zildjian drum brand

Sheikh Monirul Alam Tipu, co-founder and band leader of Warfaze, has been named an official artiste for the drum brand Zildjian, marking a significant recognition of Bangladesh’s music scene.

Tipu, born on July 15, 1970, is celebrated not only as a drummer but also as a rhythm composer, lyricist, and music producer.

Tipu’s endorsement by Zildjian marks a career milestone, showcasing his talent and global influence. Known for his distinctive setup with Zildjian cymbals, including the 14” A Custom Hi-Hats, 16” A Custom Medium Crash, and 22” K Series Heavy Ride, his preference for quality resonates with musicians worldwide.

Raihan Rafi announces ‘Toofan’ sequel with original cast

The release of ***Toofan*** during Eid has captivated audiences across Bangladesh, with theatres experiencing overwhelming responses. In a thrilling development, director Raihan Rafi has announced a sequel is in the works, following the film’s dramatic cliffhanger ending.

Starring Shakib Khan, ***Toofan*** carried high expectations even before its release and has not disappointed. Since premiering this Eid, the film has already broken records.

Plans for ***Toofan 2*** began before the first film’s release, but Rafi waited for audience reactions. “The film ends in a way that makes a sequel essential,” he said. The script is ready, with the main cast returning and potential new additions.

NEWS

Super 8 brings

FROM PAGE 12

defending 119 against Pakistan and South Africa defending 115 against Nepal and 113 against Bangladesh respectively.

The lowest successful defense, however, belongs to the Tigers, who bundled out Nepal for 85 after posting just 106 in St Vincent.

Bowlers’ iron grip on batters was slipping as the first round was coming to a close. Two of the three 200-plus totals in the tournament so far came in the final two days of the first round -- West Indies posting 218-5 against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka making 201-6 against the Netherlands.

This trend of higher scores continued in the first two matches of the Super Eight as well. In Group 2, South Africa posted 194-4 against the USA, who in reply made 176-6 in Antigua where Bangladesh are scheduled to play against Australia and India in the Super Eight.

On Thursday, hosts West Indies were blown out of the water by defending champions England despite posting a commendable 180-4 as Jos Battler’s side chased that down in just 17.3 overs in St Lucia.

Scores north of 170 being scored and chased down is signaling a change of tide in the tournament, which could very well add to the challenges of Bangladesh in the Super Eight.

The Tigers begin their Super Eight journey today against Australia, with the match starting at 6:30 am Bangladesh time.

The Tigers have heavily banked on their bowlers so far in the tournament, who have been making up for the shoddy performances from the batters.

However, the Tigers’ bowling attack still hasn’t been tested on a flat surface, and containing the belligerent Aussie batting line-up on a flat surface would be a huge challenge.

Less than 48 hours after the Australia match, the Najmul Hossain Shanto-led side will face India at the same venue.

The Tigers would be hoping for a return to first round’s playing conditions in Antigua for the next few days, otherwise, they might risk seeing their misfiring batting get exposed by two superior teams in quick succession.

Elderly couple murdered

FROM PAGE 12

Bloody footprints were spotted up to the fourth floor, police said.

As the underground water tank at Shafiqur’s house started overflowing, neighbours went to notify someone at the building.

When a tenant from the third floor came down to switch off the water pump, he found Shafiqur lying in a pool of blood on one side of the garage. She called the neighbours for help and then dialed 999 to report the incident.

The police found the key to the main gate of the building with Shafiqur. The building can however be accessed by jumping over the back boundary wall.

Emon said the killers ransacked the almirahs, but no valuables were missing. His laptop, which was inside an almirah, was found on the bed.

He went on to say that they didn’t have any enmity with any neighbours, but had a land dispute in their village.

Meanwhile, the bodies of the victims were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Speaking to reporters, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Wari division) Iqbal Hossain said the modus operandi suggests that this was a planned murder. “It’s not a case of theft or robbery.”

“The killers inflicted many blows to Shafiqur’s neck and head to ensure his death. Nothing was missing from the house. The killers tried to pass it off as a robbery.”

He said the double murder could have occurred due to previous enmity or family enmity.

Putin seeks security

FROM PAGE 12

should not be given a stage on which to defend Russia’s war in Ukraine.

Russia and Vietnam signed agreements on issues including energy, underlining Moscow’s pivot to Asia after the West imposed sanctions on Moscow over the conflict in Ukraine.

“We are firmly committed to deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership with Vietnam, which remains among the priorities of Russia’s foreign policy,” Putin was quoted as saying by Russian media.

He was quoted by Russia’s TASS news agency as saying the two countries shared an interest in “developing a reliable security architecture” in the region based on not using force and peacefully settling disputes with no room for “closed military-political blocs”.

The 11 pacts signed in Hanoi were not on the same level as the landmark mutual defence agreement in North Korea.

But Putin’s warm welcome was a public relations achievement for the Russian leader, who has an outstanding International Criminal Court arrest warrant against him over alleged war crimes in Ukraine, charges he denies. Neither Russia nor Vietnam is a member of the ICC.

The military ceremony put on to greet Putin, who was embraced by both Vietnamese President To Lam and Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, was the kind reserved for the highest heads of state and rolled out when US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Vietnam last year.

The two presidents witnessed the exchange of 11 cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding, including deals on oil and gas, nuclear science and education.

At another event, Lam said Putin continued to lead Russia “overcoming all difficulties and challenges, at the same time contributing to the peace, stability and development in the region and the world.”

Vietnam’s hosting of Putin was criticised by the United States, now an important partner which upgraded diplomatic relations with Hanoi last year and is Vietnam’s top export market, and by the EU.

A US embassy statement this week said no country should be giving Putin a platform to promote Russia’s war in Ukraine.

An EU delegation spokesperson in Vietnam said Hanoi had the right to develop its own foreign policy, but said Russia’s war in Ukraine proved Moscow did not respect international law.

Hajj death toll

FROM PAGE 2

Saudi authorities reported clearing hundreds of thousands of unregistered pilgrims from Makkah this month, but it appears many still participated in the main rites which began last Friday.

This group was more vulnerable to the heat because, without official permits, they could not access air-conditioned spaces provided by Saudi authorities for the 1.8 million authorised pilgrims to cool down after hours of walking and praying outside.

“People were tired after being chased by security forces before Arafat day. They were exhausted,” one Arab diplomat told AFP yesterday, referring to Saturday’s day-long outdoor prayers that marked the hajj’s climax.

The diplomat said the main cause of death among Egyptian pilgrims was the heat, which triggered complications related to high blood pressure and other issues.

In addition to Egypt, new fatalities were confirmed yesterday by Pakistan and Indonesia. Out of around 150,000 pilgrims, Pakistan has so far recorded 58 deaths, a diplomat briefed on the tally told AFP.

“I think given the number of people, given the weather, this is just natural,” the diplomat said.

Indonesia, which had around 240,000 pilgrims, raised its death toll to 183, according to the ministry of religious affairs, compared with 313 deaths recorded last year.

Deaths have also been confirmed by Malaysia, India, Jordan, Iran, Senegal, Tunisia, Sudan and Iraq’s autonomous Kurdistan region. In many cases authorities have not specified the cause.

We’ll retaliate

FROM PAGE 12

to navigate the waters in Myanmar’s territories of the Naf river, prompting firing either by the Myanmar military or the Arakan Army, he said.

The minister, however, said the situation has improved of late.

“Currently, they are not shooting at the boats in Bangladeshi waters. The two ships on the Myanmar side [of the Naf river] have been withdrawn,” he said referring to the deployment of those Myanmar ships.

He expressed optimism that there would be no further shooting. “However, those who cross the area are taking necessary precautions.”

Locals in St Martin’s said gunshots were fired from across the border at trawlers and speedboats on the Naf river since June 6.

‘Swiss banks not so lucrative now to park money’

FROM PAGE 12

ago after tax probes by the US, France and Germany and a new system of bank-data exchange between governments has scuppered the traditional “no-questions asked” approach by Swiss banks to serving rich clients living abroad, Bloomberg reported in 2016.

The development of the Common Reporting Standards (CRS) in 2014 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also brought about a major shift in global tax transparency.

This is because by signing up, countries agree to automatically exchange financial account information. As a result, it has become harder for individuals to conceal their wealth offshore without the rest of the world knowing about it. Before this, countries generally had to request this information from other nations.

Data from the Swiss National Bank showed that Bangladeshi nationals saved 13.96 million CHF in Swiss banks in 2023, the lowest since 1997. The amount was 78 percent of the total deposits of 17.71 million CHF, or $19.86 million.

The deposits were Tk 233 crore in Bangladeshi currency. In the case of Bangladeshi nationals, the deposits amounted to Tk 184 crore.

Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of the Transparency International Bangladesh, said Switzerland is one of the many destinations for illicit fund transfers.

Switzerland is a conventional destination, but since it joined the global efforts against money laundering and corruption, it has lost its shine, he added.

“Many destinations for illegal money transfers have sprouted, and they are more attractive,” he said, citing the names of Malaysia, Singapore, and the Middle Eastern countries.

Plus, there are offshore destinations to park money, he said.

“One can buy properties in the UK, the US, Canada, and the Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern countries. This is not easy in the case of Switzerland,” added Iftekharuzzaman.

“So, the falling deposits in the Swiss banks belonging to Bangladeshi citizens and banks do not provide any relief that illegal capital flight has declined.”

In 2022, the Tax Justice Network’s Financial Secrecy Index, the UK-based organisation, named the US as the top destination for stashing money illegally. The country overtook traditional tax havens Singapore, Switzerland, Luxembourg, the Bahamas, and the Cayman Islands.

Mansur, a former economist at the International Monetary Fund, said Switzerland had once kept the information of depositors confidential. “Now it is not maintaining the secrecy. It provides information if any government seeks.”

Bangladeshis living in Switzerland may hold a portion of the deposits. A part of the foreign currency reserves of Bangladesh are also kept there, he added.

US, UK, EU express

FROM PAGE 12

dedicated efforts to provide essential services for Rohingya refugees and Bangladesh’s host communities.

“We continue to advocate for global attention for this protracted crisis, amid emerging new crises and growing global humanitarian need,” they said.

In the camps, improved opportunities for refugees to pursue meaningful education and livelihoods could build essential resilience and self-reliance, the statement said. “This is important to overcome cycles of poverty and marginalisation for future generations.”

“We remain committed to ensure a better and more dignified life for the Rohingyas while they remain in Bangladesh. We will continue to pursue regional coordination and collective efforts towards sustainable solutions for Rohingya refugees, partnering with the government of Bangladesh.”

UK's Sunak faces call for polls date betting probe

AFP, *London*

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak yesterday faced calls to launch an inquiry after a member of his security detail was arrested for allegedly betting on the timing of the general election.

London's Metropolitan Police said it was told by the Gambling Commission that a close protection officer was being investigated over the alleged bets.

The regulator had already been looking into claims that Conservative party candidate Craig Williams, who served as Sunak's ministerial aide, placed a bet on when the election would be held.

A second candidate from Sunak's party, Laura Saunders, is now also under investigation about an alleged bet on the date of the poll, the BBC reported on Wednesday evening.

Saunders is married to the Tories' director of campaigns, it added.

Palestinians ride in the back of a pick-up truck in a displacement area of al-Mawasi in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday, as Israel continues bombardment and ground assault in the Palestinian enclave. PHOTO: AFP

DIRECT PASSENGER FLIGHT

India shuns China's calls to resume service

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

China is pressing India to restart direct passenger flights after a four-year halt, but New Delhi is resisting as a border dispute continues to weigh on ties between the world's two most populous countries, officials said.

India-China relations have been tense since the biggest military confrontation in decades on their disputed Himalayan border killed 20 Indian and at least four Chinese soldiers in June 2020. Thousands of troops remain mobilised on each side.

Since the clash, India has made it difficult for Chinese companies to invest, banned hundreds of popular apps and severed passenger routes, although direct cargo flights still operate between the Asian giants.

Direct flights would benefit both economies, but the stakes are higher for China, where a recovery in overseas travel after the Covid-19 pandemic is lagging, while India's aviation sector booms.

Several times over the past year or so, China's government and airlines have asked India's civil aviation authorities to re-establish direct air links, two people with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters, with one saying China considers this a "big issue".

"We hope the Indian side will work with China in the same direction for the early resumption of direct flights," China's Foreign Ministry told Reuters in a statement last week.

MYANMAR CRISIS

Ethnic armed groups accuse junta of breaking truce

AFP, *Yangon*

An alliance of Myanmar ethnic armed groups have accused the junta of repeatedly violating a China-brokered ceasefire in the north of the country this month and causing civilian casualties.

Beijing brokered a truce between the junta and the so-called "Three Brotherhood Alliance" in January after months of fighting that displaced more than half a million people near China's southern border.

The ceasefire allowed the alliance -- made up of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and the Arakan Army (AA) to hold swathes of territory it had seized in northern Shan state.

Junta troops on Wednesday launched an air strike on territory the TNLA holds near the ruby and gem-mining hub of Mogok, the group said.

"In this incident, one civilian was killed and 3 wounded including a 10-year-old child," the TNLA said in a statement posted to the alliance's Telegram channel on Wednesday.

Nowhere in Israel will be spared in case of war

Lebanon's Hezbollah chief warns; Israel army spokesman says Hamas can't be eliminated

AFP, *Beirut*

Fears of a regional war rose yesterday after Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah movement said none of Israel would be spared in a full-blown conflict, and Israel said it had approved plans for a Lebanon offensive.

Experts are divided on the prospect of wider war, almost nine months into Israel's vow to eradicate Hamas, the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip.

On Wednesday Israel's top army spokesman said Hamas, as an ideology, cannot be eliminated. Others, including US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, have also pointed to the difficulty of destroying the group.

Hezbollah chief also threatened Cyprus if it opened its airports to Israel "to target Lebanon".

In a televised address, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah said "no place" in Israel would "be spared our rockets" if war began.

Nasrallah's Iran-backed group has exchanged near-daily fire with Israel since Israel began offensive in Gaza on October 7, but the fire from Hezbollah rockets, Israeli warplanes and other weapons has escalated in the past few weeks.

The Hezbollah chief also threatened the nearby island nation of Cyprus if it opened its airports or bases to Israel "to target Lebanon".

Cyprus, a European Union member, is home to two British bases, including an airbase, but they are in sovereign British territory and not controlled by the Cypriot government.

Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides denied his country's involvement in the offensive and said it was "part of the solution". He pointed to its role in a maritime humanitarian corridor to Gaza.

Warplanes from the British airbase in Cyprus have, along with United States forces, carried out reprisal strikes against Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels who have for months been attacking shipping in nearby waterways.

On Wednesday, US military said its forces destroyed two Houthi sites in Yemen. The Houthis and Hezbollah both say they are acting in response to Israel's actions in Gaza. On Tuesday Israel's military announced that "operational plans for an offensive in Lebanon were approved and validated", and Foreign Minister Israel Katz warned of Hezbollah's destruction in a "total war".

US envoy Amos Hochstein called for "urgent" de-escalation.

On Tuesday Hezbollah published a more than nine-minute video showing drone footage purportedly taken by the movement over northern Israel, including parts of the city and port of Haifa.

4 in 5 people want more climate action

UN survey finds

AFP, *United Nations*

Four in every five people want their country to strengthen its commitments to addressing climate change, according to a global poll of 75,000 participants published yesterday.

The survey by the UN Development Program, Oxford University and GeoPoll posed 15 questions by randomised telephone calls to people in 77 countries representing 87 percent of the world's population.

The key finding was that 80 percent of respondents want their governments to increase efforts to fight against global warming.

Poorer countries beat this drum the loudest, with 89 percent in favour, though appetite is also high in G20 nations (76 percent), according to the survey.

China (73 percent) and the United States (66 percent) -- the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitters -- also saw a majority of respondents in favour of climate action.

"As world leaders decide on the next round of pledges under the Paris Agreement by 2025, these results are undeniable evidence that people everywhere support bold climate action," said Cassie Flynn, UNDP global climate director.

India boosts Sri Lanka's maritime monitoring centres

AFP, *Colombo*

Sri Lanka launched an upgraded naval monitoring centre yesterday, funded by its powerful neighbour India as New Delhi pushes to counter China's expanding regional influence.

The Maritime Rescue Coordinating Centre -- able to track shipping across vast areas -- was backed by a $6 million Indian grant, a statement from President Ranil Wickremesinghe's office said.

Based in Sri Lanka's naval headquarters in Colombo, it also includes seven remote stations along the island's eastern seaboard.

One lies in the far south of Sri Lanka -- close to the Chinese-run port of Hambantota -- overseeing major international east-to-west shipping routes.

Sri Lanka's maritime rescue region covers an area of 1.77 million square kilometres (683,400 square miles) stretching from India to Indonesia, Australia and the Maldives.

India's Foreign Minister S Jaishankar opened the facility during his first foreign visit since the formation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's new government this month.

Jaishankar said on social media that Colombo was a key part of India's "neighbourhood first" and maritime security policies.

India is suspicious of China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean, including in Sri Lanka as well as the Maldives, which signed a military assistance pact with Beijing in March.

That deal came as a garrison of Indian soldiers, who had been stationed in the upscale holiday destination to assist with maritime patrols, was ordered by pro-Beijing President Mohamed Muizzu to leave.

China coast guard personnel a 'band of barbarians'

Says Philippine navy official

REUTERS, *Manila*

China's coast guard personnel acted like a "band of barbarians" during a Philippine resupply mission to a contested shoal in the South China Sea this week that led to injuries and damage to vessels, a senior navy official said yesterday.

A Philippine sailor suffered serious injury after what its military described as "intentional-high speed ramming" by the Chinese Coast Guard, aiming to disrupt a resupply mission for troops stationed on the Second Thomas Shoal.

China's Coast Guard personnel, which Philippine military officials said were carrying knives and spears, looted firearms and "deliberately punctured" Philippine boats involved in the mission.

"We were unprepared for that kind of response," Philippine navy spokesperson Roy Trinidad said in a phone interview yesterday. "We stuck with the rules of engagement. They were not allowed to use guns except for self defence."

Trinidad said China's "illegal, aggressive and deceptive" actions raises the risk of miscalculation at sea.

But China's foreign ministry disputed the Philippines' statement, with a spokesperson saying yesterday that the necessary measures taken were lawful, professional and beyond reproach.

"The Philippine ships not only carry building materials, they also smuggled weapons and equipment and deliberately rammed Chinese ships," said ministry spokesperson Lin Jian.

IMMEDIATELY DISMISS NTA AUTHORITIES, DISBAND NTA!!
BAN COACHING CENTRES!!
The Lack of Integrity, The Authorities Must Clarify!
DOES IT MEAN COMPROMISED INTEGRITY OF
MUST RESIGN
Dharmendra Pradhan MUST RESIGN !
SFI
KYS
RISE IN RAGE AGAINST UGC-NET SCAM AND CORRUPT NTA!
KYS

Students holding placards protest outside the Ministry of Education against the cancellation of the UGC-NET examination in New Delhi, India yesterday. India's opposition parties and the country's students have hit out at the new government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for irregularities in recent government-run tests for college admissions and government teaching jobs. PHOTO: REUTERS

GRAFT CASE

Delhi CM Kejriwal gets bail

NDTV ONLINE

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has been granted bail in the liquor policy case. Kejriwal's lawyer had argued the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had no evidence against him.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief is likely to come out of jail today, as the bail order has to reach jail first.

His lawyer told the Delhi court that the ED's entire case against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief rested on statements given by those who turned approver in the case.

The court denied the ED's request to allow at least 48 hours to sign the bail bond in order for the central agency to challenge it before the relevant court.

The ED arrested Kejriwal on March 21 over money laundering allegations while framing the Delhi liquor policy for 2021-22, which was later scrapped after the Lt Governor raised red flags.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Air pollution now the biggest killer

Take legal action against those responsible

It is alarming to know that air pollution has become the leading cause of death in Bangladesh, outpacing fatalities from high blood pressure, poor diet, and tobacco use, according to a newly unveiled global study. The study found that in 2021, at least 236,000 lives were lost due to air pollution in the country. By comparison, 200,000 deaths occurred due to high blood pressure, 130,100 due to tobacco use, and 130,400 were linked to poor diet. This deserves critical attention.

Unlike other major causes of deaths, air pollution is something that affects everyone, particularly children. In fact, in 2021, the country ranked fifth globally in terms of deaths among children under the age of five due to air pollution. And as much as 36 percent of preterm births in Bangladesh were also linked to it. Aside from deaths, air pollution impacts children's health in many ways and at many levels, starting from pregnancy through early childhood. These issues may continue to affect an individual throughout their life.

Despite these severe health impacts—and the resulting burden on the nation—we wonder why the government has failed to make any significant progress in reducing air pollution. A number of previous studies have shared similar findings, which make it obvious that this has turned into a silent killer that must be urgently addressed. According to a study by Clean Air Fund (CAF), between 2017 and 2021, Bangladesh received $2.3 billion to curb air pollution. Where did this fund go? What was it used for? Does the government have any notable achievement to show that it was properly utilised?

Major pollutants like construction dust, traffic fumes, factory emissions, and brick kilns continue to be unchecked to this day. According to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), of the 60 lakh registered vehicles in the country, about 6.17 lakh run with no or expired fitness certificates. Additionally, Bangladesh produces about 30 lakh tonnes of e-waste every year—most of which contain carcinogenic elements. Brick kilns, too, continue to heavily pollute the environment. In other words, the government has done little to nothing to address the killer air that citizens are breathing in.

Last year, the High Court rightly lambasted the Department of Environment (DoE) for failing to take effective steps to control air pollution in Dhaka despites its repeated directives. But even that seems to have changed nothing. It is high time, therefore, for the relevant state institutions as well as polluting entities to be held responsible for their negligence or contributions in this regard. Perhaps then they will finally start to act as they are legally bound to do, and help prevent needless deaths of citizens.

A tragedy lurking in the shadow

Ukhiya landslides bring the horror to Rohingyas

We are saddened by the tragic deaths of ten people, including eight Rohingyas, in landslides at the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya upazila early Wednesday. According to a report, the landslides occurred after heavy downpour overnight, affecting multiple camps including camps 1, 2, 9, 10, and 14 where the deaths have been confirmed. The authorities are reportedly taking steps to evacuate at-risk camp dwellers from hazardous, hilly areas to prevent further casualties. While heavy rainfall has been a significant factor in these deadly landslides, it just goes to highlight the precariousness of the living condition of the Rohingya.

Such landslides have occurred in the past as well. Around 12 lakh Rohingyas have been living in 33 camps of Ukhiya and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar, most of them since 2017 after fleeing persecutions in Myanmar. Their living arrangement, with many residing in perilous conditions on hill slopes, may put them at a natural disadvantage during monsoon. Those at risk should be evacuated, but where would they be evacuated to and then what? It's a terrible and tricky situation. While the authorities are moving them to temporary locations for now, Bangladesh, which has been bearing an enormous burden by hosting so many refugees, cannot be expected to resolve the issue on its own. The international community must come up with a solution that simultaneously ensures the long-term well-being of the Rohingya community and protects our interests.

The Ukhiya landslides add to the growing casualties caused by the recent deluge and mountain runoff that already combined to set off a flood in Sylhet and Sunamganj and threaten to inundate many other areas. With the Met office warning of further rains and potential landslides in Chattogram and Sylhet divisions, it is likely that more such incidents will occur. Heavy rainfall since Tuesday night has caused extensive damage in many areas, submerging homes, roads, poultry farms, fish enclosures, etc. However, apart from Ukhiya, there have been no reports of fatalities from landslides yet, but that may change if preventive actions are not taken. The authorities in Chattogram and Sylhet, where most of the landslides usually occur because of fragile, often-illegal settlements, must remain especially vigilant and relocate at-risk families.

Given the severity and frequency of landslides, the higher authorities also must take a critical look at our state of preparedness and undertake comprehensive measures. Timely warnings and immediate response are crucial in such scenarios. Structural reinforcements and proper land management are equally important to mitigate the risk of future disasters. Without such actions, this seasonal threat will continue to lurk in the shadow and endanger people every monsoon.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Birth of Benazir Bhutto

On this day in 1954, Pakistan's first woman Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was born. Belonging to a politically influential family, she co-chaired the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and became the first woman to lead a Muslim majority country. She was assassinated in 2007.

The constitutionality of building kitchen markets over bulldozed homes

Psymhe Wadud
teaches international human rights law at the University of Dhaka and is in-charge of Law & Our Rights at The Daily Star.

PSYMHE WADUD

The Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) recently went on to evict 87 families in the Miranzilla sweeper colony. One DSCC official told this daily that the eviction measures were being carried out to implement a decision made some eight years ago.

As a law student and an academic, I am still naïve to recall judicial interpretations of our constitution and laws. Indeed, more than two decades back, the High Court categorically observed that no eviction is constitutional if alternative rehabilitative measures are not adopted (*ASK v Bangladesh*, 1999). Later, there were multiple other decisions along the same line of interpretation, landmark among which is *BLAST v Bangladesh* (2008).

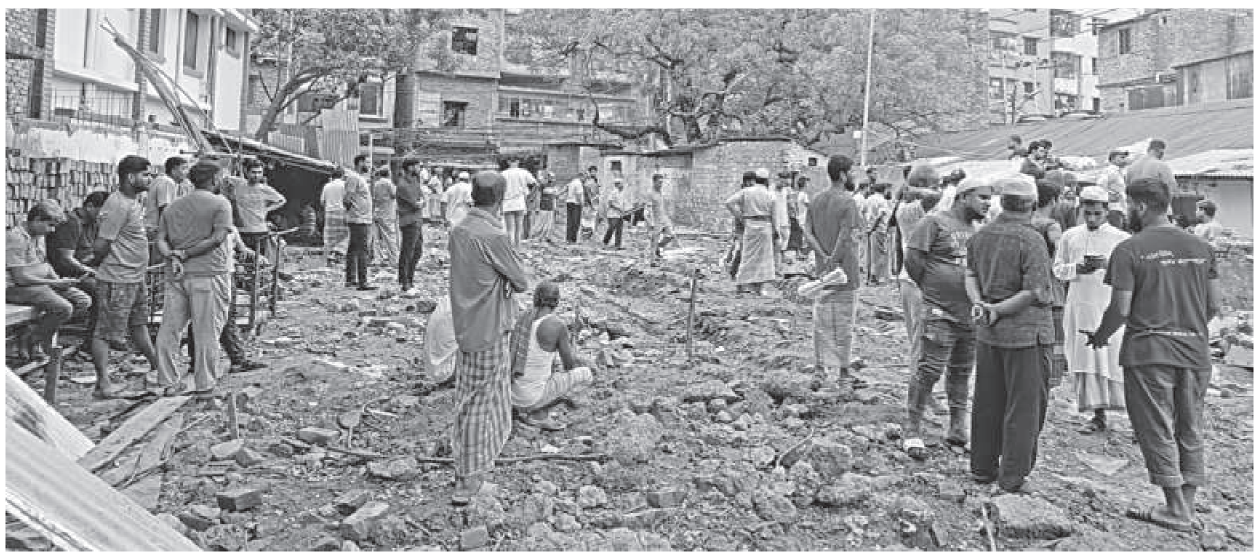
Shelter, among others, is not a judicially enforceable right under the Bangladesh Constitution. It falls within the purview of the judicially unenforceable policy principles that nonetheless are supposed to be "fundamental to the governance of Bangladesh" and to "form the basis of the work of the state." However, the Supreme Court has gone on to enforce shelter through reimagining the margins of the fundamental right to life. Indeed, the court held that the right to life, as enshrined in the constitution, cannot be construed as a vegetative existence only, but ought to be interpreted as a dignified life.

The decisions mentioned above constitute the primer for constitutional law lessons 101. These are rather primary cases for understanding and teaching right to life in law schools (at least I can speak for the University of Dhaka). The Dalit, on the other hand, are a major category to study and research into equality and non-discrimination law. They are the paradigmatic subaltern class about whom discussions abound in civil society seminars and symposia. What the Miranzilla eviction measures underscore for us afresh is the gap between our studies, activism, and reality. It also shows how only the courts are sites of constitutionalism for us.

However, the discursive notion of constitutionalism ought to be rooted in multifarious sites, including parliamentary and executive spaces of state governance, and the decisions emanating from the courts ought to be taken seriously by the decision-makers. Why should every (unconstitutional) action get remedially treated with stay orders from the court (as happened at the present instance as well), when we already have categorical observations and holdings from the court to pre-emptively inform the decisions of different branches of the state?

For purposes of international human rights law, adequate housing is a paradigmatic economic right having both cultural and social connotations. This right can be restricted only in accordance with law, and only in pursuance of a legitimate aim. In the case of Miranzilla, such aim is the expansion of a kitchen market. Tenets of human rights law require that the restriction and the legitimate aim are proportionate to each other, and that such restriction is the least intrusive measure in pursuance of the aim sought to be achieved. Further, in no case can such restriction violate the "essence" of the right, implying that there has to be alternative rehabilitative measures in place to counteract the impact of restrictions, if any, imposed on the exercise of right to adequate housing. The international human rights law envisions that the right is progressively realised, also firmly acknowledging that in no cases can states take regressive measures (e.g., eviction without appropriate and adequate rehabilitation).

Rehabilitation, too, is rather euphemistic, I would say. Indeed, eviction from ancestral homes of hundred years strikes at the very root of a community's existence, and rehabilitation can hardly restore the *status quo ante*. The fact that we advocate for rehabilitation as a minimum for the would-be evicted people too in a way empowers the top-down narrative defined by hegemony. Nonetheless, when even the bare minimum is not complied with, we get to see the unclad face of power.



Eviction from ancestral homes of hundred years strikes at the very root of a community's existence, and rehabilitation can hardly restore the status quo ante.

FILE PHOTO: **MD ABBAS**

The recent eviction measures tell us two things: first, how the Dalit community lies at the lowest stratum of the power hierarchy, and second, that those in decision-making power view them exactly as such. The decision-makers also are entirely unmindful to the existence of elderly, children, and persons with disabilities within such families. The disparate impact that the measures are having on them is unsurprisingly not accounted for.

The Dalit, the identity they embrace "as a matter of assertive pride and resistance"—are indeed the outliers, falling outside the four-fold caste schema. The eviction reifies their identity as Dalits—as opposed to "children of God" or Harijans, as Gandhi had called them—a term that I personally find rather supercilious and patronising (as did Ambedkar). In any case, can homes of the children of God be bulldozed to expand a kitchen market?

Let's honour the Rohingya refugees and their hosts

Sumbul Rizvi
is the representative of UNHCR in Bangladesh.

SUMBUL RIZVI

Over 12 crore people are forcibly displaced by conflict or persecution—across borders or within their countries. Among refugees, three-quarters are hosted by low- and middle-income countries like Bangladesh, which will soon mark the seventh year of hosting nearly one million Rohingya refugees.

This displacement, in the words of UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, is driven by "the international community's inability to solve conflicts or prevent new ones." In 2017, Bangladesh provided protection to one of the world's most persecuted communities. The generous people of Cox's Bazar were on the ground joined by UNHCR, United Nations, and NGO partners, offering food, clothing and shelter to traumatised Rohingya families.

Some refugee situations are short as in 1971, while others may take longer. The Rohingya yearn to quickly return, but are unable to until it is safe. The international community, especially regional entities, must work towards a political solution and resolution of the conflict. In the meantime, providing protection and support is how states demonstrate solidarity and shared humanity.

Seven years on, we watch in alarm the escalating conflict in northern Rakhine, while refugees await its cessation, anticipating voluntary repatriation to a peaceful homeland. As the warring parties battle for control of the Rakhine state, the inevitable viciousness of conflict is apparent, impacting civilians including the Rohingya. The stateless Rohingya once again have nowhere to go. In May, UNHCR issued a guidance note urging all states neighbouring Myanmar to respect the principle of non-refoulement and allow fleeing civilians access to safety.

While the Rohingya situation is not on the scale witnessed in 1971, memories are evoked of one crore uprooted Bangladeshis seeking asylum with India during the Liberation War. Asylum is universally applicable, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and embedded in state traditions from time immemorial, especially in this part of the world.

Protection includes safety and security while fleeing, and when in the receiving state. Pushback of civilians approaching international borders and deportation/refoulement of those desperately seeking protection with their relatives in Bangladesh's refugee camps are contrary to the shared history of humanity and asylum tradition in South Asia.

> **Sadly, a new trend of stereotypes and toxic public narrative dehumanises the Rohingya, blaming them for all and sundry woes, whether inflation, illicit yaba trade, climate impacts, and more. 'Rohingya' is used as a slur—synonymous with criminals and primitive people. History has shown how dehumanising language, seemingly harmless, can prove dangerous for all concerned. Today, social media and technology further amplify that harm.**

Since 2022, the security situation in the refugee camps has deteriorated—including killings, kidnapping, gender-based violence and child protection incidents. Rival criminal organisations feeding on despair are responsible, persuading refugee youth lacking prospects of livelihoods and education, by force or by lure. The conflict across the border further aggravates security in the camps.

While UN agencies and NGOs have stepped up protection monitoring, and UNHCR intervenes with authorities on all reported incidents, this is not enough. Concerted state action is imperative to reverse the tide of insecurity and protect the vulnerable. With 80 percent women, children and elderly having survived unimaginable trauma, refugee mothers clamour for attention to their plight, demanding a safe environment. A proposed Joint Peace Campaign is raising hopes as efforts commence.

I am inspired by the Rohingya community's incredible courage—in the face of historical prejudice and targeted violence and living amid the impacts of climate change and natural disasters. If the majority lacked basic education and urban skills when they arrived from Myanmar, they are now active participants in education, skills, and community empowerment programmes. Seeking self-improvement, they access online courses, English lessons, vocational trainings; operate community blood drives, camp libraries for women, youth environment groups, and so much more.... Steadily, the Rohingya are building capacity to provide for themselves. They are at the forefront, delivering services in camps, including mental health counselling, manufacturing menstrual hygiene products, documenting camp life through photography and art, fighting fires, and protecting from natural disasters.

Cohesion with local host communities have allowed Rohingya coexistence over the last seven years. Sadly, a new trend of stereotypes and toxic public narrative dehumanises the Rohingya, blaming them for all and sundry woes, whether inflation, illicit yaba trade, climate impacts, and more. "Rohingya" is used as a slur—synonymous with criminals and primitive people. History has shown how dehumanising language, seemingly harmless, can prove dangerous for all concerned. Today, social media and technology further amplify that harm.

The challenges are myriad, but collective advocacy and a common vision have overcome enormous constraints. In 2023, after 33 percent drop in food rations, UNHCR and humanitarian partners sounded the alarm, linking the cuts to increased malnutrition and health risks, as well as child marriage, child labour, and dangerous boat journeys in search of hope. This year, with new funding, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) was able to raise the value of food vouchers twice from $8 to $10 on January 1, and to $11 on June 1. The 2023 funding appeal, too, received higher funding compared to most refugee situations in a year of competing global priorities. The 2024 funding requires collective advocacy and support to sustain the refugees.

Partners are providing Myanmar curriculum classes for children in Grades KG to 10, with Grade 11 beginning this year. In June, 90,000 Rohingya school children took end-of-year learning assessments. Four years ago, there was no formal education for the Rohingya. Today, through advocacy and partnership, girls and boys are enrolled across grades. Through collective efforts, the tree cover in camps has been restored and deforestation for firewood is a memory. Slopes, streambanks, drainage systems, and forests have been rehabilitated by Rohingya volunteers and donor funds.

Local communities and refugees will further benefit from much needed funds that will flow from the World Bank IDA 2020 Window for Host and Refugees. Based on the MoU between UNHCR and the World Bank, aimed at supporting developing economies with large refugee populations, the $700 million grant and extremely concessional loan is key to enhancing the local context. By uplifting refugees alongside its own people, Bangladesh continues a tradition of solidarity and protection, and invests in a vibrant relationship with its Rohingya neighbours when they one day return to a stable Rakhine.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Subscription:
01711623906

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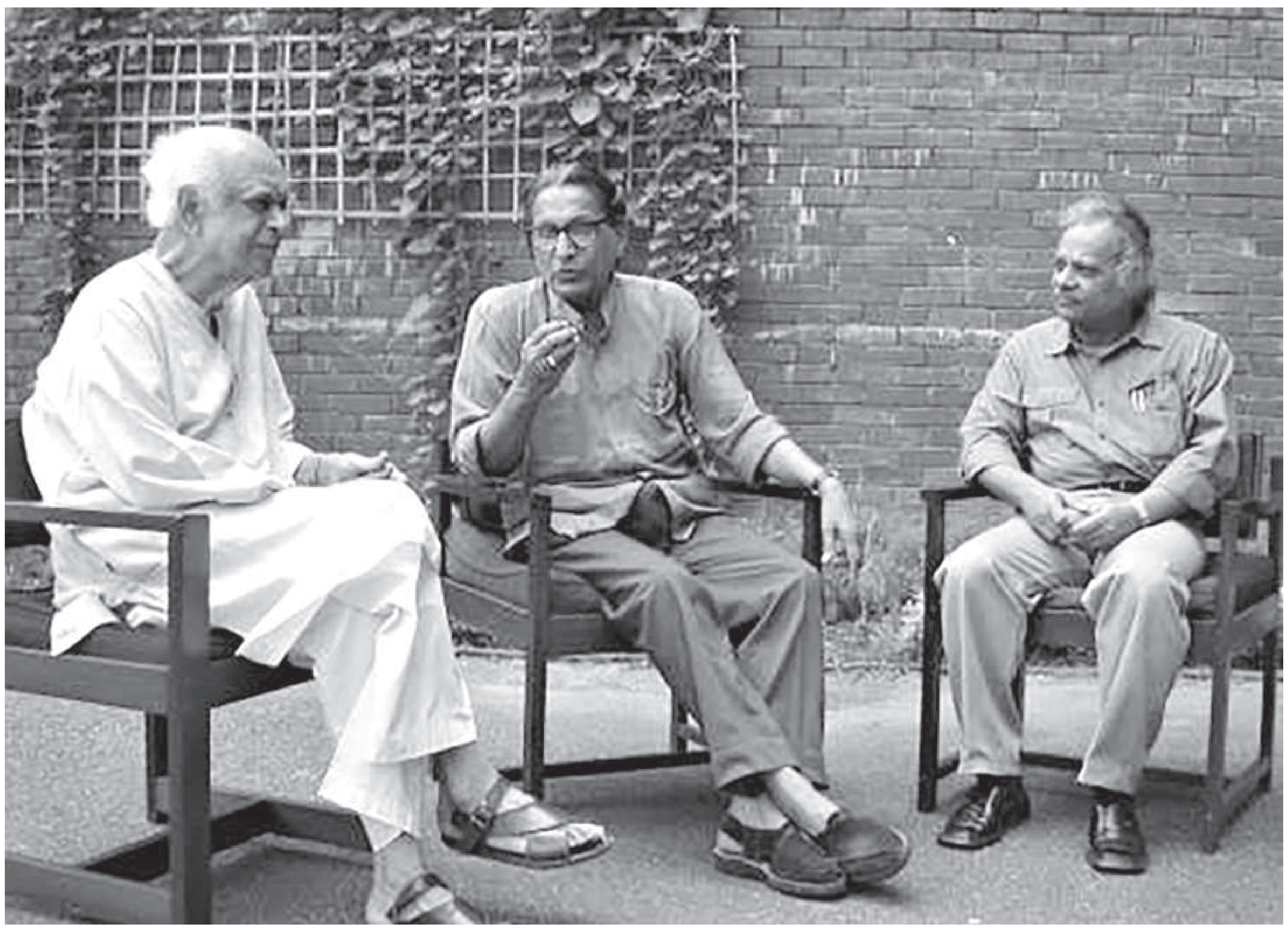
A teacher who inspired generations of architects

THE GRUDGING URBANIST

Dr Adnan Zillur Morshed
is an architect, architectural historian, urbanist, and professor. He teaches at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, and serves as executive director of the Centre for Inclusive Architecture and Urbanism at BRAC University.

ADNAN ZILLUR MORSHED



Shamsul Wares (right) with Muzharul Islam (left) and Indian architect BV Doshi.

PHOTO: **COURTESY**

Do we have a national fetish to celebrate accomplished people around us only after they perish? How often do we express gratitude to our teachers when they are still around? Being an educator myself, I understand, even if imperfectly, how much students' appreciation means to a teacher.

Today, I would like to thank a professor who inspired generations of architects in Bangladesh.

Shamsul Wares is known as a fiercely passionate teacher who professes architecture as a philosophy of modernism—one that views the challenges of space-making through the lens of 20th century aesthetic experiments in abstraction, platonic clarity, and humanism. His growth as an iconic teacher in the Department of Architecture at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) paralleled the trials and tribulations of a post-independent country and the evolution of its built environment.

As an architect, Shamsul Wares has produced a robust body of design work, ranging from residential houses to urban parks, from factories to institutional buildings, from cinema halls to shopping malls and apartment complexes. "Wares sir" built an intellectual bridge between the aggregate design legacy of Muzharul Islam, Louis Kahn, Constantinos Doxiadis, Paul Rudolph, and Stanley Tigerman during the Pakistan era and the generations of architects that contributed to the development of what has been called a "Bengal Stream" in architecture in post-independence Bangladesh. The kind of architecture he advocated in his classroom is deliberately abstract, where overt social and historical representations are muted in favour of platonic formal expressions. We learnt from his position on aesthetic modernism, one that is cognitively powerful without having to resort to any kind of semiotic adventures or show gratuitous associations with the power structures of history and society.

Prof Shamsul Wares

PHOTO: **COURTESY**

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Towards the end of Nathaniel Kahn's acclaimed documentary, *My Architect: A Son's Journey* (2003), there is a perplexingly poignant moment. I reflected on it in a review of the documentary, "Inside the Capitol building ... Shamsul Wares delivers a startling, if not the ultimate, message: that personal failings should not blind us to the genius of a great artist and that a son must seek his father not always in the father's fulfilment of familial duties, but sometimes in the humanity of his aesthetics." To describe the genius of a great artist, Wares likened Louis Kahn to "our Moses" who, in his view, gave Bangladesh an unmistakable symbol of democracy, a timeless Parliament Building that captures the highest expression of modernism. The most dramatic part in all of this was not Wares's "genius father" statement, but the tears that rolled down his cheeks while stating it. Nathaniel Kahn stated on several occasions that, for him, the Shamsul Wares moment in the documentary unexpectedly became his project's intellectual epicentre. Many people agreed.

It is hard not to wonder what Wares's tears meant both for the documentary and the state of architecture in Bangladesh. Were they tears of gratitude? Joy? Emotion? Days after I first watched the documentary in New York City, I ran into India's celebrated architect Charles Correa at a soiree hosted by MIT professor Stanford Anderson at his beautiful waterfront house in Boston. Upon hearing that I was from Bangladesh, Correa asked me about Shamsul Wares, particularly the reason for his tears in *My Architect*. Kahn's work is great, but why cry, Correa asked. I was at a loss for words but found myself ruminating on the question, too. I tried to convince Correa that Bangladeshis become sentimental while talking about Kahn's Parliament. There are several potential reasons for this: the edifice parallels the country's political journey to independence; Kahn had a monumental influence on the architectural evolution in this country; and the country had found a national symbol of architectural pride in this building. This is emotional stuff, I argued with Correa, who seemed unconvinced. Years later, I told Sundaram Tagore, director of *Louis Kahn's Tiger City* (2019), that weeping inside Kahn's Parliament has not been uncommon.

Shamsul Wares's tears also reveal his quintessential pedagogy: architecture is a lifestyle, an abstraction of life itself. As his students, we found such teaching inspirational and contagious. In our young minds, he was our Plato, who made us conscious of *praktike* (doing) and *gnostike* (knowing) in design education. Wares's metaphysics of the art of buildings had a profound influence on us. Architecture is an arduous journey, one that requires perseverance, determination, and love. Architecture must simultaneously undertake the archaeology of the aggregate human experiences of the past, while endeavouring to forge ahead into the future. This is probably the reason why he often cites the Danish existential philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, "Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards." Wares demonstrates a deep understanding of the project of history—his panoramic, nuanced, and non-conforming history classes used to spellbind us—yet he steadfastly remained committed to architecture's ability to shape a humane future.

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Shamsul Wares grew up in Chandpur, a small city southeast of Dhaka, near the confluence of two mighty rivers of the Bengal delta: the Meghna and the Padma. The geographic energy emanating from the meeting of two delta-shaping rivers must have left an indelible impression on his worldview, one that accommodates and triggers multiple lines of thought as a critical vantage on life.

When he arrived in Dhaka in the early 1960s to pursue higher studies and visited the East Pakistan University of Engineering and Technology (EPUET), his chance encounter with the newly minted programme of architecture there determined what his lifelong passion would be. The decade of 1960s was a period of "great transformation" for the then East Pakistan, politically and socially. The political and economic asymmetries between West Pakistan and East Pakistan that disempowered the people of the eastern wing of the state created a robust culture of protest and resistance in East Pakistan. For the people of East Pakistan, this was a time of national soul-searching.

Richard "Dik" Vrooman, an American architect and academic from the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University (Texas A&M University), came to Dhaka in 1961 for eight years to create a faculty of architecture at EPUET. Other Texas A&M University professors who joined Vrooman included James C Walden, Jr (1962-66) and Samuel T Lanford (1963-65). The mission was to educate local architects, filling the void of architectural design expertise warranted by the burgeoning building industry, particularly during Ayub Khan's "Decade of Development" in Pakistan. Vrooman and his colleagues were supported by, among others, expatriate architects like Daniel C Dunham (1962-67) and Jack R Yardley (1966-68). Part-time faculty included East Pakistan's first professionally trained architect Muzharul Islam. Joan C Walden taught basic design and Mary K Donaldson art history. Prominent artists like Rashid Chowdhury, Hamidur Rahman, and Abdur Razzak also taught in the architecture programme. Abdullah Abu Sayeed introduced Bangla literature, while Mary Frances Dunham lectured on European art and music. Roy Vollmar and Gus Langford, two of Louis Kahn's associates stationed at his local office in Dhaka during the construction of the Parliament Building, were occasional instructors. This was a time of extraordinary academic fertility that characterised architecture education at EPUET.

Shamsul Wares was an intellectual product of this vibrant and cosmopolitan environment, as well as the political consciousness of 1960s East Pakistan. He graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1968, during the height of Bangalee agitation for self-rule in East Pakistan. After graduation, he worked at Vastukalabid, the acclaimed architectural office of Muzharul Islam. In 1972, he joined the architecture programme as a lecturer at the age of 26. His pedagogy began to demonstrate the cosmopolitanism, modernism, and multidisciplinarity of the programme that had trained him.

The decades of 1970s and 1980s were a time of a regionalist spirit in architecture around the world as the idea of a universal 'modern' was challenged for its alleged failure to incorporate local characteristics of a place. Wares, however, maintained a sophisticated distance from the discourse of regionalism in architecture. He never advocated any comforting and phenomenological symbolism of placeness in the built environment.

The decades of 1970s and 1980s were a time of a regionalist spirit in architecture around the world as the idea of a universal "modern" was challenged for its alleged failure to incorporate local characteristics of a place. Wares, however, maintained a sophisticated distance from the discourse of regionalism in architecture. He never advocated any comforting and phenomenological symbolism of placeness in the built environment. While acknowledging the significance of the place in making architecture meaningful, he resolutely and deliberately wanted to transcend its causal influence, in the same way Rabindranath celebrated Bengal and its people, nature, rivers, and rain only to ultimately surpass them all to reach a universal milieu of humanity. In *The Apu Trilogy* (1950s), Satyajit Ray depicted an intimate portrayal of life in rural Bengal while narrating a universally understood sapiens story. There is a reason why his *Pather Panchali* (1955) won the Best Human Document award at the Cannes Film Festival in the year of its release. In a similar vein, Wares's modernism aspires to a universal value system that neither glorifies nor rejects the place.

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Asked to suggest one book to an aspiring architect, Shamsul Wares's answer was bewilderingly beautiful, "If it is concerned with architecture, I do not know of one book that surpasses all other books. Thirty years ago, I would have suggested *Space, Time and Architecture* by Sigfried Giedion. Right now, I think we are in a much-diversified state, and one book is too few to understand the dynamics of architecture today. However, if I must pin down my suggestion to one book, I would suggest a novel ... *The Bicycle Thief*." Recommending Luigi Bartolini's haunting novel (1946) portraying the urban despair of postwar Rome—transformed into a devastatingly poignant film (1948) by Vittorio De Sica—to students of architecture is one instance of Wares's cosmopolitanism, enlightenment, and wisdom. Learning about architecture through iconic buildings may be too parochial or didactic a suggestion. The ability to see the promises and perils of architecture through the humanity of a father-son saga, as in *The Bicycle Thief*, or through the existential angst of city life, shows the irresistible allure of Shamsul Wares's design pedagogy.

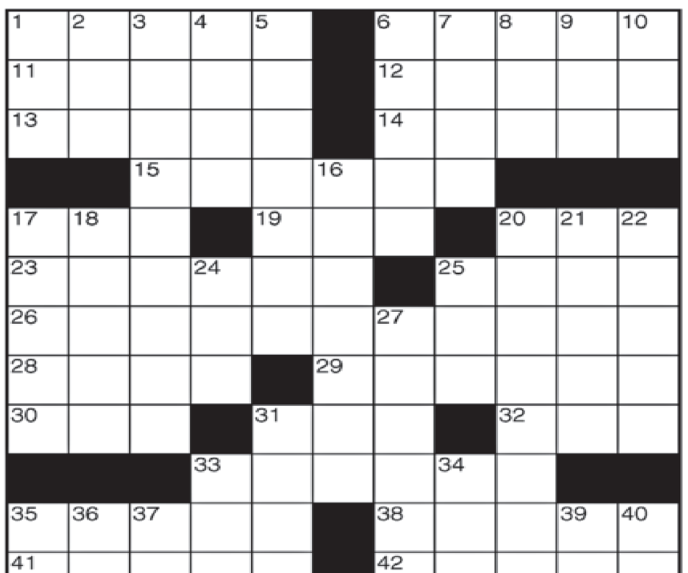
Aristotle once said, "Those who know, do. Those who understand, teach." Shamsul Wares understood, and hence taught. Being his student has been our privilege.

***This essay is an excerpt from a forthcoming book titled* Shamsul Wares: Teacher, Mentor, and Architect.**

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Radius end
6 Football team
11 Feudal lord
12 Full of passion
13 Verdi work
14 Usher's spot
15 Make over
17 Snaky shape
19 "— been swell!"
20 Sis's sib
23 Genetic oddity
25 Horse halter
26 Oktoberfest locales
28 Do copy work
29 Unrefined
30 Bear's lair
31 Pi follower
32 Track act
33 Fume
35 Godzilla's home
38 Deceitful
41 Glorify
42 Skateboarding jump
43 Campout sights
44 Fit for a king

DOWN
1 "Evil Woman" band
2 Gloss target
3 Draft mug
4 Storybook monster
5 Not staying in one's lane
6 Criticizes
7 Witty remark
8 Naval initials
9 Georgia airport code
10 Color
16 Embassy worker
17 Plant, in a way
18 Soft leather
20 Barfly's paunch
21 Free of suds
22 Start
24 Museum focus
25 Nutrition label abbr.
27 Cheer on
31 Signs a lease
33 Shaker stuff
34 Ring of light
35 Airport sight
36 Fire
37 Scathing review
39 "Chandelier" singer
40 Snaky fish



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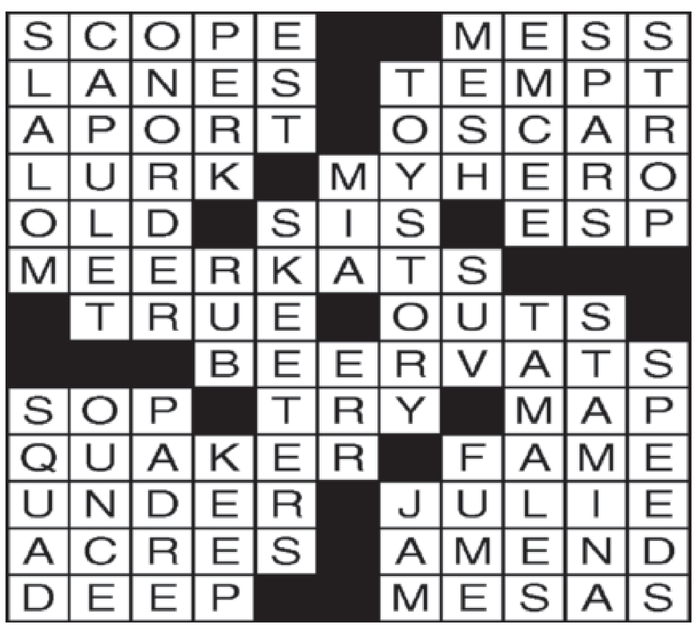
SUNDAY'S ANSWERS



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CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Secularism and state religion in the Bangladesh Constitution

NAFIZ AHMED

One of the most unique features of the Bangladeshi Constitution is that it pledges to conserve secularism (Article 12) while also declaring Islam as its state religion (Article 2A). The promise of secularism was present in the original Constitution. The state religion was added later through an amendment. Secularism was removed from the Constitution but was later restored through another amendment. Currently, both secularism and state religion co-exist in the Bangladeshi Constitution. If their meanings are taken literally, the existence of secularism and a constitutionally recognised state religion seem mutually exclusive, as there is an intrinsic conflict between the two. However, in a recent judgment (decided in 2016), the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh held that secularism and state religion can co-exist without contradicting each other. This short essay examines how the recently published judgment changed the meaning of secularism and state religion in Bangladesh.

Through the *Anwar Hossain Chowdhury and others v Bangladesh* case, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh incorporated the doctrine of basic structure into the constitutional law jurisprudence of Bangladesh. According to the basic structure doctrine, the Constitution of Bangladesh cannot be amended in a way that destroys the basic structure of the Constitution. A provision or principle connected to the constitutional identity of Bangladesh Constitution is part of its basic structure. Secularism was one of the primary motivators of the emergence of independence Bangladesh and the adoption of its autochthonous Constitution. The readers of the Bangladesh Constitution would generally agree to call it a secular constitution. Thus, secularism is undoubtedly connected with the constitutional identity of Bangladesh. The Supreme Court of Bangladesh had made similar remarks in *Bangladesh v Advocate Asaduzzaman Siddiqui and Ors.*

Through the Writ Petition No. 1434 of 1988, *Swairachar O Sampradaiyikata Protirodh Committee*, along with prominent public intellectuals of that time, challenged the constitutionality of the insertion of a state religion in the Constitution. The writ was finally heard in 2016. However, the hearing only lasted for 10/12 minutes, as noted by Justice Ashraful Kamal in the full text of the judgment. The writ was dismissed because the first petitioner did not have *locus standi* (the right to sue), as per the Court. The full text of the judgment became available to the public in 2024. Quite interestingly, the full text of the judgment discusses the substantive issues of the petition, although only the issue of *locus standi* was argued before the Court. In the full text of the judgment, the Court held that the inclusion of state religion does not affect the basic structure of the Constitution and does not violate the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religion. It also held that the inclusion of state religion "does not offend the concept of secularism, as provided for in the Constitution."

Secularism has been given different meanings in different jurisdictions. Three meanings of secularism are worth mentioning. Firstly, it may mean that the state has a negative obligation not to endorse the practice of any religion (the idea associated with the Constitution of the United States of America). This version of secularism prohibits the state from conflating religion with public life. Secondly, secularism may mean that the state must regulate religion (the idea associated with the French Revolution). This version of secularism requires the state to prohibit the people from bringing religious practices and symbolisms into the public sphere (e.g., banning hijabs and abayas in public schools). The second version of secularism requires the state to govern and restrict, if necessary, religious practices through laws. Thirdly, secularism may mean that the state has a positive obligation to take measures to ensure that all religions can be practiced freely. This may be done by funding the establishment of places of worship, providing state-funded security in places of mass religious gatherings, and so on.

Justice Naima Haider, writing for the majority in *Swairachar O Sampradaiyikata Protirodh Committee vs Bangladesh*, observed that the third meaning of secularism is its true meaning in the context of the Bangladeshi Constitution. She noted that Article 2A "places an *obligation upon the State to ensure* equal status and equal right in the practice of the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and other religion." (Emphasis added) Justice Haider also observed that "Article 12 as drafted... would impose an obligation upon the State to ensure [that] religious authorities of any particular religion cannot dominate over the State..." Thus, according to Justice Haider, although Article 2A recognises Islam as the state religion, it creates a positive obligation on the state to ensure the religious rights of the minorities.

While interpreting Article 2A, Justice Haider held that the constitutional recognition of Islam as the state religion does not create any legal obligation on the state. She noted that the recognition of a state religion may be of two types: 'recognition with establishment' and 'recognition without establishment'. A recognition is 'with establishment' where state religion may be enforced by placing religious laws in the legal hierarchy or giving special privileges to that religion's followers (such as becoming President or Monarch). Justice Haider wrote, "...recognition with establishment will occur when the State maintains a formal connection with any specific religion which is 'established' in the sense of being supported, funded by the State". According to Justice Haider, the recognition of state religion in Bangladesh is recognition without establishment. Thus, according to the Court, the recognition of state religion has no legal consequence. Justice Haider notes, "[t]he conferment of status of 'State Religion' on its own does not tantamount to an action on the part of State to grant political status in favour of Islam. Article 2A must be read as a whole and once read, it becomes obvious that the insertion of the concept of Islam being the state religion does not, on its own, affect the constitutional rights of others having different religious beliefs."

The above-discussed case begs a few questions. For instance, one might ask if all petitioners must have *locus standi* for a writ petition to be maintainable. One might also ask how a clearly justiciable constitutional provision can be without legal consequences. The Court also did not address how the recognition (even without establishment) of a religion as the state religion may affect the believers of other religions. Nevertheless, the judgment provides us with a new understanding of secularism in Bangladesh and the consequences (or lack thereof) of recognising Islam as the state religion.

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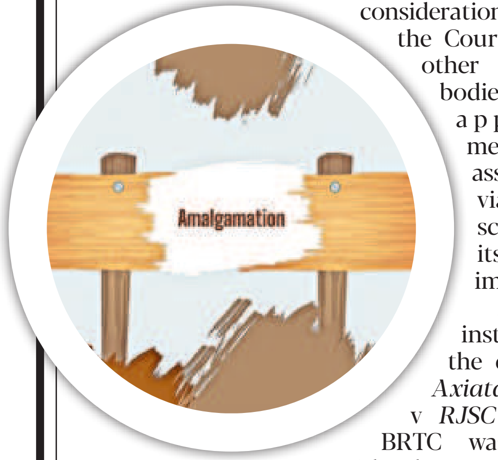
The author teaches jurisprudence at North South University.

LAW VISION

Role of the Supreme Court in an amalgamation process

MOHAMMAD FOYSAL

Under the scheme of the Companies Act 1994, sections 228 and 229 require a scheme of amalgamation, be it for merger or acquisition, to get approved by the High Court Division (HCD or Court). Central to an amalgamation process is the application procedure and consideration of application by the HCD, as the HCD is vested with the authority to either approve or reject such an application. The HCD might reject such an application, if it considers that the scheme is in asymmetry with the core of public interest or even when it finds the scheme not to be generally beneficial. In certain cases, the Court may choose not to outrightly reject a scheme and direct the applicant to revise the scheme in line with public interest and other lawful considerations. Further, the Court may direct other regulatory bodies to take appropriate measures to assess the viability of a scheme and its potential impacts.



As an instance, in the case of *Robi Axiata Limited* v *RJSC* 2016) the BRTC was entrusted with the same task and conducted an expert evaluation of the proposed merger as well as a public hearing on the merger and amalgamation as per section 87 of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Act. In this case, the Court considered several key aspects of post-amalgamation effects. While considering the effects of the merger through socio-economic lenses, the Court allowed several intermediaries including some employees of airtel to secure justice and protect public interest by applying its inherent jurisdiction. Thereafter, the Court also considered the issue of consumer rights and directed the BTRC to assess the effects of merger on the consumers in terms of charges imposed and access, quality and variety of services available, deter unfair practices of operators to secure and promote healthy competition, ensure market accessibility of new operators etc. In the language of the court, the BTRC conducted a thorough investigation and public hearing to guard against "total chaos in the telecommunication industry of Bangladesh". Indeed, there should be certain yardsticks to assess the socio-economic impact of any amalgamation process, particularly whether the scheme of amalgamation will monopolise the business affecting other corporations in the same business arena. Also, in the case of *Summit Power Limited* v *Summit Narayanganj Power Ltd* (2018), the Court directed the petitioner to revisit some clauses of the scheme so as to enable them to merge the corporations.

The HCD plays a catalyst role in an amalgamation process and approves an amalgamation process after a thorough perusal of the application and being satisfied that the amalgamation will not bring any evil for anybody.

Thus, the HCD plays a catalyst role in an amalgamation process and approves an amalgamation process after a thorough perusal of the application and being satisfied that the amalgamation will not bring any evil for anybody.

The writer is a law student, University of Dhaka.

COURT CORRIDOR

Judicial discretion as a potent tool

MOBASHSHIRA TABASSUM RAHI

When a legal rule is not adequate to reach a conclusion, honorable judges use their discretionary power by seizing assistance from legal principles, which they are entitled to do. Although statutes of our country repeatedly mention judicial discretion, they do not precisely specify its limits. In the *BLAST and Others v Bangladesh & Others* (2015) 1 SCOB (AD) case, it was suggested that courts tend to passively echo statutory punishments. However, the same case also recognised those discretionary powers embedded in Bangladesh's penal provisions allow judges to adapt sentences based on the unique facts of each case. Civil cases in Bangladesh allow judges greater flexibility in handling preliminary issues and determining financial penalties, unlike criminal cases with stricter guidelines. However, one may ask: in the presence of clear and valid legal rule, does judicial discretion still hold any weight? The very essence of judicial discretion lies in its application when multiple permissible options coexist within the legal framework. While multiple lawful options may exist, discerning the one with the highest moral weight stands as the core function of judicial discretion.

The perception of discretion may vary among individuals, as it is influenced by personal values, cultural norms, and lived experiences. It hinges on what one person considers a discreet action that might differ enormously from another's perspectives. Contextual and individual experiences further influence how discretion is applied, making it a nuanced subjective judgment.

Despite conflicting legal provisions, in *Riggs v Palmer*, 115 N.Y. 506 (1889) the court (New York Court of Appeals) considered morality and societal norms using discretionary power. The core legal question in the case revolved around whether William A. Palmer, who murdered his grandfather, could still inherit his estate. The court, ultimately, decided against inheritance, ruling that his unlawful and morally unacceptable actions forfeited any benefits granted by the will. Judge Robert Earl speaking for the majority, sided with the plaintiffs. The court, guided by timeless principles of law and recognised maxims, determined that granting Elmer any advantage from his criminal act would be fundamentally unjust. Justice demands that no one be allowed to exploit their own wrongdoings, profit from their deceit, or leverage their injustice for personal gain. Acquiring property through criminal means is similarly condemned. When important judgments like this one arise, a disconnect between legal rulings and societal norms poses a serious concern. While strict interpretations safeguard order, clashes with fundamental morals necessitate judicial flexibility. After all, courts exist within a social fabric that grants them legitimacy, and their decisions should reflect shared social values.

Discretion permits legal actors to interpret and apply laws in a way that aligns with the contemporary perspectives. This adaptability supports maintaining the relevance and legitimacy of the legal system, as it can respond to changing public attitudes and expectations. However, while discretion is a potent tool, it must be utilised within the bounds of established laws and regulations. Meandering beyond these boundaries can undermine the principles of justice and fairness. Therefore, a delicate balance must be struck, permitting discretion without renouncing the overarching framework of legal principles.

While discretion is a potent tool, it must be utilised within the bounds of established laws and regulations. Meandering beyond these boundaries can undermine the principles of justice and fairness.

The writer is student of Law, North South University.

Star SPORT
DHAKA FRIDAY JUNE 21, 2024, ASHAR 7, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV AND STAR SPORTS 1,2,3
T20 World Cup
England vs South Africa
Live from 8:30 pm

T SPORTS
Euros
Slovakia vs Ukraine
Live from 7:00 pm
Poland vs Austria
Live from 10:00 pm
Netherlands vs France
Live from 1:00 am (Saturday)

Tigers target 'unconventional paths' in 'bonus' quest

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh had specific dreams going into this T20 World Cup: to make the Super Eight stage by qualifying from Group D. With that target achieved, a bigger mountain now stands before them.

What coach Chandika Hathurusingha said at the press conference on Wednesday may not reflect the team's overall sentiment, but it remains to be seen whether it can ignite the passion required for the task ahead.

While the likes of Towhid Hridoy and Soumya Sarkar had oozed optimism in going far ahead of the tournament, Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto remarked that fans should not have high expectations since the Tigers often wear expectations like a burden. Past World Cups and many big tournaments, especially finals, are cases in point.

There are no Associate teams in Bangladesh's way in the Super Eight. First comes Australia, shortly followed by India, before the Tigers take on Afghanistan in their final Super Eight game.

"Yeah, I mean, when we came into the tournament, our first target was to get into this Super Eight. So, I think we achieved that with... what can I say, our bowlers kept us in the game? So, we played the conditions really well, used the conditions in our favor," Hathurusingha said.

"So going forward for us, being here, we're very happy to be here. And then anything from here for us is a bonus. So, we play with a lot of freedom. And we are going to challenge all three teams the best we can," he further claimed.

It might be that he wanted to downplay the pressure. For Bangladesh, as they are not one of the Associate nations at this World Cup, winning is the only target. But given Bangladesh's lackluster performances in the T20I format, even making the Super Eight was a big achievement.

Thus, along with the freedom to express their game, Hathurusingha reminded the players that they would have to play the roles they are responsible for.

"This game, why do we start playing this game? To enjoy," Hathurusingha said about why players come into cricket.

"So that fact of enjoyment, we don't take it away from the players. How big is the game? That doesn't mean that they have a free license to go and do whatever they want. So, the enjoyment factor is always at the forefront, but they have to do their role for the team," he added.

But this World Cup has served playing conditions that helped Bangladesh's cause so far. Going forward, there is no guarantee of that happening. Bangladesh had not been able to see the wicket for the game but were able to assess conditions with wind directions coming into play in quite a few games. Clear planning with the ball has been evident in this tournament. Hathurusingha said they might do something unique when asked if they want to beat Australia.

"Planning and decision-making give them a lot of belief that if you are not afraid to make decisions and be brave, you can compete with them [Australia]. We will probably take some unconventional paths to beat some teams," he added.

It remains to be seen whether Hathurusingha downplaying pressure is the first step in the Tigers' "unconventional path" as they look to secure a maiden berth in the knockout stage of the premier event.

India to open next home season against Tigers

AGENCIES

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) confirmed on Thursday that India will be kicking off their upcoming home season against Bangladesh in September before hosting New Zealand in October and England next year.

India will welcome Bangladesh for a two-match Test series, which will be played in Chennai and Kanpur from September 19-23 and September 27-Oct. 1, respectively. It will be followed by three T20Is in Dharamsala, Delhi and Hyderabad.

This will only be the third instance of India hosting Bangladesh in a bilateral series. Bangladesh played a solitary Test in their first-ever tour to India for a bilateral series in 2017 while the last time the Tigers travelled across the borders was back in 2019 for a similar itinerary of three T20Is and two Tests.

Bangladesh's only win -- across all formats -- away to India was during the 2019 tour when the Tigers beat India by seven wickets in the first T20I in Delhi.

Following the home series against Bangladesh, India will then host the Black Caps for three Tests, with the first Test starting on October 16 in Bengaluru.

England will visit India in January next year to play five T20Is and three ODIs. Chennai, Kolkata, Rajkot, Pune and Mumbai will be the venues for the T20s, while Nagpur, Cuttack and Ahmedabad will host the ODIs.

England's tour of India will begin on January 22 and conclude on February 12.

BANGLADESH'S TOUR OF INDIA

FIRST TEST: September 19, Chennai
SECOND TEST: September 27, Kanpur
FIRST T20I: October 6, Dharamsala
SECOND T20I: October 9, Delhi
THIRD T20I: October 12, Hyderabad

Clash of hosts with survival at stake

STAR SPORTS DESK

West Indies and USA are set to collide in a high-stake Super Eight fixture of the T20 World Cup in Barbados on Saturday, in the two teams' first-ever international meeting, the result of which will leave one of the co-hosts all but eliminated.

With both the co-hosts opening their Super Eights journey on the losing side, with the former going down against South Africa before the latter succumbing to holders England, the Kensington Oval is poised to stage a spectacle.

Although a colossal gulf of experience exists between the two teams -- since the two-time champions are up against a side that advanced from the group stages in their maiden World Cup appearance -- the on-field show may not reflect this, given how the USA have fared in the ongoing marquee event.

USA have scripted a fairytale by coming this far on the back of a monumental win over Pakistan in Texas. Therefore, despite an 18-run defeat to South Africa, the Aaron Jones-led side have every reason to fancy inflicting another massive upset.

West Indies, meanwhile, have done justice to their pedigree as T20 specialists, having won all four group-stage encounters.

The Men in Maroon came up short against England despite having totaled 180, but their bowling exploits left a lot to be desired. Their team management may consider fielding young pace sensation Shamar Joseph, who this year had scripted the Windies' first Test win in Australia after 27 years.

Batters come alive as England take on South Africa

STAR SPORTS DESK

Batters have started to come alive in the T20 World Cup following a shift to the West Indies and a blockbuster contest between two of the best batting lineups, at least on paper, in the tournament will face off when reigning champions England take on hot favourites South Africa at the Darren Sammy Cricket Ground in St.Lucia today.

In six meetings in T20 World Cups, South Africa have had the better of England on four occasions. England won the other two.

The venue for the contest has already seen two 200-plus first-innings totals in the four matches played so far and boasts a 194.75 average first-innings total, and on that basis, another run-fest is expected to be on the cards when the two sides lock horns.

Both sides come into the contest having won their opening Super 8 contests. Despite having flirted with group-stage elimination, England seemed to have found top gear after a dominant display in an eight-wicket victory over co-hosts West Indies in St.Lucia yesterday, courtesy of a match-winning unbeaten 47-ball 87 from opener Phil Salt.

The right-handed batter smacked five sixes and seven fours and put together an unbeaten 97-run stand with Jonny Bairstow (48 off 26) to help England chase down an 181-run target with 15 balls to spare.

England will be further boosted by the fact that their encounter against South Africa will be at the same venue whereas the Proteas played their last match in Antigua.

On the other hand, South Africa qualified for the Super 8s with a 100 percent record but barely got over the line in at least three of the four encounters -- a four-wicket win against the Netherlands, a four-run win over Bangladesh, and a one-run victory against Nepal. South Africa batters struggled to get going on wickets in New York, where they played three matches, as well as in Kingstown where they beat Nepal to cap off the group stage. Batting first in two of those contests, the South Africa batters managed a best first innings total of 115.

Against the USA, however, South Africa's batters were able to get rid of their shackles as they posted 194 for four -- their highest total this tournament so far. Opener Quinton de Kock found his mojo as he smashed five sixes and seven fours in a 40-ball 74 while skipper Aiden Markram notched up his highest score in the tournament -- a 32-ball 46 which was followed by a 22-ball 36 from Heinrich Klaasen.

England are expected to go unchanged from their eleven that played against the West Indies, while Markram has a big call to make -- whether to continue with two spinners or to go with an extra pace option. Tabraiz Shamsi took a solitary wicket but went for 50 runs in his four overs against the USA and should the Proteas skipper opt to go with one spinner, it would likely mean that Ottneil Baartman will return to the lineup.

JUNIOR HOCKEY

Bangladesh emerge Pool A champions

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh U-21 team emerged as Pool A champions with an all-win record as they inflicted a massive 7-0 defeat on Indonesia in their last pool match of the Men's Junior AHF Cup in Singapore on Thursday.

With four successive wins, Bangladesh sit at the top of the five-team table with 12 points and set their semifinal clash with Pool B runners-up Chinese Taipei.

The men in red and green confirmed their semifinal and Junior Asia Cup berth before coming into their fourth and final pool match. They just needed a point to become group champions, but the men in red and green left the ground with a comprehensive win.

Mohammad Abdullah gave Bangladesh a three-minute lead from open play before Mehrab Hossain Samin doubled it four minutes later by converting a penalty corner.

In-form Amirul Islam made it 3-0 in the ninth minute by converting a penalty corner before Din Islam netted a field goal in the 13th minute to take a comfortable 4-0 lead in the first quarter.

Bangladesh struck three more goals in the third and fourth quarters, with Jibon and Abdullah netting one field goal apiece before Shimul Islam scored from open play to complete the rout.

Mbappe injury leaves France thinking

AFP, *Paderborn*

France boast fearsome strength in depth but remain hugely reliant on Kylian Mbappe for inspiration and are now facing the prospect of being without their injured superstar for at least their next Euro 2024 game against the Netherlands on Friday.

Captain Mbappe is recovering from a broken nose suffered in Monday's 1-0 win over Austria in Duesseldorf in their opening match at the tournament.

The French Football Federation later said Mbappe would not need an operation but did admit he would need to be fitted with a mask before he could return to action.

In any case, the lack of time between matches means the clash with the Dutch in Leipzig is set to come too soon for the 25-year-old.

And France coach Didier Deschamps will hope his team can get a positive result which could seal their last-16 place.

But can Les Bleus beat a strong Netherlands side without arguably the world's most lethal striker?

"Of course, he is an important player, the captain, a leader. So that will have an impact, but we have an exceptional squad," midfielder Adrien Rabiot said on Wednesday.

France met the Netherlands twice in Euro 2024 qualifying, and Mbappe scored a brace on each occasion, in a 4-0 win in Paris and in a 2-1 victory in Amsterdam.

Above all, it is worth considering how France have done in recent games without Mbappe.

Deschamps' team lost 2-1 in a friendly in Germany last September when Mbappe was left on the bench. They also laboured to a 0-0 draw against Canada in their final pre-tournament friendly when he only appeared as a late substitute.

The obvious option for Deschamps when it comes to replacing Mbappe would be to start Giroud, even if the big centre-forward is a very different player.

"Everyone knows I think about the collective before I think about myself," Giroud said after the Austria game.

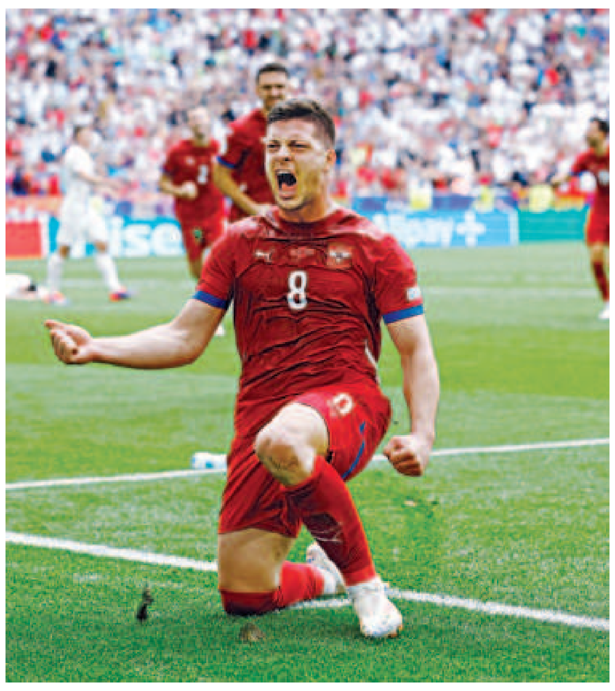
Another option for Deschamps is to move Marcus Thuram in from the left wing and to a central role.

Thuram, though, has only scored twice for his country in 20 caps, and one of them came against Gibraltar.

Then there is Randal Kolo Muani, but he appears low on confidence after a difficult season in Mbappe's shadow at PSG.

One thing is for sure, France's performance against Austria -- with the returning N'Golo Kante outstanding shielding an impressive defence -- indicated they do at least look solid enough to shut most opponents out as they wait for Mbappe to return.

- Kylian Mbappe, who is doubtful for the game with a broken nose, has scored more goals against the Netherlands (six) than he has versus any other nation.
- Mbappe, France's third highest scorer of all time, is yet to score at Euro -- he was unable to score in four games in the last edition of the tournament in 2022.
- This will be the fourth Euros meeting between the teams.
- France have, however, won seven of their last eight matches against the Dutch in all competitions, the exception being a 2-0 defeat in the UEFA Nations League in November 2018.



Luka Jovic celebrates after scoring a last-gasp header to snatch an equaliser for Serbia after Slovenia were put ahead by Zan Karnicnik in a Group C fixture of Euro 2024 yesterday. Even though the 1-1 draw kept both teams in contention for a place in the last 16, the head of the Serbian football association threatened to pull the team out of the tournament over chants, including "Kill, kill, kill the Serb", made during the draw between Albania and Croatia. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Super 8 brings about batters' resurgence

ASHFAQ-UL-ALAM

The end of the first round and the commencement of the Super Eight phase has seemingly brought an end to bowlers' domination in the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup, posing a fresh challenge for the teams that are vying for a spot in the semifinals.

In the first round of the T20 World Cup, which took place jointly in the USA and the Caribbean, the balance between the ball and bat was overwhelmingly tilted towards the former, in a surprising change from what usually transpires in the shortest format of cricket.

In the 37 completed games in the first round, the average run rate of teams was a mere 6.71. A record 10 times bowlers bowled 20 or more dot deliveries in a spell, a feat that had only happened twice before in the past eight editions of the tournament, once each in 2010 and 2012.

The four lowest successful defences in T20 World Cups have all come in the ongoing edition. Three of them happened in New York, with India

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

SURYA
63
IND

Jasprit Bumrah celebrates after claiming the first of his three wickets against Afghanistan, which helped India bundle out the Afghans for 134 and secure a convincing 47-run win in their Super Eight match of the ICC T20 World Cup at the Kensington Oval in Barbados yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

NAF RIVER

'We'll retaliate if boats come under fire'

Says Asaduzzaman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh would retaliate if the Myanmar military or the Arakan Army continued firing at Bangladeshi boats on the Naf river, said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday.

The warring parties in Rakhine State have been warned about it, he said at a press briefing at the Secretariat.

"Occasionally, they [warring parties] have opened fire on our Border Guard Bangladesh by mistake. We have conveyed our concern to them. They said if our vessels clearly display the Bangladeshi flag, no one will fire at them."

Reaching Saint Martin's Island from the mainland by boat has become a challenging task due to poor navigability at certain parts of the Naf river, Asaduzzaman said.

This compelled Bangladeshi boats

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

BANGLADESHI NATIONALS, BANKS

'Swiss banks not so lucrative now to park money'

Their deposits fell in 2023 for second year in a row

SOHEL PARVEZ *and* **REJAUL KARIM BYRON**

Bangladeshi nationals and banks kept 17.71 million Swiss francs (CHF) in deposits last year in the banks of Switzerland, the lowest on record, reflecting the fading attractiveness of the country among the wealthy to park money.

This was a 68 percent decrease from the 55.2 million CHF Bangladeshi citizens and banks deposited in 2022, according to figures released yesterday by the Swiss National Bank (SNB), the central bank of the western European nation.

This is the second year in a row that deposits kept by Bangladeshis fell in Swiss banks. However, it does not mean that illicit outflows of capital from the country have come to an end, said two analysts.

"Of course, illegal money siphoning out of the country has increased, and it is taking place. But Swiss banks are not a favourite destination anymore. It is not a place to keep the identity secret anymore," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director at the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, a local think-tank.

"Now, Dubai and Singapore are the new havens. Money is laundered and is invested in real estate and businesses in the US and England too."

At a programme in Dhaka yesterday, Shamsul Alam, a former state minister for planning, said $7 billion to $8 billion are laundered from Bangladesh every year.

Swiss banks began to lose their lustre nearly a decade

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Putin seeks 'security architecture' for Asia

Visits Vietnam; Moscow, Hanoi sign around a dozen cooperation agreements

Putin shakes hands with Vietnam's President To Lam at the Presidential Palace in Hanoi, Vietnam yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

REUTERS, *Hanoi*

Russian President Vladimir Putin said he wanted to build a "reliable security architecture" in the Asia-Pacific region during a state visit to Vietnam yesterday, part of a trip to Asia seen as show of defiance to the West.

A day after signing a mutual defence agreement with North Korea, Putin received a 21-gun salute at a military ceremony in Vietnam, was embraced by two of its Communist leaders and lavishly praised by one of them.

Putin had contributed to "peace, stability and development" in the world, Vietnam's president said.

Putin's visit has drawn criticism from the United States and its allies, who treat the Russian leader as a pariah and have protested that he

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Summer vacation cut short

Schools, colleges to open June 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to shorten the summer vacation for educational institutions by a week to make up for learning losses caused by unexpected closures earlier this year due to cold waves and heat waves, among other reasons.

The last day of the summer vacation will be on June 25 (Tuesday) and educational institutions will reopen on June 26 (Wednesday), said MA Khair, the public relations officer at the Ministry of Education.

According to the academic calendar, this year's Eid-ul-Azha and summer vacation started on June 13 and were scheduled to continue until July 2.

Meanwhile, the ministry also decided to resume the two-day weekend -- Friday and Saturday -- for educational institutions.

In May, the education ministry announced that academic activities at all secondary-level educational institutions would resume on Saturdays to compensate for the sudden closures due to the heatwaves.

Elderly couple murdered at a Jatrabari home

Police say it was a planned killing, motive not clear yet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elderly couple were hacked to death at their residence at Momenbagh in the capital's Jatrabari area yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Shafiqur Rahman, 62, a retired driver of Janata Bank, and his wife, Farida Yasmin, 55.

Their son, Al Amin Emon, is a sub-inspector in the Special Branch of police. He joined the force in 2021.

Police recovered Shafiqur's body from the ground floor of the four-storey building and Farida's body from a bedroom on the first floor around 6:00am, Inspector (Operations) Ohidur Haque Mamun of Jatrabari Police Station told The Daily Star.

The bodies of both victims had multiple injuries inflicted by sharp weapons, the inspector added.

Emon said his parents lived with him on the first floor, and the second and third floors were rented out.

On Wednesday, Emon went to their village in Feni's Dagonbhuiyan, while his wife went to her father's house in Jatrabari's Matuail.

According to Emon, it was his father's routine to wake up at 4:00am every day, switch on the water pump, and perform the Fajr prayer at a local mosque.

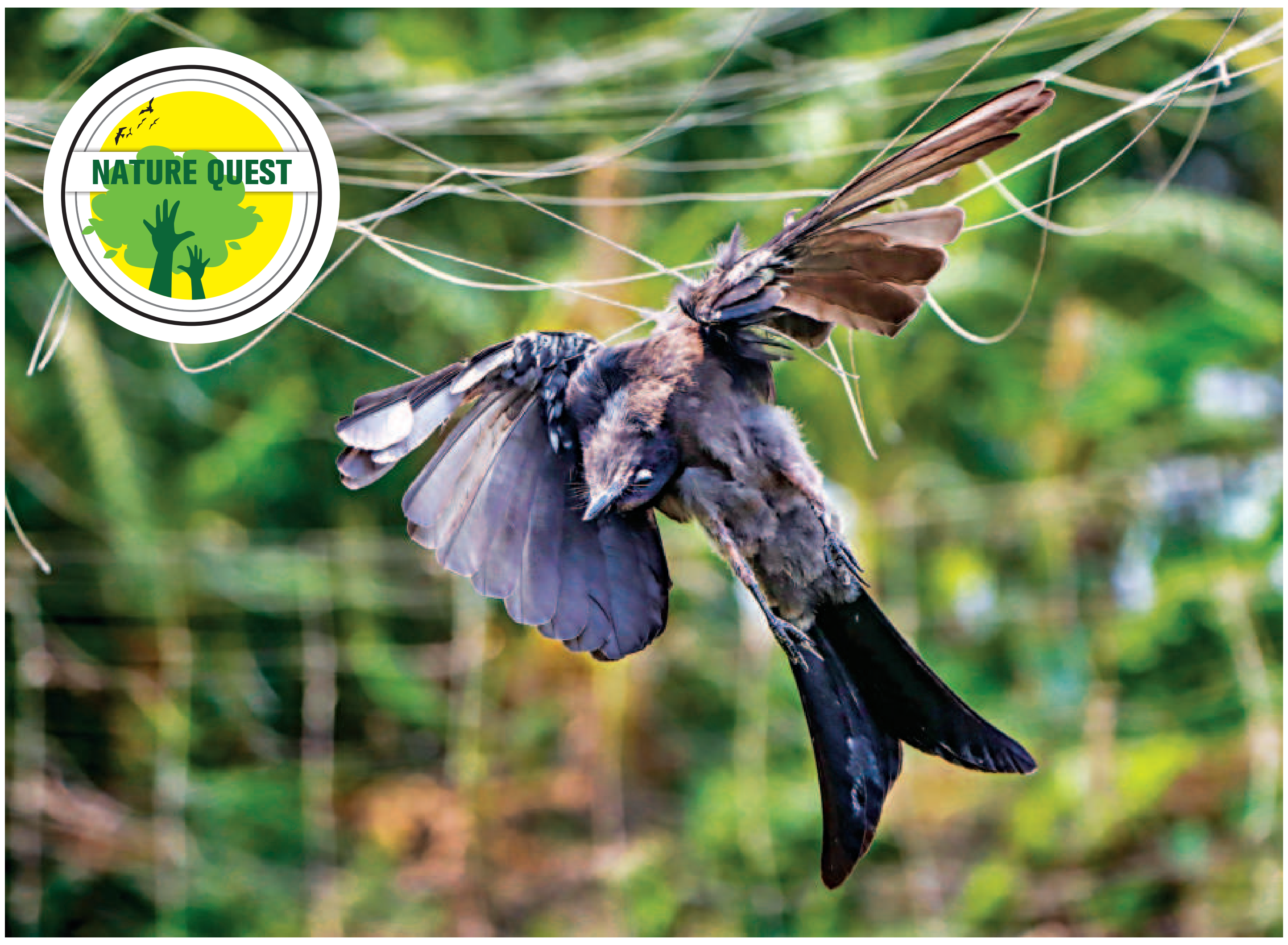
Yesterday morning, his father went to the ground floor to switch on the water pump as usual. The killers, who were already there, first hacked his father to death in the garage, then went up to the first floor and hacked his mother, who was asleep at the time, before escaping through the roof.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

OF BROKEN WINGS & EMPTY EYES

Tangled in a protective net, a black drongo hangs dead above a fish enclosure in Madhabhakhati village in Khulna's Dumuria upazila. Farmers and fishery owners have set up such nets over enclosures and crop farms to ward off pests. When the birds come by to look for food, mainly insects, they get trapped, tangled and strangled to death. However, little do the people know that these birds play an important ecological function in controlling pests and thereby, help maintain a balance benefitting the farmers and the ecosystems. As a matter of fact, black drongos are sometimes even referred to as "symbols of good fortune" owing to their ecological role. This photo highlights the importance of awareness about the vital role these birds play in maintaining natural harmony and why they should be protected.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



US, UK, EU voice worry over conflict in Rakhine State

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

As many as 15 countries -- including the US and the UK -- and development partners yesterday expressed concern over the worsening situation in the Rakhine State of Myanmar and the cross-border implications.

"Today we reiterate the importance of protecting all civilians," they said in a joint statement on the occasion of the World Refugee Day yesterday.

The intense fighting between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army in Rakhine State since November last year has left hundreds of thousands of people, including the Rohingya, displaced.

Another several thousand also took shelter along the Naf river close to the Bangladesh border.

Several hundred Myanmar border security personnel and Myanmar military along with some of their family members had also crossed the border and taken shelter in Bangladesh. They were later repatriated.

Transport through the waterway between Teknaf and St Martin's Island has remained suspended after bullets were fired targeting boats last week.

The 15 countries in their statement recognised Bangladesh's generosity in hosting more than a million Rohingya who fled their homes in 2017 and earlier.

The other signatories of the statement are Japan, Germany, Canada, Australia, Denmark, Spain, Sweden, France, Switzerland, Norway and Italy.

The donor countries said they will continue to make

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

WALTON
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YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW
The Daily Star
SECOND EDITION

DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 22, 2024

REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 150 | ASHAR 8, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | ZILHAJJ 15, 1445 HIJRI | 16 PAGES : TK 15.00

KSRM
শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

In Dhaka's secret alleys, lone arcades hint at a bygone era
WR1

A 'castle' in ruins
P5

Delhi HC blocks Kejriwal's release from prison
P6

Sylhet's flood is the price we're paying for ignoring nature
P8

Nargis paddles a raft on her way home with her younger brother and a cousin after collecting relief packets from a madrasa in Borni area of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila yesterday afternoon. All 13 upazilas of Sylhet have been hit by flooding due to downpours and onrush of water from upstream. More than one million people in the district have been affected by the floods. PHOTO: **SHEIKH NASIR**

Docs, engineers grab a third of civil admin jobs

More and more medical, engineering graduates opt for BCS general cadre

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR *and* **BAHARAM KHAN**

The general cadre jobs in the civil service have become so lucrative that even medical and engineering graduates are queuing up for them, giving up careers in the two highly specialised fields.

Around 30 percent of the general cadres recruited through the last three Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examinations graduated from either medical colleges or engineering universities, shows Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PCS) data.

The government spends a lot of money on medical and engineering students, and the skills they acquire are important for the country, said Mohammad Kaykobad, distinguished professor of Brac University.

Knowledge and the country's resources are wasted when such graduates choose civil service,said the professor who taught at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) for over 40 years.

Administrative power, perks, quick promotions, and what is perceived as a discrimination against non-admin cadre officers are the reasons why graduates gravitate towards the general cadre, said several bureaucrats.

In the 43rd BCS, recruits in the admin cadre included 183 engineers and 25 doctors, which is 32.24 percent of the total number, according to PSC sources.

The trend was similar in the 40th and 41st BCS.

Dhaka University Prof Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury said, "Doctors and engineers turning away from their specialised field is a new phenomenon. It was not the case in the past.

"This indicates that meritorious students find jobs in administration more lucrative ..."

The 14 categories of general BCS include administration, police and foreign services while the 14 categories of specialised BCS include education and health. Any university graduate can participate in the recruitment tests for general cadres.

WHY IS GENERAL CADRE SO POPULAR?

In the 41st BCS, 36,098 engineering and 22,715 medical graduates applied for jobs under the general cadre while in the 43rd BCS, 47,315 engineering and 15,665 medical graduates vied for the jobs.

A PSC official said the number of applications from doctors fell in the 43rd BCS because the preceding BCS tests were held to recruit only doctors: 4,000 physicians were hired from 31,026 applicants.

"It is widely known that the administration officers reign over others. They have the chance to become top bureaucrats," said a PSC official, requesting anonymity.

A foreign service officer who is a medical graduate, said, "A foreign service officer gets additional benefits when posted abroad. The ones appointed in a developed country can get their children enrolled at good schools. There are many other incentives."

An admin cadre officer has the opportunity to be promoted as an upazila nirbahi officer within a relatively short period of time.

GENERAL CADRE

40th BCS
TOTAL **574**
Engineers **173**
Doctors **23**

41st BCS
TOTAL **816**
Engineers **195**
Doctors **18**

43rd BCS
TOTAL **645**
Engineers **183**
Doctors **25**

ANNUAL SPENDING ON EACH PUBLIC UNIVERSITY STUDENT

GENERAL UNIVERSITIES
Tk 44,000 - Tk 2.19 lakh

ENGINEERING UNIVERSITIES
Tk 66,000 - Tk 3.14 lakh

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Hasina-Modi talks in Delhi today

Bangladesh PM accorded warm welcome

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi will hold a bilateral meetingat the Hyderabad House in New Delhi today.

Hasina reached the Indian capital yesterday afternoon on a two-day state visit which is aimed at advancing the bilateral relationship.

Indian State Minister for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh welcomed her at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Her visit is taking place after the general elections in both the countries this year. The premier along with several other international leaders attended the swearing-in ceremony of Modi and his cabinet ministers on June 9.

In September last year, Hasina had a meeting with the Indian prime minister on the sidelines of the G20 summit in New Delhi.

Diplomatic sources said nearly a dozen agreements and MoUs on areas of mutual cooperation, including regional connectivity, power, economy, and digital technology, are likely to be signed today.

The Teesta river management project, border killing, and Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement could be on the agenda of today's bilateral meeting between Bangladesh and India.

Before the formal meeting, the two prime ministers will hold one-to-one meeting at the Hyderabad House.

Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud joined the entourage of Hasina in New Delhi yesterday after performing hajj in Saudi Arabia.

JAISHANKAR MEETS HASINA

During her meeting with Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar yesterday evening, Hasina called for sustained dialogues between Bangladesh and India to exchange ideas and experiences to overcome the challenges in their journey towards economic development.

The Indian minister called on Hasina at hotel Taj Palace in New Delhi, reports

PHOTO ON PAGE 2 SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

FLOODS IN SYLHET

Thousands in dire need of relief

DWOHA CHOWDHURY *and* **MINTU DESHWARA**

With the waters receding in some areas, the flood situation in the Sylhet region started showing signs of improvement yesterday. However, due to an insufficient supply of relief items, thousands of people who are stranded in remote areas continue to suffer and are in desperate need of assistance.

According to official data, some 2,603 tonnes of rice along with around Tk 75 lakh cash assistance and 12,493 sacks of dry food have been allotted for the flood-affected people in the region.

While the government officials concerned said that enough relief supplies had been allocated and more aid was on its way, flood victims and members of civil society argued that the allocation was insufficient given the number of people affected by the flood and should be increased.

According to official data, the flash floods have marooned some 22.46 lakh people in the division's three worst-affected districts: Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Moulvibazar. Of them, 57,889 people were still at the shelters till yesterday.

While supplies for relief were given to those staying at the shelter centres, people living outside the shelters told this newspaper that as of yesterday, they had not received any supplies.

Md Abdullah and Shelly Begum of Sunamganj's Chhatak Monhanpur village, who lost their home in the flood, said they were struggling to manage food as no government relief reached them.

"We are somehow surviving on the food given to us by our neighbours in the area," said Abdullah.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

GRAFT ALLEGATIONS

News reports on cops 'motivated, misleading'

Says police association; TIB chief critical of its 'stance to protect corrupt officers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA) has described the recent media reports on graft allegations against some former and current members of the police force as a smear campaign by the media.

The association came down heavily on the media and also called for exercising more caution while reporting on the police force in future.

In a statement issued yesterday, it claimed that the reports being run by print, electronic, and the social media outlets are partial, motivated, exaggerated, and misleading.

Former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed has recently come under the spotlight due to reports on his huge properties, including land, houses, and apartments. Benazir and his family had reportedly left the country after the Anti-Corruption Commission started investigating his wealth.

Former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia recently hogged the headlines for allegations of corruption.

The BPSA statement came a day after Home Minister

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

PHOTO: **PID**

Clad in traditional attire, dancers perform at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi to greet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina upon her arrival in the Indian capital yesterday afternoon. The premier is on a two-day visit to the neighbouring country.

Road crashes claim 5 lives in 2 districts

STAR REPORT

At least five people were killed and 22 others injured in three road crashes in Faridpur and Rangpur on Thursday night and yesterday.

In Faridpur, two people were killed and 10 others injured when a bus hit an easy bike on the Dhaka-Khulna highway near Madhukhali bus stand early yesterday.

The victims are Sumon Ali, 38, of Kundupasha village of Jhalakathi's Nalchity upazila, and Siraj Hawladar, 60, of Sarukhali village of Barishal Sadar upazila.

Police said the deceased and injured are relatives.

After visiting a relative's house in Pabna from Jhalakathi after Eid, they were going to another relative's place in Faridpur.

They hired the easy bike for Gondardia after getting off a bus at Madhukhali bus stand in Faridpur. Around 1:00am, the three-wheeler was hit by a Dhaka-bound bus.

The injured were first taken to Madhukhali Upazila Health Complex and doctors referred them to Faridpur Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital. The two died while undergoing treatment.

Mohammad Salauddin, officer-in-charge of Kariampur Highway Police

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

TEESTA WATER SHARING

Dhaka, Delhi should look for 'creative solution'

Int'l affairs expert Sreeradha tells Star

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh and India should find a "creative solution" to the Teesta management as Dhaka has long been demanding its share of water from the transboundary river, said Prof Sreeradha Datta of OP Jindal Global University.

Given the strong bilateral relationship between the two countries, the border killings are "shameful", she said.

"India has not effectively responded to Bangladesh's long-standing demand for Teesta water. I think the leaders of the two countries will find out a creative solution to this problem," she told The Daily Star yesterday.

Her comments came a day before the bilateral meeting between Prime

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

PHOTO: BSS

Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at hotel Taj Palace in New Delhi yesterday.

2 killed, 5 injured in Sherpur boat capsize

UNB, *Sherpur*

Two young men, including a medical student, were killed while five others were injured when a boat capsized in a beel (lake-like wetland) in Sherpur yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Mosharraf Hossain Milton 22, a second-year student at Rangpur Medical College, and Md Amanullah 19.

The incident took place in the Dhali beel around 2:30pm in the Kanduli area under Jhenaigati upazila, confirmed Md Shafiqul, chairman of Dhanshail union.

According to police, hospital, and local sources, Milton, from South Kanduli village, along with some friends, rented two boats, one of which capsized in the middle of the beel. The passengers drowned because they couldn't swim.

The boatmen and passengers from the other boat rescued them and took them to Jhenaigati Upazila Health Complex.

As their condition worsened, they were moved to Sherpur District Hospital, where the on-duty doctor declared Milton and Amanullah dead, said Dr Khairul Kabir Sumon, residential medical officer (RMO) at Sherpur District Hospital.

Jhenaigati Police Station Inspector (Investigation) Iskandar Habib, said that a duty officer was sent to the scene immediately after learning about the boat capsize. "Legal actions are being taken regarding the incident."

Messi's bright start

FROM PAGE 12

takes place in Florida where Messi is ending his career with Major League Soccer club Inter Miami.

Thursday night's victory over Canada on a below-par temporary grass pitch in Atlanta was not a vintage performance: the Argentine captain and talisman missed a couple of clear chances though he also had a hand in both goals.

"The important thing is that we started with a win," said Messi, whose team had started the last World Cup with a defeat by Saudi Arabia that was one of the all-time shocks.

"We struggled a bit in the first half and the pitch didn't help either," he added after his record 35th Copa America finals appearance. "We'll always give our best, sometimes playing better, sometimes worse, but always fighting our hardest."

It was Messi's perfectly weighted pass to Alexis Mac Allister that made Julian Alvarez's opener followed by another controlled through ball to assist Lautaro Martinez's second.

"When Lionel Messi gets going, everything looks easy," football writer Diego Provenzano wrote in Argentine daily Clarin.

Messi could yet make the 2026 World Cup, depending on how his body holds up, but coach Lionel Scaloni has urged fans to stop speculating about that and just enjoy the moment.

"It doesn't make much sense to be thinking about when they are not here," he said of Messi and veteran striker Angel Di Maria. "Let's enjoy them now. Then we'll see what happens."

Argentina next face Chile and Peru in Group A of the U.S.-hosted tournament between 16 teams in the Americas.

With some, including French striker Kylian Mbappe, suggesting the Copa is inferior to the also ongoing European Championship, Messi noted that his tournament included teams with 10 World Cups between them: Brazil (5) Argentina (3), and Uruguay (2).

"There are a lot of world champions left out to say that it (the Euros) is the most difficult tournament," he said.

Road crashes

FROM PAGE 1

Station, said, "After the incident, police arrested Sukumar Das, driver of Purbasha Paribahan. Police also seized the bus and the easy bike."

In Rangpur's Pirganj upazila, three people were killed and 12 others injured in two road crashes on Thursday night and yesterday, said police.

The deceased are Mintu Mia, 25, of Hajratpur village of Mithapukur upazila, and Ashraful Islam, 30, of Narayanpur village of Pirgachha upazila. The identity of another victim could not be known immediately.

Solaiman Sheikh, OC of Borodargah Highway Police Station in Pirganj, said a bus rear-ended another bus of Hanif Paribahan at Madarhat on Dinajpur-Panchagarh highway around 10:20pm, killing a person and injuring 12 others of both vehicles.

On information, firefighters went to the spot and sent the injured to Rangpur Medical College Hospital. One of the injured, Mintu, died there.

Police seized the vehicles, said OC Solaiman, adding that the deceased were Hanif Paribahan passengers.

In another incident, a Pirgachha-bound pickup was hit by a bus in Madarhat village early yesterday, injuring Ashraful, a pickup passenger.

Locals took him to the local upazila health complex, where he died in the morning, said OC Solaiman.

[Our Faridpur and Dinajpur correspondents contributed to this report.]

Thousands in dire need of relief

FROM PAGE 1

The couple has now taken shelter at their neighbour's home, which was flooded as well but not as badly as other houses.

They also said they lost all their rice stored at the house when it got flooded.

Sufi Alam Sohel, chairman of the Islampur union in Chhatak upazila, said the flash floods severely damaged at least 800 houses while thousands of families lost their stored paddy as they live at the foothills of India's Meghalaya state.

"As an emergency response, I was allotted only 10 maunds of rice and three sacks of dry food, which was barely enough to feed the people at the shelters, let alone all the affected people in the union," he told this newspaper.

Another 17 tonnes of rice have been allotted for the union, but that has yet to arrive. "But that too will be inadequate," he added.

Kanon Alam, an advocate of the Supreme Court, said he was at his home in Azampur village of Sunamganj's Dowarabazar upazila when the flash floods first hit.

"In the last couple of days, I have closely observed the struggle of the affected people. The government allotment is so small that many people would have been starved if the solvent locals did not lend their support," he said.

Faruque Mahmud Chowdhury, president of the Sylhet divisional unit of Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan), said that on the one hand, the amount of relief provided is insufficient, and the distribution is also questionable.

"The process of distributing relief provides an opportunity for local representatives to commit irregularities," he said, calling for adequate supply and transparency in distribution.

Abdul Karim Kim, coordinator of Songkhubdho Nagorik Andolon Sylhet, said the Sylhet region gets affected by floods every year, yet the government fails to allot adequate relief.

"The government ought to provide relief assistance to the people in proportion to their needs."

Speaking on the matter, Debojit Singha, additional divisional commissioner (general) of Sylhet, said, "As general relief, we have received enough cash, rice, baby food, and animal feed. Additionally, 26,000 relief packs with 14 essential items have been provided by the Prime Minister's special relief fund.

"Reaching those residing in shelter centers was our top priority because they are the most severely affected and they have received relief multiple times. We are aiming to extend relief efforts to the people left in the villages and remote areas now that we have received a new allocation."

According to the Water Development Board (WDB), as of 9:00am yesterday, the water level of the Surma River was flowing 16cm above the danger mark at Sylhet point and 65cm above the danger mark at Kanaighat point.

On the other hand, the Kushiyara River was flowing 61cm above the danger mark at Amalsid point, 13cm above the danger mark at Sheola point, 1.2cm above the danger mark at Fenchuganj point, and 24cm above the danger mark at Sherpur point.

Shah Mohammad Sajib Hossain, Assistant Meteorologist at Sylhet Weather Office, told UNB that there was no rainfall from Thursday noon till Friday morning.

Meanwhile, the local meteorological department has predicted moderate to heavy rains in some parts of Sylhet for the next few days due to active monsoon conditions.

In the past three weeks, Sylhet city has been inundated five times due to heavy rains, affecting hundreds of areas and causing untold suffering to the dwellers.

Earlier, on May 29, heavy rains and hill torrents from upstream caused flooding in Sylhet. The flood situation began to normalise on June 8.

However, continuous rains starting in the early hours of June 17 led to another flood in the district.

Prior to this, in May, floods were caused by hill torrents and rains from upstream in India.

CORRECTION

The Sylhet floods story in Friday's newspaper mentioned that 103,776 people were at shelters when, in reality, over 51,000 people moved to shelters. We apologise for the inadvertent mistake.

Hasina-Modi talks in Delhi today

FROM PAGE 1

our New Delhi correspondent.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, PM's Principal Secretary M Tofazzel Hossain Miah said the two leaders discussed advancing the partnership between the two countries.

"The two new governments [of India and Bangladesh] have come to power with mandates [from people]. So, the two countries will have new visions," he said.

The Indian minister said his country wants to work with Bangladesh in a more substantive way in the areas of logistics, energy, and connectivity.

Hasina and Jaishankar agreed to strengthen BIMSTEC.

The premier emphasised speeding up the ongoing developmental projects involving the two neighbours. The two leaders agreed on the issue.

On Rohingya issue, the principal secretary said border areas of Bangladesh and India are being affected by the ongoing fighting between the Myanmar government forces and rebel groups.

Prime Minister's Private Industries and Investment Affairs Adviser Salman F Rahman and Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, among others, were present.

After the meeting, Jaishankar wrote on X, formerly Twitter, that Hasina's state visit to India underlines the "close and abiding" ties between Bangladesh and India, reports UNB.

"Delighted to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh this [Friday] evening. Appreciate her guidance on the further development of our special partnership," he said.

'INVEST IN BANGLADESH'

During another meeting with a delegation of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) yesterday evening, Hasina called upon Indian businesspeople to invest in Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh government gives priority to the neighbouring countries for trade, business and investment, PM's Private Industry and Investment Affairs Adviser Salman quoted Hasina as saying while briefing reporters after the meeting.

Hasina said Bangladesh is setting up 100 special economic zones and the Indian entrepreneurs can invest there.

The CII team told Hasina that they in collaboration with Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) want to work in Bangladesh's different sectors, including agriculture, IT and logistics.

He said Bangladeshi businesspeople raised the issue of non-tariff barriers and urged the CII delegation to prevail upon the Indian government to address the issue.

FBCCI President Mahbubul Alam, Nitol Niloy Group Chairman Abdul Matlub Ahmad, Pran RFL Group Chairman Ahsan Khan Chowdhury and some other leading Bangladeshi businesspeople were also present.

Today morning, red carpet will be rolled out for Hasina at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, where she will received formally by Modi. She will also inspect the guard of honour there.

Hasina is scheduled to visit Raj Ghat to pay tribute to the Father of the Indian Nation Mahatma Gandhi by placing a wreath at his Samadhi. She will sign the visitor's book there.

The premier will attend a luncheon hosted by Modi at the Hyderabad House.

Hasina is expected to call on Indian President Droupadi Murmu and Vice President Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar.

The PM is scheduled to depart the India capital from Palam Airport at 6:00pm (Delhi time) and reach Dhaka around 9:00pm.

Yesterday, Hasina departed the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport by a chartered flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines at 2:00pm.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

HK charges two under new nat'l security law

AFP, *Hong Kong*

Hong Kong has charged two people in the span of a week with "sedition" over social media posts and clothing slogans, under a new national security law.

The city passed a homegrown security law in March, commonly known as Article 23, which the United States and Britain have criticised for curbing rights.

The legislation is Hong Kong's second national security law and follows the one imposed by Beijing in 2020 after huge, sometimes violent pro-democracy protests a year earlier.

Yesterday, authorities charged Au Kin-wai, 58, with publishing "seditious" posts on social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and X.

Au published the content intending to incite "hatred, contempt or disaffection against the fundamental system of the state" and against Hong Kong's constitutional order, according to a court document.

Authorities separately charged Chu Kai-pong on June 14 with sedition, saying the 27-year-old wore a t-shirt calling for Hong Kong's "liberation" and a mask with a design suggestive of a protest slogan, local media reported.

Docs, engineers

FROM PAGE 1

"But doctors, engineers and other cadre officials wait for years for a promotion. In most cases, they work under younger admin cadre colleagues. It is clear discrimination."

SM Golam Kibria, former president of BCS Information Association, said while some administration cadre officers of the 13th BCS have been appointed as secretaries -- the top grade for a bureaucrat -- officers of the same batch in education cadre have reached the 4th grade at best, and those in health reached the 3rd grade.

Prof Baizid Khoorshid Riaz, additional director general of the Directorate General of Medical Education, said, "A deputy secretary gets an interest-free car loan and Tk 50,000 per month to pay for a chauffeur and maintain the vehicle. A professor gets no such thing."

Serajul Islam Choudhury said medical graduates choosing other fields is alarming when the country is facing a dearth of doctors, especially in rural areas.

"It's a pity that they go to villages as public servants, but not as physicians."

Contacted, PSC Chairman Sohorab Hossain said he has nothing to comment on the issue.

The commission recommends candidates as per the rules, he said.

News reports on cops 'motivated, misleading'

FROM PAGE 1

Asaduzzaman Khan on Thursday said the graft allegations against Asaduzzaman appeared to be based on speculation.

The same day, the BPSA, a platform of the police's BCS cadre officials, held a meeting at the police headquarters. Some participants of the meeting even demanded that legal action be taken against those involved in publishing such news.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), said police's stance is akin to "shooting the messenger".

"By doing this, they are actually warning the people and the media that you don't comment on the graft allegations or publish reports in the media. They are actually threatening the media and the people," he told The Daily Star when asked for his reaction on the BPSA statement.

He said the BPSA, as a representative association of police, does not want publication of reports on irregularities and corruption by the force members.

BPSA STATEMENT

According to the statement, anti-liberation and anti-state elements, along with cyber terrorists hiding abroad, are using the social media to assassinate the characters of police officers through spreading misinformation. Inspired by them, several media outlets are running biased and negative reports against some former and current members of the police.

The statement, signed by BPSA President Monirul Islam, additional IGP, and General Secretary Golam Mostafa Russel, superintendent of Narayanganj police, said in most cases, the reports did not mention their sources of information. Such reports damage morale and tarnish image of the police members.

It went on to say that because of the police's successful role against the anti-liberation, communal, and anti-democracy forces' activities like torching properties and hurling petrol bombs, they are constantly criticising the police force.

It added that some media outlets are publishing negative reports against certain police officers out of personal vengeance and individual interests, which goes against the ethics of journalism.

The BPSA said the media has obligations to publish impartial news. "But for some mysterious reasons, a section of the media is cleverly trying to make the police force controversial, which is nothing but an attempt to stifle honest journalism. Such one-sided behaviour from the media is tantamount to deceiving the general readers."

In the interest of public safety, the BPSA requested the media to refrain from publishing any misleading reports.

The association's statement also highlighted the role of police in uprooting terrorism and militancy and also during the Covid-19 pandemic.

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN'S REACTION

Iftekharuzzaman said the BPSA took a stance to save the police officials against whom graft allegations have been brought.

"Instead, they could have said that they were embarrassed by the reports on the allegations against their fellow members. As a police association, it should state that they are ready to cooperate with investigations.

"If they can do it, people's faith in them would be restored to some extent," Iftekharuzzaman said.

Ukrainian drones strike 4 Russian oil refineries

Radar stations, intel centres in Bryansk, occupied Crimea also hit

REUTERS, *Kyiv*

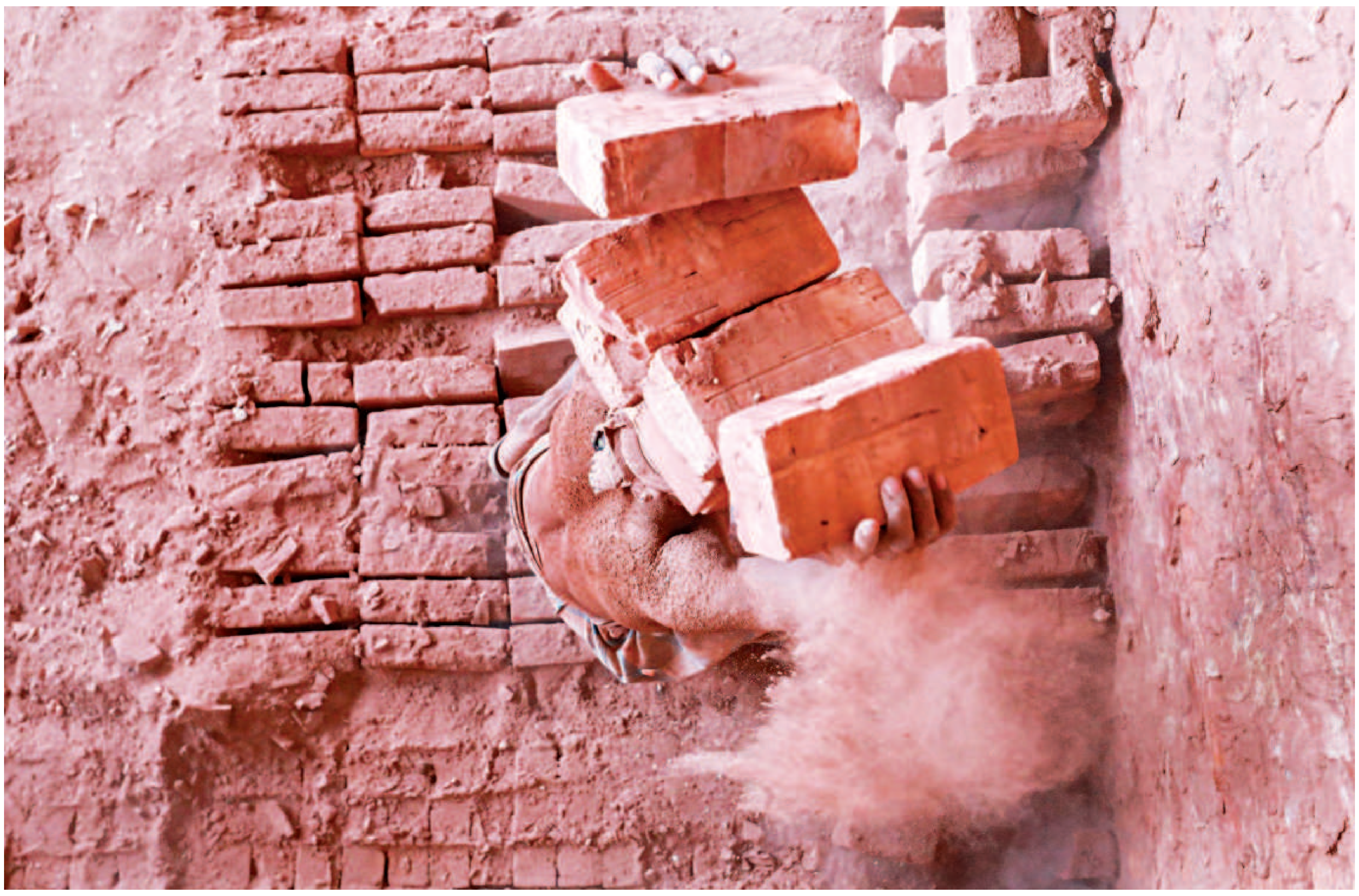
Ukrainian long-range attack drones struck four Russian oil refineries as well as radar stations and other military targets in Russia in a major attack in the early hours of yesterday, Kyiv's military said.

Ukraine has dramatically stepped up its use of drones this year to attack Russian oil facilities, which it deems legitimate military targets that are fuelling Russian troops in their nearly 28-month-old invasion.

"Unmanned aerial vehicles attacked the Afipsky, Ilsky, Krasnodar, and Astrakhan oil refineries," the Ukrainian military said in a statement on the Telegram messaging app.

Russia's military said earlier that it had downed 70 drones over the Black Sea and Ukraine's occupied Crimean peninsula, 43 drones over Russia's Krasnodar region and one more over Russia's Volgograd region yesterday.

A Kyiv intelligence source told Reuters that the Afipsky, Ilsky and Krasnodar oil refineries produced fuel for Russia's Black Sea Fleet and that the drone operation targeting them had been conducted jointly with the SBU security service.



A man carries bricks after taking them out of the furnace at a brick kiln in Diamond Ghat area of Chattogram. These workers work eight hours a day without any weekly holiday or other leaves and make around Tk 800 daily. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

HANIF FLYOVER

Hit by auto-rickshaw, Indian national dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An Indian national, who was visiting relatives in Dhaka, died after a CNG-run auto-rickshaw hit him on the Mayor Hanif Flyover in Tikatuli area yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Dwijendra Lal Chowdhury, 60, a resident of Nadia district in West Bengal, said his nephew Pradip Roy Chowdhury.

Pradip said Dwijendra left his ancestral Chandpur residence many years ago and settled in India.

He arrived in Bangladesh a month ago to visit relatives here and was supposed to return to India today, he said.

The man got down from a bus on the flyover and was crossing the road around 2:30pm when an auto-rickshaw hit him, leaving him injured, Kawshik Roy, a passerby, said.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead, said Kawshik who took him to the DMCH.

Inspector Bachchu Mia, in-charge of the DMCH Police Outpost, said the body was kept at the hospital morgue for autopsy.

RENOVATION OF OSMANI UDYAN

DSCC extends deadline once again

Mayor says work to complete by next month

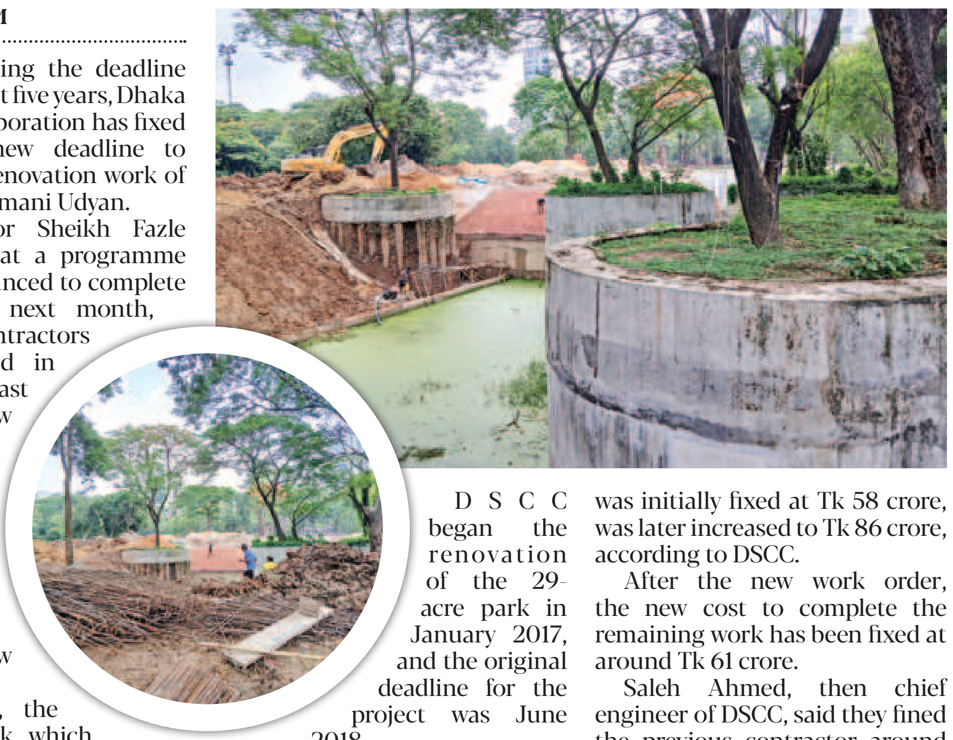
HELEMUL ALAM

Despite extending the deadline four times in last five years, Dhaka South City Corporation has fixed yet another new deadline to complete the renovation work of the capital's Osmani Udyan.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, at a programme recently, announced to complete the work by next month, as new contractors were appointed in September last year with a new work order and they have already started working.

The deadline has been fixed July 2024 in the new work order.

Before that, the renovation work, which was supposed to be completed in 2018, remained halted for around two years due to the contractor, Builders Limited's, work order getting cancelled in 2022, with the allegation of breaching contract.



DSCC began the renovation of the 29-acre park in January 2017, and the original deadline for the project was June 2018.

The deadline was first extended to June 2019, was later extended twice to June 2020 and June 2021 and was again extended until June 2022, according to DSCC sources.

Meanwhile, the cost, which was initially fixed at Tk 58 crore, was later increased to Tk 86 crore, according to DSCC.

After the new work order, the new cost to complete the remaining work has been fixed at around Tk 61 crore.

Saleh Ahmed, then chief engineer of DSCC, said they fined the previous contractor around Tk 3.5 crore for their failure to complete the project.

Renovation of the park -- named after General Muhammad Ataul Goni Osmani, commander-in-chief during the Liberation War -- is taking place under a Tk 200-crore "Jol Sobujey Dhaka Project" for modernisation of 19 parks and 12 playgrounds by DSCC, most of which have been completed.

In the park, there are walkways, a library, a food court, drainage system to control two lakes, direct walkways to come from the side of secretariat to Nagar Bhaban, a stairway to the lake, an indoor games zone, and parking facilities.

The 29-acre green sanctuary has a number of rare trees and plants, alongside sculptures and an auditorium.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw workers busy with the construction work.

Three firms -- PF Corporation, NDE-SBN (JV), and PFC and SI (JV) -- got the work order to complete the work in five packages.

Md Nadim Bhuiyan, project manager of NDE-SBN (JV), said 50 percent of the work on their portions has been completed.

He said they started their work on September 28 last year and are scheduled to complete their work by June 25.

Meanwhile, according to new design, there will be boundary

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

FLOODS IN NORTHEAST

772,000 children affected: Unicef

UNB, *Dhaka*

Over 20,00,000 people, including over 772,000 children, are already affected by flash floods in the north-eastern region and in urgent need of assistance, said Unicef Representative in Bangladesh Sheldon Yett yesterday.

Yett said Unicef is "deeply concerned" about the devastating flood situation unfolding in Bangladesh.

"The rivers are flowing dangerously high, and the situation is expected to worsen over the next 24 to 48 hours," he said.

"As waters rise, children are the most vulnerable, facing heightened risks of drowning, malnutrition, deadly waterborne diseases, the trauma of displacement, and potential abuse in overpopulated shelters," Yett said in a statement.

He said their priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of children and adolescents.

In coordination and partnership with the government of Bangladesh and local stakeholders in the field, they have already distributed safe water to reach more than 100,000 people for over 5 days, and while these efforts continue.

"We have also distributed more than 3,000 ten-liter water containers. We are urgently bringing in additional emergency supplies to the affected communities in case the situation worsens," he said.

Over 810 government schools in the Sylhet division have been flooded and almost 500 are being used as flood shelters. In addition, almost 140 community clinics are also affected by flood waters.

"Child Protection Social Workers are offering support to mitigate potential violence and counseling to help children overcome trauma during this difficult time," Yett said.

419 hajj pilgrims return home

UNB, *Dhaka*

The first return hajj flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying 419 pilgrims landed in Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia early yesterday.

The flight landed at the airport around 5:40am, said a media release signed by Boshra Islam, general manager of Public Relations of the Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

The return hajj flights will continue till July 22.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines took 40,967 hajj pilgrims to the KSA by 107 flights.

For the post-hajj period, the airlines will operate 125 flights to bring the pilgrims back to Bangladesh.

The first hajj flight departed on May 9. The flights to Saudi Arabia continued until June 12. A total of 218 flights were operated for hajj pilgrims. They included 106 flights operated by Biman, 75 by Saudi Arabian Airlines, and 37 by Flynas.

A total of 21 Bangladeshi pilgrims have died so far. Of them 18 were men and three women. Sixteen died in Makkah, four in Madinah and one in Jeddah.

Conspiracy on to make AL look corrupt

Quader tells rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday alleged that a conspiracy is being hatched to portray AL as a corrupt party to the people of the country.

"Stay alert; Fakhruls are spreading rumours. Allegations of corruption are being brought against Awami League. The police force is being attacked in a generalised way, and they have the intention to do the same against the army," said Quader.

He was addressing a brief rally prior to a procession brought out marking AL's 75th founding anniversary, starting from in front of the Institution of Engineers in the capital's Ramna.

He also alleged that some media outlets are also involved in anti-AL propaganda.

The AL second-in-command also stated that they should think about whether the plot to label the party as corrupt is part of a conspiracy to oust it from the government.

"If a person commits a crime, in that case, the Anti-Corruption Commission is independent and the judiciary is independent. Sheikh Hasina has the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Awami League and its associate bodies bring out a procession from in front of the Institution of Engineers in the capital's Ramna marking the party's 75th founding anniversary.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Waiting to see what PM brings from Delhi

Says BNP leader Farroque

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Chairperson's Advisory Council member Zainul Abedin Farroque yesterday said the country's people are waiting to see what Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina brings from Delhi this time.

"But if she returns empty-handed, the people won't forgive her. There will be political resistance against her," he said while speaking at a protest rally.

Jatiyatabadi Nagorik Parishad organised the programme in front of Jatiya Press Club to protest a move "to build railway tracks over Bangladeshi soil by the Indian government".

Hasina went to India on Friday on a two-day state

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Fatema finds success in vermicomposting

SUZIT KUMAR DAS, *Faridpur*

Kaniz Fatema, 31, a homemaker from Pierpur village in Faridpur, earns Tk 40,000-45,000 per month by producing vermicompost, allowing her to become self-reliant and create job opportunities for others.

Her journey was not easy. After completing her SSC in 2007, she married Sheikh Shamsur Rahman and her in-laws did not allow her to continue her education.

Despite this, Fatema persevered. In 2019, she began working with USID, where she received training in various subjects and learned about vermicomposting, a natural process of converting organic waste into fertiliser using earthworms.

"In 2021, I took a loan of Tk 5,000 from a local NGO and bought two kilogrammes of earthworms, four concrete slab rings, and four tins. Using 100kg cow dung, I produced 40kg of vermicompost in one month, which I sold for Tk 400," said Fatima.

By the end of 2021, Fatema had purchased six more rings and began earning Tk 4,000-5,000 per month. In 2022, she invested Tk 65,000 to build four reservoirs and a tin-shed house for her farm, naming her business "Ehan Vermicompost".

Currently, Fatema operates 10 rings and nine reservoirs on five decimals of land at her father's home, producing around 2.5 tonnes of vermicompost each month. She sells those for Tk 15-20 per kg. She has invested around Tk 4 lakh into the business.

Fatema buys cow dung from locals for Tk 2 per kg.

Champa Begum, a homemaker from Alalpur village, said, "Fatema collects cow dung from my house each week, allowing me to earn Tk 1,200-1,400 per month."

Fatema also employs a permanent worker, Hima Begum. "I start working after finishing my household chores and earn Tk 8,000 per month," said Hima.

Fatema sells most of her vermicompost at fertiliser shops in Pierpur Bazar and sometimes directly to consumers from her house. She also supplies vermicompost to various shops and customers in Dhaka.

Arif Hossain, a resident of Mirpur-1 in Dhaka, said, "I collect vermicompost from Fatema for my rooftop garden. The quality is excellent."

Now, people interested in vermicompost production visit Fatema for advice. "Fatema is very supportive. I took a lot of advice from her," said Sahan Khan, a resident of Komorpur village.

Anwar Hossain, sub-assistant agriculture officer of Faridpur Sadar upazila, said, "Fatema is one of the top vermicompost producers in the district. We are giving all kinds of support to her."

Holidaymakers throng Barishal River Port yesterday to return to the capital after spending Eid holidays with family members.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

Army chief pays homage to Bangabandhu

BSS, *Dhaka*

Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed paid rich tribute to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman yesterday by placing a wreath at his portrait in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi-32.

After laying the wreath, the army chief stood in solemn silence there for some time as a mark of profound respect to the memory of Bangabandhu and his family members as well as all martyrs of August 15, 1975, said an ISPR press release.

Army high officials, among others, were present.

SYLHET FLOOD

Over 10,000 left without power

UNB, *Sylhet*

Incessant rain and water from the hills have led to early flooding in the Sylhet region, causing power outages for over 10,000 residents in the district.

The Power Division has cancelled all leaves for electricity workers to ensure that they are available to support people during this crisis.

In a notification yesterday, it was reported that the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) and the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (BREB) in the Sylhet zone have faced significant damage to power substations, lines, transformers, and electric poles due to the ongoing deluge.

Safety measures have been implemented in flood-affected areas, leading to intentional power cuts to prevent electrical accidents.

Rising water levels have also necessitated further power disconnections.

All 21 of the 33/11 kV substations under BPDB Sylhet remain operational, maintaining power supply to the region.

10th Int'l Yoga Day celebrated

BSS, *Rajshahi*

The 10th International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Rajshahi University yesterday.

Marking the day, the Assistant High Commission of India in Rajshahi and Indian Council for Cultural Relations organised a session of Common Yoga Protocol at the university's gymnasium in association with RU.

This year's theme for the day was "Yoga for Self and Society".

Lawmaker Shafqur Rahman, Indian Assistant High Commissioner Manoj Kumar, RU Vice-Chancellor Prof Golam Sabbir Sattar and pro-VC Prof Sultan-Ul-Islam were present at the session.

DSCC extends

FROM PAGE 3

grilles around the park and two gates on the south and north sides. The fencing around the park has already been completed.

Iqbal Habib, vice president of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said if authorities confined the park to its boundary again, that would be a clear violation of its original design.

Earlier, a total of 70 architects prepared the designs of 19 parks and 12 playgrounds and presented them at Nagar Bhaban in 2017.

In the designs, experts opined that the parks must contain greenery. Moreover, boundary walls or fences around parks or playgrounds should be removed in most cases.

20,000 stranded

FROM PAGE 5

Contacted, Mohidul Haq, UNO of Kaunia upazila, said steps are being taken to distribute dry food among those affected.

Meanwhile, WDB has issued a flood alert for parts of Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, and Nilphamari, predicting further rises in the water levels of the Teesta, Dudhkumar, and Dharla rivers due to anticipated heavy rainfall in northern Bangladesh and Indian West Bengal.

India's Gangtok recorded 31mm of rainfall in 24 hours till yesterday morning, which might exacerbate Rangpur's current flood situation.

Waiting to see what

FROM PAGE 3

visit at the invitation of her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.

Farroque, also a former opposition chief whip in parliament, said India, being a friend, cannot take everything away from Bangladesh and deprive it of its fair share of water from shared rivers.

The BNP leader warned that the people of Bangladesh will never accept if India builds railway tracks over Bangladesh to transport goods to the other side.

"Let's forget all the differences and join a movement against Indian aggression," he said.

He said lakhs of people in the Sylhet region are living in extreme misery due to sudden floods.

Farroque alleged that the government constructed the Mithamoin-Austagram road in Kishoreganj haor area only to appease an individual, which is now causing floods.

Saline creeps into

FROM PAGE 5

the upazila, claimed that he had reported the problem to the authorities concerned through the upazila administration on behalf of the farmers.

"However, no initiative has yet been taken to repair or rebuild the sluice gates," he added.

Moreover, water seeps in through these ineffective sluice gates during extreme weather events such as cyclones and floods to inundate the localities, said locals.

Tarek Mahmud of Banshbaria union said his yard was inundated by sea water during the recent cyclone.

Contacted, officials of BWDB said new sluice gates will be constructed in these affected areas.

Asked why they have not done so yet, Prashanta Talukder, sub-divisional engineer of BWDB (Sitakunda sub-division), said they could not do so due to fund crisis.

"These existing sluice gates need to be replaced. So, we are preparing a development project proposal for constructing new structures and will send it to the ministry concerned for approval soon," he said.

Conspiracy on to make

FROM PAGE 3

courage to bring the corrupt, no matter how influential they are, under book," added Quader.

Addressing BNP, he said, "How would you wage a movement? Will you run away like on October 28?"

"A movement without people is not a movement. Today, in the name of movement, if they take to the streets again with arson, terror, and murder, Awami League will give an appropriate response," said Quader.

The procession was scheduled to start at 2:30pm, and to attend it, AL leaders and activists began to throng the venue around 1:30pm.

Streets in front of IEB, Matsya Bhaban, and the one leading to Shahbagh intersection were brimming with them, which caused vehicular movements on those roads to come to a halt, with commuters having to wait long hours in their vehicles.

As the procession advanced through Mirpur Road towards Dhanmondi-32's Bangabandhu Bhaban, traffic congestion extended to adjacent roads.

The procession started from Suhrawardy Udyan around 3:45pm and ended at Dhanmondi 32 at 5:30pm.

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নং-০৫.৪৫.৬১০০.০২৪.২৪.০০৩.২৩-১৪৪৯

তারিখ : ০৬ আষাঢ়, ১৪৩১ / ২০ জুন,২০২৪

ভূমি মন্ত্রণালয়, সায়রাত-২, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা-১০০০ এর ১৮ এপ্রিল, ২০২৪ তারিখের ৩১.০০.০০০০.০৫১.৩৭.০০৭.২৩-১৮০ নং স্মারক এবং জেলা বালুমহাল ও মাটি ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটির গত ১৩/০৬/২০২৪ তারিখে অনুষ্ঠিত সভার সিদ্ধান্ত মোতাবেক ময়মনসিংহ জেলার ব্রহ্মপুত্র নদের বালুমহালসমূহে বিআইডব্লিউটিএ কর্তৃক ড্রেজিং এর মাধ্যমে উত্তোলিত বালু/মাটি বিক্রয়ের নিমিত্ত অত্র কার্যালয়ের তালিকাভুক্ত ব্যক্তি/ প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে নিম্নবর্ণিত তারিখ ও সময়সূচী অনুযায়ী সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। নিম্নবর্ণিত তারিখ ও সময়সূচী অনুযায়ী ১ম পর্যায়ে ইজারা প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন হওয়ার পর ইজারার জন্য অপেক্ষমাণ অবশিষ্ট বালুর ইজারা প্রক্রিয়া পর্যায়ক্রমে সম্পন্ন করা হবে। অনিবার্য কারণবশতঃ কর্তৃপক্ষ দরপত্রের তারিখ ও সময় প্রয়োজনে সংশোধন, পরিবর্তন, পরিমার্জন ও বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

দরপত্র গ্রহনের পর্যায়	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র বাক্স খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র পত্র প্রাপ্তি ও দাখিলের স্থান
১	২	৩	৪	৫
১ম পর্যায়	০৯/০৭/২০২৪ সকাল ৯-০০ টা হতে বিকাল ৫-০০টা পর্যন্ত	১০/০৭/২০২৪ সকাল ৯-০০ টা হতে দুপুর ১-০০টা পর্যন্ত	১০/০৭/২০২৪ বিকাল ০৪-০০ ঘটিকা	বিভাগীয় কমিশনারের কার্যালয়, ময়মনসিংহ, জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, ময়মনসিংহ (রাজস্ব শাখা) এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট উপজেলা নির্বাহী অফিসারের কার্যালয়।
২য় পর্যায়	২৩/০৭/২০২৪ সকাল ৯-০০ টা হতে বিকাল ৫-০০টা পর্যন্ত	২৪/০৭/২০২৪ সকাল ৯-০০ টা হতে দুপুর ১-০০টা পর্যন্ত	২৪/০৭/২০২৪ বিকাল ০৪-০০ ঘটিকা	
৩য় পর্যায়	০৭/০৮/২০২৪ সকাল ৯-০০ টা হতে বিকাল ৫-০০টা পর্যন্ত	০৮/০৮/২০২৪ সকাল ৯-০০ টা হতে দুপুর ১-০০টা পর্যন্ত	০৮/০৮/২০২৪ বিকাল ০৪-০০ ঘটিকা	

ক্রমিক	প্যাকেজ নং	উপজেলা	মাটি/বালু রাখার স্থান	মৌজার নাম	খননকৃত বালু/মাটির পরিমাণ (ঘনফুট)	আনুমানিক সর্বনিম্ন মূল্য প্রতি ঘনফুট	মোট সর্বনিম্ন মূল্য	মন্তব্য
১	০৮	সদর	চরজেলখানা	চরজেলখানা	২৭,৯৩,০৭৩	০.৫০ টাকা	১৩,৯৬,৫৩৬.৫০	
২	০৮	ঐ	চরশ্যামরামপুর	চরশ্যামরামপুর	৪১,৬৫,৮৩০	০.৫০ টাকা	২০,৮২,৯১৫.০০	
৩	০৯	ঐ	চরদড়ি কুষ্টিয়া	চরদড়ি কুষ্টিয়া	১৭,৭১,০০০	০.৫০ টাকা	৮,৮৫,৫০০.০০	
৪	০৯	ঐ	চরদড়ি কুষ্টিয়া	চরদড়ি কুষ্টিয়া	৭৬,৫৯,১৮৭	০.৫০ টাকা	৩৮,২৯,৫৯৩.৫০	
৫	০৯	ঐ	চরদড়ি কুষ্টিয়া, নামাপাড়া	চরদড়ি কুষ্টিয়া	২৩,০০,০০০	০.৫০ টাকা	১১,৫০,০০০.০০	
৬	০৬	ঐ	চরনিলক্ষীয়া	চরনিলক্ষীয়া	৩৫,৬৫,৭২৫	০.৫০ টাকা	১৭,৮২,৮৬২.৫০	
৭	০৭	ঐ	জালালেরচরের বিপরীত থেকে খাল ব্রিজ পর্যন্ত	চরঈশ্বরদিয়া	৭৫,১৯,৬৮৮	০.৫০ টাকা	৩৭,৫৯,৮৪৪.০০	
৮	০৯	ঐ	রূপাখালী	চরদড়ি কুষ্টিয়া	৯৩,৮৯,৬০০	০.৫০ টাকা	৪৬,৯৪,৮০০.০০	
৯	১০	ঐ	বোরের চর	বোরের চর	২০,৫২,০০০	০.৫০ টাকা	১০,২৬,০০০.০০	
১০	১০	ঐ	ডিগ্রিপাড়া/ পঃ কুষ্টিয়া পাড়া	বোরের চর	৯৪,৩৯,১২৫	১.২০ টাকা	১,১৩,২৬,৯৫০.০০	
১১	১১	ঐ	রেহাই তারাপুর	রেহাই তারাপুর	২৩,৭১,৫০০	০.৫০ টাকা	১১,৮৫,৭৫০.০০	
১২	০৭	ঐ	জালালের চর	চরনিলক্ষীয়া	১২৬০০,৯৩,	০.৫০ টাকা	৬,৪৬,৮০০.০০	
১৩	০৭	ঐ	দুই ব্রিজের মধ্যখানে	চরঈশ্বরদিয়া	৬৫৮৭,৫৯,	২.৫০ টাকা	১৬,৪৮,৯৬৭.৫০	
১৪	০৭	ঐ	কাচারি ঘাটের বিপরীত পার্শ্বে	চরঈশ্বরদিয়া	৫০৮৫,২৭,	২.৫০ টাকা	১৩,১৭,৭১২.৫০	
১৫	০৭	ঐ	পুলিশ লাইন সংলগ্ন	চরজেলখানা	১৩১২৫,৭৮,	৩.২০ টাকা	৪৪,১০,০০০.৫০	
১৬	০৮	ঐ	দুলাল বাড়ী পুষ্পগ্রামের বিপরীত পার্শ্বে	চরজেলখানা	১৭২৫০,০৬,	০.৫০ টাকা	৮,৫৩,১২৫.০০	
১৭	০৯	ঐ	বিদ্যাগঞ্জ	দরিকুষ্টিয়া	১৮৭৫,৮১,২৭,	০.৫০ টাকা	৬৩,৯০,৯৩৭.৫০	
১৮	১০	ঐ	বৈঠামারী	বোররচর	১২০০০,৭৮,	০.৫০ টাকা	৬,৩৯,০০০.০০	
১৯	০৪	ত্রিশাল	মরাখোলা	চরমাদাখালী	৮,৪৪,৪০৩	২.৫০ টাকা	২১,১১,০০৭.৫০	
২০	০৪	ঐ	ধলা স্কুলের মাঠ সংলগ্ন	চরমাদাখালী	২৪,১৫,০৬২	৩.০০ টাকা	৭২,৪৫,১৮৬.০০	
২১	০৫	ঐ	ঝিলকী	ঝিলকী	৪৭৯৬৫,৬৭,	২.২০ টাকা	১,০৪,৮৯,৫২৩.০০	
২২	০২(ক)	গফরগাঁও	হোসেনপুর ব্রিজের উত্তর পাশে	খুরশিদ মহল	৭,২০,০০০	২.২০ টাকা	১৫,৮৪,০০০.০০	
২৩	০২(ঘ)	ঐ	হোসেনপুর বীজের পার্শ্বে	খুরশিদ মহল	১১,৬৮,৮৩০	২.২০ টাকা	২৫,৭১,৪২৬.০০	
২৪	০২(চ)	ঐ	চর শাখচুড়া	শাখচুড়া	২৭,২৩,২৭৭	২.৫০ টাকা	৬৮,০৮,১৯২.৫০	
২৫	০৩(ক)	ঐ	কলেজ ঘাট	যোলাশিয়া	৭,৫০,০০০	২.৫০ টাকা	১৮,৭৫,০০০.০০	
২৬	০৩(ক)	ঐ	গলাকাটা বাজার	চরআলগী	৮৩,২৮,৩২০	২.৫০ টাকা	২,০৮,২০,৮০০.০০	
২৭	০৪(গ)	ঐ	আশ্রয়ন প্রকল্প বটতলার বিপরীত পার্শ্বে	চর কামারিয়া	৩৭,৪৪,০০০	০.৫০ টাকা	১৮,৭২,০০০.০০	
২৮	০৪(ঘ)	ঐ	মাইজহাটী বাজারের বিপরীত পার্শ্বে	চর কামারিয়া	২৭,৭২,০০০	০.৫০ টাকা	১৩,৮৬,০০০.০০	
২৯	২(ঙ)	ঐ	খুরশীদ মহল ব্রীজের দক্ষিণে	খুরশীদ মহল	১৭,২৭,৯৬৫	২.০০ টাকা	৩৪,৫৫,৯৩০.০০	
৩০	২(ছ)	ঐ	খুরশীদ মহল ব্রীজের দক্ষিণে	খুরশীদ মহল	১২,৪৭,৬০৬	২.০০ টাকা	২৪,৯৫,২১২.০০	
৩১	০৪	ঐ	বটতলা বাজার	চারিপাড়া	১১১,৭৬৮,৮১,	০.৭০ টাকা	৮,২৭,২৩৭.৬৭	
৩২	০৪	ঐ	গফরগাঁও ব্রীজের উত্তরে (৩)	জয়ারচর	৩০৮,০১৮,২৯,	১.৪০ টাকা	৪২,৪০,৬২৬.৩২	
৩৩	০৩	ঐ	তেতুলিয়া বাজার বিপরীত পার্শ্বে	চর আলগী	৯৮৩৮,৯৯,.২৮	০.৭০ টাকা	৬,৯৯,৮৮৬.৮০	
৩৪	০৩	ঐ	লামকাইন প্রাইমারী স্কুলের পাশে	লামকাইন	৭৫৫,৩৫৩,৩৩,	২.২০ টাকা	১৬,১৩,৩৭৭.৮১	
৩৫	০৫	ঈশ্বরগঞ্জ	চর রামমোহন	চর রামমোহন	৪০,৯৪,৭৬০	০.৫০ টাকা	২০,৪৭,৩৮০.০০	
৩৬	০৬	গৌরীপুর	খোদাবক্সপুর	খোদাবক্সপুর	১,৩০,২৩,০০০	০.৫০ টাকা	৬৫,১১,৫০০.০০	
৩৭	০৬	ঐ	চর ভাবখালী	চর ভাবখালী	১,০৩,৭৪,০০০	০.৫০ টাকা	৫১,৮৭,০০০.০০	
৩৮	০৬	ঐ	ভাটিপাড়া	ভাংনামারী	৫২,৭০,৪০০	০.৫০ টাকা	২৬,৩৫,২০০.০০	
৩৯	০৬	ঐ	ভাংনামারী	ভাংনামারী	১,৪৮,০৬,৭৫৭	০.৫০ টাকা	৭৪,০৩,৩৭৮.৫০	
৪০	০৬	ঐ	ভাংনামারী খেয়াঘাট সংলগ্ন	ভাংনামারী	৬,২০,৮১৩	২.০০ টাকা	১২,৪১,৬২৬.০০	
৪১	০৬	ঐ	ভাংনামারী খেয়াঘাট সংলগ্ন	ভাংনামারী	২৩,১১,৫৭৫	২.০০ টাকা	৪৬,২৩,১৫০.০০	
৪২	০৬	ঐ	আবাসন সংলগ্ন	ভাংনামারী	৩৩,৮১,০০০	২.২০ টাকা	৭৪,৩৮,২০০.০০	
৪৩	০৬	ঐ	ভাংনামারী ভাটিপাড়া	ভাংনামারী	২৫১৭০,৫৭,	২.২০ টাকা	৫৬,২৫,৭৭৪.০০	
৪৪	০৪	নান্দাইল	চরভেলামারী (০১)	চরভেলামারী	১১৫০,৩৮৪,৮২,	১.৫০ টাকা	১৭,৭৩,৫৭৬.৭৫	
৪৫	০৪	ঐ	চরভেলামারী (০২)	চরভেলামারী	২২১০,২২৭,৫৪,	১.৫০ টাকা	৩৩,৮১,৩৪০.৬৫	

দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী ঃ

১. ময়মনসিংহ জেলা প্রশাসনের তালিকাভুক্ত (লাইসেন্সপ্রাপ্ত) কোন ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠান ছাড়া কেউ বালু/মাটি ইজারা দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন না। লাইসেন্স অবশ্যই হাল সন পর্যন্ত নবায়ন থাকতে হবে।
২. দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য বাবদ ২০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) তফসিলভুক্ত যে কোন ব্যাংকে জেলা প্রশাসক, ময়মনসিংহ এর অনুকূলে জমা দিয়ে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/ পে-অর্ডার এর মাধ্যমে দরপত্র ফরম সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।
৩. নির্ধারিত সময়ের পর কোন দরপত্র বিক্রি বা গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
৪. দরপত্র দাখিলের দিনই বিকাল ৪.০০ ঘটিকায় প্রাপ্ত দরপত্রসমূহ নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর কার্যালয়ে দরপত্রদাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হবে।
৫. দরপত্রের সাথে জেলা প্রশাসক, ময়মনসিংহ এর অনুকূলে উদ্ধৃত দরের ২৫% (শতকরা পঁচিশ) টাকা জামানত হিসাবে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট বা পে-অর্ডার সংযোজন করতে হবে।
৬. কোন প্রকার ঘষামাজা/ অস্পষ্ট/কাটাছেড়া দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
৭. হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, টিআইএন নম্বরসহ হালসন পর্যন্ত আয়কর প্রদানের সনদপত্র, ০৩ (তিন) কপি সত্যায়িত ছবি, জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি, সংশ্লিষ্ট ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ চেয়ারম্যান/ পৌরসভার মেয়র কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত স্থায়ী বাসিন্দা সংক্রান্ত সনদপত্র এবং তফসিলি ব্যাংক কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত আর্থিক সচ্ছলতার সনদপত্র দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।
৮. দরপত্র দাখিলের পূর্বে বালুর পরিমাণ সম্পর্কে সরেজমিনে প্রকৃত অবস্থা সঠিকভাবে দেখে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে। পরে কোন আপত্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
৯. উত্তোলিত বালু ইজারা প্রাপ্তির ০৬ (ছয়) মাসের মধ্যে নিজ উদ্যোগে অপসারণ করতে হবে। নির্ধারিত তারিখের পরে বালু অপসারণ করা যাবে না।
১০. জেলা বালুমহাল ও মাটি ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটি প্রাপ্ত দরপত্রসমূহ যাচাই-বাছাই ও প্রচলিত বিধি-বিধান অনুসরণপূর্বক বালু/মাটি ইজারা প্রদান করবেন।
১১. ইজারা প্রাপ্তির ০৭ (সাত) দিনের মধ্যে ইজারা গ্রহীতাকে ইজারামূল্য এবং ইজারা মূল্যের উপর অতিরিক্ত ১৫% ভ্যাট ও ১০% আয়কর পরিশোধের পর নির্ধারিত ফরমে জেলা প্রশাসক, ময়মনসিংহ এর সাথে ৩০০/- (তিনশত) টাকার নন-জুডিশিয়াল স্ট্যাম্পে লীজ চুক্তি সম্পাদন করার পর দখল হস্তান্তর করা হবে। নির্ধারিত সময়ে টাকা জমা না দিলে দাখিলকৃত জামানত বাজেয়াপ্ত করে সরকারী কোষাগারে জমা প্রদান করা হবে।
১২. উত্তোলিত কোন বালু/মাটি ১ম বার ইজারা প্রদান করা সম্ভব না হলে ইজারার তারিখসমূহ পর্যায়ক্রমে প্রযোজ্য হবে।
১৩. ইজারা সংক্রান্ত সরকারি নীতিমালা ও সময়ে সময়ে জারিকৃত সরকারি বিধি-বিধানসমূহ ইজারা গ্রহীতাকে মেনে চলতে হবে। ইজারাদার কর্তৃক বর্ণিত কোন শর্ত ভঙ্গ করা হলে ইজারা প্রদানকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ তাৎক্ষনিকভাবে বালু অপসারণ বন্ধ করে দিতে পারবেন ।
১৪. বালু/মাটির বিস্তারিত বিবরণ ও অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী অফিস চলাকালীন এ কার্যালয়ের রাজস্ব শাখা হতে জানা যাবে।

২০/০৬/২০২৪

(দিদারে আলম মোহাম্মদ মাকসুদ চৌধুরী)
জেলা প্রশাসক
ও
সভাপতি
জেলা বালুমহাল ও মাটি ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটি, ময়মনসিংহ।

GD-1017

Woman crushed under train wheels

UNB, *Pabna*

A 60-year-old woman died after being crushed under the wheels of a train in Sadar upazila of Pabna district yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Sokhina Khatun of Khalishpur village in Sadullapur union.

Locals said the accident occurred in the morning when the Dhallachar Express hit her in Ghorerbhita area while she was crossing the road.

Locals alleged that no gateman was there.

Ishwardi Railway Station Police Officer-in-Charge Habibur Rahman said a police team was sent to the spot to look into the matter.

20,000 stranded in Rangpur flash flood

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

Around 20,000 people in the low-lying areas of Rangpur's Kaunia upazila have been marooned due to a flash flood caused by a surge in the Teesta river.

The flood occurred following excessive rain in the area alongside Indian upstream regions in 24 hours till yesterday morning, which caused the river's water level to rise above the danger mark.

The flood has already affected around 10 villages in the upazila. Also, 11 char areas have been affected by Teesta's rising water levels.

Rangpur Water Development Board (WDB) officials said the Teesta was close to the danger level at Dalia Point a couple of days ago, causing floods in Gangachara in Rangpur and parts of Nilphamari district.

The Teesta is now flowing 52cm above the danger level at Kaunia point. However, WDB officials said the water level has remained unchanged since yesterday morning.

As floodwaters swept away many homes, residents of the flood-affected villages -- particularly in Balapara and Dhepamadhupur unions -- have sought refuge on higher grounds with their families and livestock.

"The flood situation has been worsening since Thursday. The flash flood has already claimed the livestock of many families, while a significant area of cropland has also been submerged," said Aminul Islam, chairman of Dhepamadhupur union.

He also expressed concern over the severe drinking water crisis and said relief efforts have yet to reach many flood-affected people.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Flash floods hit northern districts like Rangpur and Kurigram due to the rise in water levels in the Teesta following torrential rain. Around 20,000 people in the low-lying areas of Rangpur's Kaunia upazila have been marooned due to the flood. The photos were taken yesterday. PHOTO: **STAR**

Lightning kills four in Khulna

UNB, *Khulna*

Four people, including a child, died after being struck by lightning in three upazilas of Khulna, authorities said yesterday.

Of them, two people, including the child, died in Koyra upazila's Ghorilal village and one each in Botiaghata and Paikgachha upazilas on Thursday afternoon.

The deceased were identified as Enayet Ali, 37, from Koyra, and Nazmul, 8, son of Al Amin from Matiadanga village. One Musa Gazi was seriously injured during the incident.

Moreover, deceased Srikanth Mondal, 25, was a resident of Deluti union under Paikgachha, and Al Mamun, 17, son of Moni Chowkidar of Kararia village in Botiaghata.

Ripun Kumar Mondal, chairman of Deluti UP, said Srikanth was an employee at a fish farm and was taking shelter in a hut during the afternoon rain when he was struck by lightning. He died on the spot.

Abul Kalam Akhonda, assistant superintendent of police (ASP-south) of Khulna, said the bodies were handed over to the families.

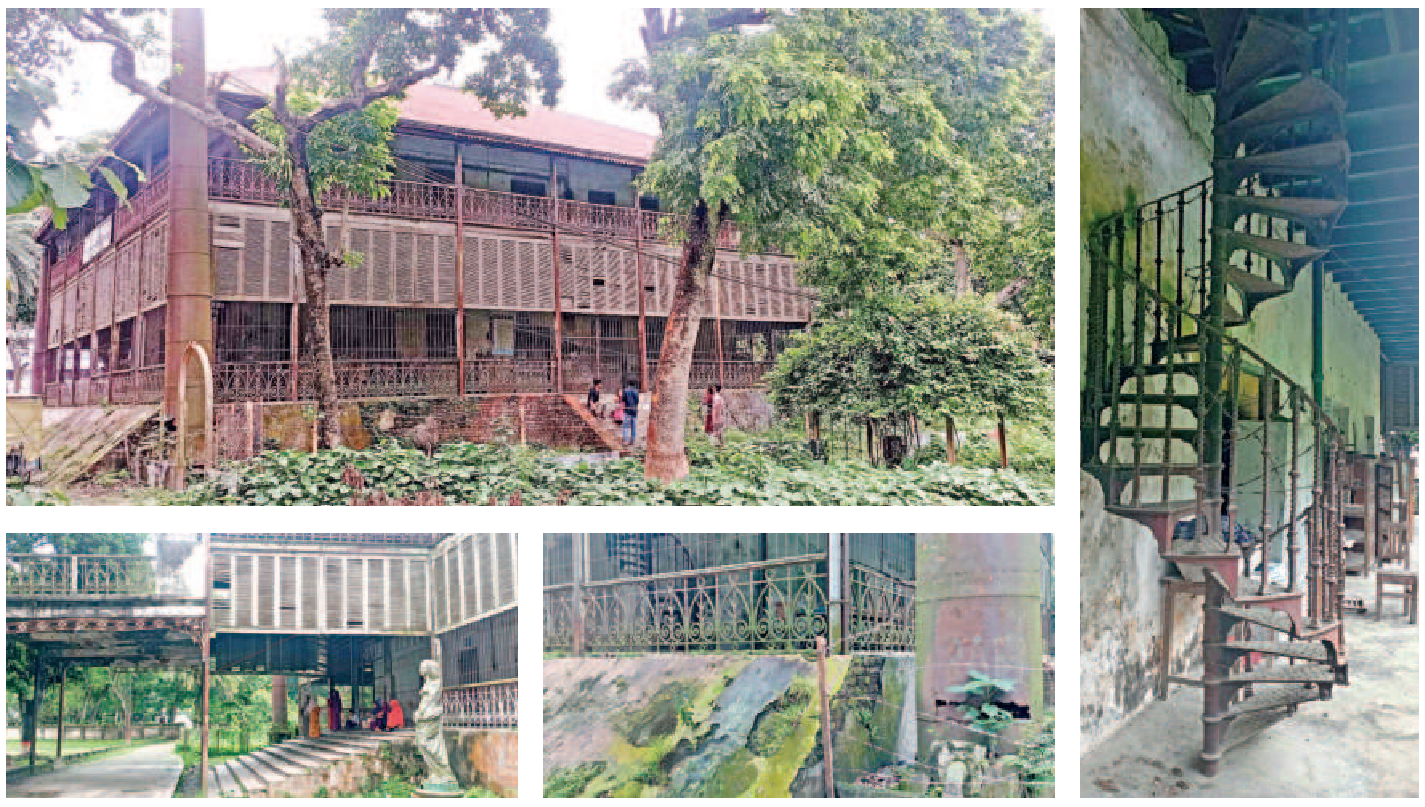
PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 22

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-52	8-17
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

A 'CASTLE' IN RUINS

145-year-old historic Mymensingh building in dilapidated condition



OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

At the heart of Mymensingh city, surrounded by greenery, stands a two-storied tin-shed "castle" with a banyan tree in front of it.

Its European architectural design bears testimony to the sense of aesthetics and wealth of the then Mymensingh zamindars.

The structure comprises staircases made of iron, alongside various other metal accessories. Due to the sheer quantity of iron used in constructing and decorating the structure, this 145-year-old establishment was also known as "Lohar Kuthi" among locals.

The two-storied building was placed on a high plinth, which historians say was done to protect the castle from floods. The building also hosts two Greek sculptures in white on both sides of the front gate.

However, the dismembered hands of both the sculptures show how decades of negligence made it a forgotten "castle".

Maharaja Suryakanta Acharya Chowdhury, a prominent zamindar, constructed the castle on 27.50 acres of land at a cost of Tk 45,000 in 1879 in Mymensingh town.

Some say it was named in memory of Mymensingh's first Zilla magistrate NS Alexander. However, another group of scholars claim that the building was named after Alexandra, the beloved wife of Emperor Edward.

Acharya used this building as a rest house for his guests. Rabindranath Tagore arrived in Mymensingh by train on February 15, 1926, and stayed at this place for four days as his guest.

Tagore was accorded several receptions during his stay there.

However, the rich history of the establishment remains mostly unexplored to this day. Not much has been done to create awareness either.

After the 1947 partition, the house was used as the library of Teachers Training College for men and teachers' dormitory.

The two-storied house has 14 rooms on the ground and first floors. Seven rooms on the first floor of the house were used as dormitories for around 60 years.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found the floor abandoned, and in a precarious condition.

Although TTC still uses the second floor as a library for its students, this correspondent saw it to be only a shadow of its former self.

TTC Principal Prof Zainal Abedin Khan said officials of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs visited the castle recently to talk about renovation. "We are yet to get any confirmation in this regard," he said.

The castle was listed as an archaeological site in March 2019.

Contacted, Afroza Khan Mita, regional director of the Department of Archaeology (Dhaka and Mymensingh), said a proposal for preservation, renovation and digging of all archeological sites including Alexandra Castle has already been approved. The work could start in the next fiscal year.

"The renovation work of the castle will be given priority," she said.

Saline creeps into cropland as sluice gates lie unrepaired

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*

At least 50 farmers in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila are struggling to protect their crops as saline water from the Bay of Bengal constantly inundated their 150 acres of cropland due to four sluice gates being non-functional for eight years.

"We used to cultivate three crops on our land. Due to salinity, the land has turned barren," said Ahmed Hossain, a farmer from Muradpur union under the upazila.

According to Bangladesh Water Development Board, these sluice gates, constructed on the mouths of Boalia, Shikder, Rajapur and Guliakhali canals between 1960 and 1968 became inoperative in 2016.

Visiting Boalia Khal (canal) area recently, this correspondent observed that sea water was constantly entering the locality during high tide through a damaged sluice gate.

Affected farmers in the area said they had urged the local administration several times for immediate steps to resolve the problem, but to no avail.

Nur Mohammed, who used to be a paddy farmer in the area, said salinity turned his land barren and compelled him to leave paddy cultivation.

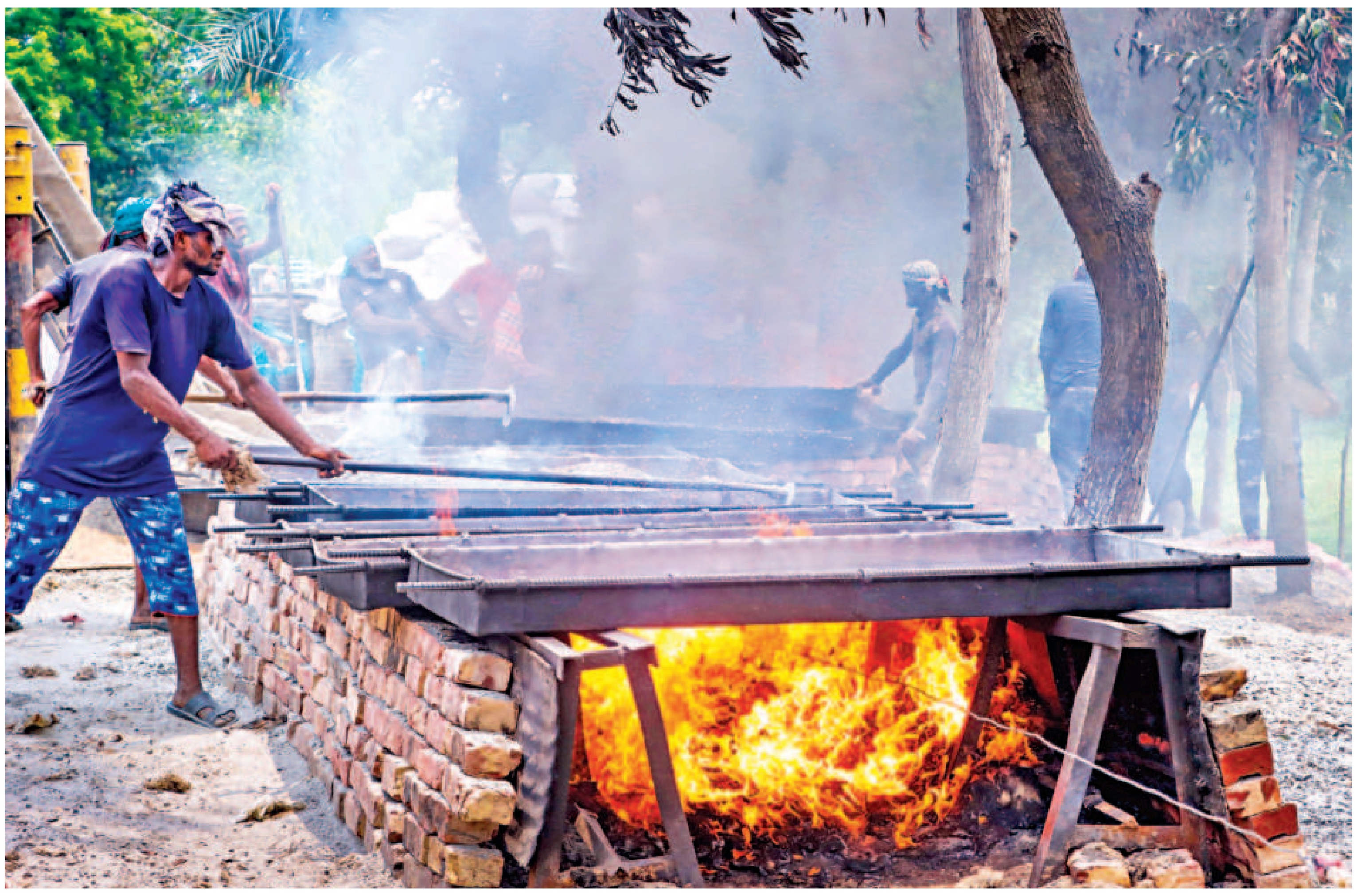
A non-functional sluice gate in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila. PHOTO: **STAR**

"Only an operational sluice gate can turn my land cultivable again," he added.

Sitakunda is known for producing high-yielding varieties of beans, as well as tomatoes, gourds and sweet pumpkins every year.

Contacted, Habibullah, agriculture officer in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Black smoke billows as workers mix stone and bitumen for roadwork beside the Rupsa Bridge bypass road in Khulna. The smoke not only affects the people passing by but also pollutes the environment. The photo was taken in Aranghata area yesterday. PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

COX'S BAZAR DISTRICT

Govt building 268km road network

BSS, *Dhaka*

The government is implementing a project to improve the rural connectivity in Cox's Bazar district.

Under the project titled "Emergency Multi-Sector Rohingya Crisis Response Project (EMCRP)", the government is building a 268-kilometre road network in several upazilas, including Ukhia and Teknaf.

The government is also building 50 new cyclone shelters, one relief administration and distribution centre, 34 multipurpose community service centres, six markets, two fire service offices, one LGED building, nine fire-fighting warehouses and drains, culverts and bridges inside the camps.

Under the project, the government is also setting up lightning arresters and solar street lights.

Talking to the news agency, Project Director of the EMCRP, being implemented by LGED, Javed Karim, said the project is helping build and rehabilitate basic infrastructure, improve community resilience and help prevent gender-based violence against the forcibly displaced Rohingya population.

Executive Engineer of LGED in Cox's Bazar Md Mamun Khan said work of around 200 kilometres has been completed.

"Four bridges and 45 school and disaster shelters in Ukhia upazila have been handed over. Also, a modern jetty is being constructed at the Cox's Bazar-Maheshkhali link gate. Two rubber dams have been constructed. Apart from these, several other works are going on," he added.

He also said multipurpose community service centres, satellite fire service centres, 268 lightning arresters, 2,500 solar street lights and 35 nanogrids for energy supply have been installed inside the camp.

Development Project Proposal of the EMCRP got the Ecnec approval on October 30, 2018. The revised DPP was approved on October 6, 2020.

The total estimated cost of the project is Tk 1,394.47 crore. Of the amount, the government is providing Tk 12.80 crore and the remaining Tk 1,381.67 crore is coming from the World Bank and German Development Bank.

TAIWAN CONFLICT

US, China hold first informal nuclear talks in five years

REUTERS, *Hong Kong*

The United States and China resumed semi-official nuclear arms talks in March for the first time in five years, with Beijing's representatives telling US counterparts that they would not resort to atomic threats over Taiwan, according to two American delegates who attended.

The Chinese representatives offered reassurances after their US interlocutors raised concerns that China might use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons if it faced defeat in a conflict over Taiwan. Beijing views the democratically governed island as its territory, a claim rejected by the government in Taipei.

"They told the US side that they were absolutely convinced that they are able to prevail in a conventional fight over Taiwan without using nuclear weapons," said scholar David Santoro, the US organiser of the Track Two talks, the details of which are being reported by Reuters for the first time.

Participants in Track Two talks are generally former officials and academics who can speak with authority on their government's position, even if they are not directly involved with setting it. Government-to-government negotiations are known as Track One.

Washington was represented by about half a dozen delegates, including former officials and scholars at the two-day discussions, which took place in a Shanghai hotel conference room.

Beijing sent a delegation of scholars and analysts, which included several former People's Liberation Army officers.

A State Department spokesperson said in response to Reuters' questions that Track Two talks could be "beneficial". The department did not participate in the March meeting though it was aware of it, the spokesperson said.

Such discussions cannot replace formal negotiations "that require participants to speak authoritatively on issues that are often highly compartmentalized within (Chinese) government circles," the spokesperson said.

Palestinian boys carry the shrapnel remains of ordnance following the Israeli military bombardment of the Gaza Municipality garage on al-Wahda Street in the al-Daraj neighborhood in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Israel 'pause' in Gaza had no impact on aid supplies

Says WHO, warns intense heat could worsen health crisis for displaced Palestinians

AGENCIES

A daily "pause" the Israeli military declared in Gaza to facilitate aid flows has had no impact on deliveries of badly needed aid, the UN's health agency said yesterday.

"So overall, we the UN can say that we did not see an impact on the humanitarian supplies coming in since that, I will say, unilateral announcement of this technical pause," said Richard Peeperkorn, the World Health Organization (WHO) representative in the Palestinian territories. "That is the overall assessment."

Over the weekend, the Israeli military announced a daily humanitarian "pause" in fighting on a key road in southern Gaza. Days later however, a United Nations spokesman said "this has yet to translate into more aid reaching people in need".

According to the WHO, as of May 17, only 750 people remained in the city of Rafah.

There were between 60,000 and 75,000 in the Al-Mawasi area in the south of the Gaza Strip, where many Palestinians have taken refuge since the start of the Israeli offensive in Rafah, reports AFP.

Dr Thanos Gargavanis, a trauma surgeon and emergency officer at the WHO, said the UN in Gaza was trying to "operate in an unworkable environment".

Returning from Gaza, the UN Women's Special Representative for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Maryse Guimond, described the territory as a "world of devastation".

She added: "More than one million people in Gaza are in constant displacement" in the hope of finding somewhere safe. However, the WHO's Dr Gargavanis said that "no place is safe".

The world health body also warned that scorching heat in the Gaza Strip could exacerbate health problems for Palestinians displaced by Israeli bombardment, reports Reuters. The WHO is calling for the Rafah crossing to be reopened for humanitarian aid and medical evacuations.

US destroys 6 Houthi drones in Red Sea

AFP, *Washington*

The US military said later on Thursday that it had destroyed four Houthi nautical drones and two aerial ones over the Red Sea off Yemen.

Iran-backed Houthis have launched scores of drones and missiles at commercial vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since November, describing the attacks as being in support of Palestinians during Israel's offensive in Gaza.

The US and its allies have responded with an increased naval presence to defend shipping in the vital waterway and with retaliatory strikes on Houthi targets.

Trump promises US green card for foreign graduates

AFP, *Washington*

Donald Trump said he wants to grant green cards to foreign graduates from US colleges, in an apparent softening of his typically hard-line view on immigration, a key election issue.

The Republican candidate made the remarks in a podcast published Thursday, days after President Joe Biden announced a citizenship pathway for immigrants married to US nationals, counterbalancing his recent crackdown on illegal border crossings.

"What I want to do and what I will do is, you graduate from a college, I think you should get automatically as part of your diploma a green card to be able to stay in this country," Trump told the All-In podcast. A green card is the commonly used name for a permanent resident card in the United States and a step toward citizenship.

Trump said this should include "anybody who graduates from a college," including those who complete two-year programs, known as junior colleges, and doctoral graduates.

Asked initially on the podcast if he would promise to help import the "best and the brightest around the world to America," Trump replied: "I do promise."

CORRUPTION CASE

Delhi HC blocks Kejriwal's release from prison

AFP, *New Delhi*

An Indian court yesterday stopped the release from jail of one of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's chief opponents, a day after he was granted bail in a long-running corruption case, reports said.

Arvind Kejriwal, the chief minister of Delhi and the leader of the opposition Aam Aadmi party, denies the charges as a "political conspiracy" by Modi and his Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

He was released from detention to campaign partway through India's weeks-long general election but returned to jail after voting ended this month.

A trial court ordered his release late Thursday, but before he could walk out of jail yesterday the country's top economic crimes investigative agency, the Enforcement Directorate (ED), appealed to the Delhi High Court.

It suspended his release until it could decide on the appeal, local media reported.

Tigers face India

FROM PAGE 12

the competition, and the scorecards of the other matches in the Super Eight are indicating that runs are flowing more freely now, unlike the first round.

In the first four matches of the Super Eight, the average run-rate has been 8.60, which is significantly higher than the first round's average scoring rate of 6.71.

This upsurge in runs will make Bangladesh's task even more arduous against India, who are fresh off a convincing 47-run win over Afghanistan in their Super Eight opener on Thursday, where they posted 181-8.

Much like the Australia match, Bangladesh will be tested against a side that look stronger on paper in all departments.

India boast one of the strongest batting line-ups in the competition, and although their star batter Virat Kohli is yet to hit his stride, making just 29 runs in four innings, it hasn't stopped their undefeated march so far in the tournament.

India's ace in the hole so far in this World Cup has been pacer Jasprit Bumrah. His economy rate of 3.46 is the best amongst bowlers who have played at least four matches, and on top of that, he has also claimed eight wickets, conceding just 6.50 runs per wicket.

Bangladesh's fragile top-order will have to try and preserve their wickets against Bumrah and Co early on and again deal with the pacer's searing yorkers at the death.

History is also not on Bangladesh's side, as the Tigers have ended up on the losing side in all four previous encounters against India in T20 World Cups.

The last two of those defeats were agonising for Bangladesh, as they lost by just one run in Bengaluru in 2016 and by five runs in DLS method in Adelaide in 2022.

A defeat today will douse Bangladesh's faint hopes of making it to the knockout phase of the T20 World Cup for the first time. A washout would keep them in the hunt while a win would put the Najmul Hossain Shanto-led side with a golden opportunity of making it to the top four.

But to topple India, a lot has to go right for the Tigers and even more things have to go horribly wrong for India, which at the moment seems unlikely.

JU lost 40pc waterbodies

FROM PAGE 12

The university is situated on over 697 acres.

According to the study, Jahangirnagar University's original master plan, designed by renowned architect Mazharul Islam in 1968, was neglected during subsequent structural development phases, disguising the changes as further development.

"As a consequence, significant structural alterations have occurred in the university's landscape, land use, and land cover. Unfortunately, these changes have led to a reduction in blue-green spaces, resulting in a de-greening impact on the campus," it added.

The research found that the university's new registrar building, new arts building, and several dormitories of male and female students were constructed after removing a significant portion of vegetation cover.

The study further said much of the architecture of the buildings, constructed on the campus in the last two decades, does not harmonise with the surrounding environment by utilising maximum airflow and natural lighting.

Furthermore, many abandoned structures remained unused on the campus occupying the spaces, it mentioned.

Farhadur Reza, one of the four researchers who conducted the study, said an area with more trees absorbs more carbon, and if the vegetation cover is reduced, it affects the microclimate and ecological services.

If any area faces deforestation, temperature will rise subsequently and that has a negative impact on the biodiversity, said Farhadur, also an associate professor of urban and regional planning at JU.

Another member of the team, Mashura Shammi, said the construction of academic and administrative buildings without proper environmental and social assessments, and also in violation of the master plan is to blame for the decrease in waterbodies and vegetation area.

Mashura, also a professor of environmental sciences at JU, said the drainage system, footpath, sewage plan, air flow, and abandoned buildings should have been taken into consideration before taking up such construction projects.

The study said solid waste management practices, faecal sludge and sewage management, grey water management and energy management were ignored in the Further Development Projects of JU.

"These problems require practical solutions," it said.

Students and teachers have long been criticising the authorities for taking up development projects without proper environmental and social assessments. They demanded a master plan for the university saying that the authorities violated the existing one.

Students staged demonstrations over the felling of trees to make room for different structures to be built under different projects. The ongoing project, involving around Tk 1,445 crore, is one of them.

Under the project launched in 2018, a total of 22 new buildings and an extension building are being constructed. Construction of some of these buildings have been completed. The project was supposed to the completed by this year but the deadline will be extended.

Amartya Ray, president of a faction of JU Chhatra Union, said, "Since the beginning of the Further Development Projects, we have been urging the authorities to knock down old and abandoned buildings, except the special ones designed by Mazharul Islam.

"If the new infrastructures are built after knocking down the old ones, land will not be wasted and the environmental damage will be much less," he said.

Renowned economist Prof Anu Muhammad, also a former faculty member of JU, said, "I used to call the university a 'living laboratory'. But the present environment is not like that."

He said the biggest damage happened to JU over the last decade.

"The authorities keep saying that they are preparing a new master plan, but we have not seen one yet. They are cutting trees in the absence of a new master plan.

"This is an administration governed by contractors," said Anu Muhammad.

Nasir Uddin, director at the planning and development office of JU, said they were drawing up master plan which would have details about sewage management.

Asked about filling waterbodies, he said only an extension building of the Faculty of Mathematical and Physical Sciences is being built on low land.

Putin threatens to arm North Korea

FROM PAGE 12

"It would destabilise the Korean Peninsula, of course, and potentially ... depending on the type of weapons they provide, might violate UN Security Council resolutions that Russia itself has supported," Miller said.

Russia and North Korea's signing of a mutual defence pact this week sent ripples out across the region, with South Korea summoning Moscow's envoy yesterday, and Japan and the United States voicing serious concern.

The defence pact, which comes against the backdrop of Putin's grinding war against Ukraine, is the most significant agreement signed by Russia and North Korea in decades and is seen as something of a revival of their 1961 Cold War-era mutual defense pledge.

The deal was inked on Wednesday during Putin's trip to Pyongyang, where he received a lavish welcome from fellow autocrat Kim Jong Un, North Korea's leader.

It consolidates the Kim regime's powerful link with a world power that wields a veto on the UN Security Council and means Russia now has a defence pact with South Korea's biggest enemy.

South Korea, a US treaty ally, condemned the treaty and summoned Russia's ambassador yesterday, a rare diplomatic step that illustrates the soured tensions between Seoul and Moscow.

First Vice Minister Kim Hong-kyun relayed the South Korean government's "stern position" on Kim and Putin's defense pact, urging Moscow to "immediately halt military cooperation" with Pyongyang and abide by UN Security Council resolutions, the foreign ministry said.

Dhaka, Delhi should look for 'creative solution'

FROM PAGE 2

Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi.

Dhaka and Delhi failed to seal the Teesta deal in 2011 due to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's last-minute opposition.

People in Bangladesh's northern region currently suffer from a shortage of irrigation water in the dry season. There is no respite for them during the monsoon either as they experience flooding.

In 2020, Bangladesh asked China to support the implementation of nearly $1 billion Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project. China has shown interest in the project.

During a visit to Dhaka on May 9 this year, Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra told Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud that his country was interested in financing the Teesta project.

On June 13, Hasina told parliament that her government was considering a proposal for a detailed feasibility study for the Teesta project as per recommendations from China.

The premier is likely to visit China on July 9-12. During that tour, Dhaka and Beijing may discuss the Teesta project, said diplomatic sources.

Sreeradha, a professor of Jindal School of International Affairs at OP Jindal Global University in Haryana, yesterday said India would not want to see any "unfriendly country" implementing any project close to its border.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has a very good understanding of Indian security concerns. So, it is expected that Narendra Modi and Sheikh Hasina will go for a mutually acceptable agreement," said Sreeradha, who researches into India's neighbouring countries and South Asian security.

She expressed optimism that India will realise the importance of Bangladesh's priority project.

About the killing of Bangladeshis by Indian Border Security Force, she said identifying and addressing the root causes of cross-border smuggling and trespassing are crucial.

Though India approved line of credits of about $8 billion for Bangladesh, only about $1.7 billion has been disbursed so far because of the difficult terms and conditions, Sreeradha said.

As Bangladesh seeking fresh loans, India should offer credits under new terms and conditions, she added.

She said India's northeast region is much more secure today and is developing because of Bangladesh's support in addressing the security concerns.

According to Sreeradha, the road, rail and water connectivity between Bangladesh and India has seen a significant progress, thanks to Bangladesh's support.

"All these are advancing the regional and sub-regional cooperation."

However, the visions of India and Bangladesh to have access to ASEAN nations via Myanmar have been affected due to the conflict in Myanmar, she observed.

"In South Asia, India attaches highest priority to its relations with Bangladesh. Addressing each other's concerns can greatly help promote the regional value chain, stability and peace," she said.

She hoped the two top leaders will advance this agenda.

About reducing the Bangladesh-India trade gap, Sreeradha said Bangladesh should produce new products that are in demand in India.

Bangladesh also needs to improve its investment environment to attract more investment from India, she added.

"Though there is a Special Economic Zone in Chattogram for India, red tape, corruption and other governance issues keep Indian investors away from investing in Bangladesh," she said.

India's exports to Bangladesh are worth $12 billion a year against Bangladesh's exports of about $2 billion to India.

BLESSED BASAR

This Eid-ul-Azha, the young sensation Khairul Basar has graced our screens with 12 TV projects – some already aired, while others await release. Fresh from the festivities Basar drops by The Daily Star for a quick chat.

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

SHARMIN JOYA

How are you? Where did you spend Eid?
I am doing great! I spent Eid in Mymensingh city, where I grew up. I stayed there for four days, spending quality time with my family and friends. Though the joy was immense, duty called and I had to return to Dhaka soon after.

Around 12 of your small screen projects are slated to air this festival. What can viewers expect from them ?
These projects offer a diverse array of settings, including some shot in Australia. Those will feature Tanjim Saiyara Totini, under Rubel Hasan's direction. This time, I am sharing the screen with Tasnia Farin, Tanjin Tisha, Sabila Nur, Keya Payel, Samira Khan Mahi, and Safa Kabir, among others.

Shooting abroad for tele-fictions-how viable is it financially?
To be honest, if the team is not properly organised, it is hardly worth the effort. As we shot in Australia, the location was amazing, and our producer, Fakhrul Alam Mojumder Reya, made it possible for the entire team to complete the work in an organised manner.

We completed five projects there, all directed by Rubel Hasan, featuring Totini and myself. One of them, titled ***Blame Game***, is set to air this Eid.

Television is known as the writer's medium – so focusing on the script is more important, I believe. For these five projects mentioned above, the scripts were good and suitable for an extensive international shoot.

Tele-fictions have broadened their scope for visual arrangement in recent times. We have now seen the plots being adapted from South Indian films as well. Is this good for the industry's improvement?
I think small screen projects should not make the audience think that it could be a 'film'.

For instance, if you write a short story that gives you the essence of a novel, it will lose its unique style.

It is good that we are innovating with visual arrangements by working on art direction and set design – yet, at the end of the day, it should have the essence of being a story-based fiction.

The audience loved your performance in 'Networker Baire' and 'Mohanagar', and you were a regular face on OTT. However, your presence on OTT platforms has reduced over time. Why?
For Gias Uddin Selim's ***Kajol Rekha*** and Masud Hasan Ujjal's ***Bonolota Sen***, I had to reject many offers from both television and OTT. Since I had to work on my looks for both films, I had no option but to change it for other roles.

Thus, it took time to return to television. Amitabh Reza Chowdhury's ***Bodh*** was my last project on OTT. After that, due to previously committed silver-screen schedules, I couldn't sign new projects. Also, after almost two and a half years, I don't get calls for any projects that I would want to take on, and the audience also has some expectations from me, which I must meet. So I am waiting for the right project to come along.

What are your upcoming projects?
The post-production of ***Bonolota Sen*** has been completed, and it will be released soon. I am also working on another government-granted film titled ***Sharey Tin Haat Bhumi***, by Noyeem Imtiaz Neamul. I am in talks for another set of government-granted films.

What do you like to do in your leisure time?
I like to read poems, listen to music, and read books whenever I get time. My usual routine is to listen to at least one song by Kabir Suman every day. It brings peace to my mind.

On a lighter note, how many times have you fallen in love?
(Laughs) I have fallen in love quite a few times! I want to keep feeling this emotion forever. We all want to be independent, but love is a beautiful dependency.

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Bridgerton

HBO Max
House of the Dragon

ALL MUST CHOOSE

Hoichoi
Golam Mamum

Chorki
Baaji

Bongo
Female 4

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA

ON THE FIRST DAY of MONSOON

On the First Day of Monsoon
June 28 | 7:15pm-8:50pm
Bangladesh Mohila Samity, Bailey Road

Upukuler Jonno Gaan
June 28 | 7pm
Alliance Française de Dhaka

AN EXHIBITION OF ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY
+ 10 SEGMENTS
+ WORKSHOPS
Lens And Canvas 1.0

Lens & Canvas 1.0
August 23-24 | 6pm
Liberation War Museum

WHAT'S ON THE GRAM

TANJIN TISHA

Tanjin Tisha exudes elegance in a form-fitting white gown adorned with rhinestones, highlighting her beautiful physique. Her choice of a loose bun, contact lenses, complemented by nude lipstick, and a subtle brown smoky eye look, enhanced her overall glamorous appearance. The actress made her OTT debut with Sanjoy Somadder's ***Poison***, a web-film that revolves around an actress, Rupa Mirza, whose life becomes embroiled in a series of murders and shadows of her past.

TV TALKIES

'Eric' shadows a father's reckoning

Set in 1985, Netflix's new miniseries ***Eric***, directed by Lucy Forbes, navigates a father's psychological warfare involving an imaginary character, particularly when his son goes missing.

The story hence runs on renowned puppeteer Vincent Anderson (Benedict Cumberbatch) and his wife, Cassie (Gaby Hoffmann), dealing with their only son, Edgar (Ivan Morris Howe), going missing when their personal and professional lives come to a boiling point.

Turmoiled with the potential of being replaced on his founded famous on-screen Puppet Show, Vincent's additional emotional turbulence manifests in Eric– a blue fictional character that Edgar creates for his father's show.

The character becomes a constant reflection of Vincent's character as the notoriously distant person deals with both the case of his missing son and his professional upheaval.

The series' further introduction and inclusion of Vincent's father explains why Vincent is the way he is.

Embroiled with other simultaneous missing children's cases, Edgar's incident is a gritty compelling narrative done suitably.

WHAT'S PLAYING

ISWEGH ATTAY

Tinariwen's ***Iswegh Attay*** from their Grammy-winning album ***Tassili*** is a haunting and introspective track. The poetic yet enigmatic lyrics, with the repeated line– ***I drank a glass of tea that scorched my heart***, suggesting deep emotional anguish.

The captivating music video opens with the band members sitting in a well-lit cave, gracefully preparing a pot of tea– no tea has ever looked better. As the soothing, calming desert blues groove unfolds, the visuals are equally pleasing, perfectly complementing the hypnotic music.

TINARIWEN
TASSILI

With Kyp Malone's featured guitar and vocals, and written by Malian artiste Sanou Ag Ahmed, ***Iswegh Attay*** is a spellbinding exploration of inner turmoil. The courage to overcome adversity resonates through the evocative lyrics and stunning imagery.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Don't neglect primary education

Govt has to look into the decline of students

A recent government report has revealed a concerning statistic: the number of students in all primary-level educational institutions in the country has reduced by over 8.32 lakh in 2023 from the previous year. The implications of this decline is no doubt significant, as primary education is the foundation for bringing up a skilled, informed generation to ensure Bangladesh's prosperity. While officials have highlighted the country's declining birth rate and a new, more accurate software at the Directorate of Primary Education for this decrease, there are other pieces of the puzzle which, if not resolved, can have grave repercussions for the country's future.

The Covid pandemic dealt a major blow to education, as financial struggles brought on by it forced many to take their children out of primary school or transfer them to Qawmi madrasas. Infact, financial insecurity continues to be one of the biggest detriments to primary education. According to UNESCO, households account for 71 percent of total education spending in Bangladesh, one of the highest in the world. The average annual family cost per child in 2023 was Tk 17,294 for primary education, stated the Education Watch 2023 report. To put things in perspective, the average monthly family income in 2022 was just Tk 32,422. News of parents taking their daughters out of school and marrying them off circulated all around during the pandemic, and unfortunately the trend has continued since then.

Meanwhile, many of the government-run primary schools are in no shape to cater to the children, reeling from the absence of a proper learning environment, lack of safety, and poor infrastructure. Only those from the low-income group see these institutions as an option—and even they prefer madrasas in many cases.

In this scenario, this year's budget for education is Tk 94,710 crore—only 1.69 percent of the GDP, the lowest in the last 16 years. The drop in the number of students, revealed by the Annual Primary School Census 2023, might very well be due to a falling birth rate and improved software, but we cannot ignore the contributing factors that have been plaguing the sector for years. When more than 60 percent of Class 3 students and 70 percent of Class 5 students do not have the expected grade-level proficiency in mathematics (according to an assessment), it is clear that our primary education is faltering. The government must address these cracks to ensure that all children in the country get access to the best primary education possible.

Must commuters risk their lives every Eid?

Take effective actions to prevent road crashes

It seems we have no escape from the recurring nightmare of road crash fatalities during Eid holidays. This Eid-ul-Azha, too, at least 92 lives were lost in road crashes across the country between June 13 and June 17, according to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

Reportedly, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader quoted the BRTA data and warned about the urgent need for policies to regulate motorcycles and easy bikes, which accounted for most of the recent crashes. While we are glad that the minister has expressed concern over this issue, the history of three-wheeler bans or the government's feeble attempt to prevent unfit and unlicensed vehicles from operating on the road and then backtracking on their decisions don't give us much hope that any such policy will be formulated or implemented soon.

For more than a decade, road crashes during Eid rush have been on the rise. It is incomprehensible why no effective steps have been taken to prevent these tragic incidents in the last 10 years, especially when the same government has been in power during this time. The current regime has undoubtedly excelled at developing Bangladesh's roads and communication infrastructure, but it has failed to make those very channels safe for people to use. The reasons behind road crashes are not unknown, neither are the solutions. Even simple measures such as increasing traffic monitoring on the roads after Eid could prevent many deaths.

As the road crash fatality count goes up with each passing hour, the government should stop providing lip service to the issue and take some real actions, such as creating dedicated lanes for different types of vehicles, not allowing unfit and unlicensed vehicles on the road, increasing traffic monitoring, and giving exemplary punishment to reckless drivers. It must start treating the epidemic of road crashes with the seriousness it deserves.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

'Hand of God' goal by Diego Maradona

On this day in 1986, Argentine football legend Diego Maradona scored his memorable "Hand of God" goal (the ball struck his hand, but the referee mistakenly thought it had hit his head) to help his team defeat England in a World Cup quarterfinal game. Argentina went on to win the tournament.

Sylhet's flood is the price we're paying for ignoring nature

Pavel Partha,
an ecology and biodiversity conservation researcher, is director at Bangladesh Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (BARCIK). He can be reached at animistbangla@gmail.com.

PAVEL PARTHA

The flood that we are seeing in the Sylhet region is happening due to multiple reasons. As the monsoon season sweeps across Bangladesh, rainfall will naturally increase. Sylhet is the wettest region in the country. Heavy rainfall is a common occurrence there since it is located just below Cherrapunji, which is often called the wettest place on Earth. However, the severity and frequency of flooding in Sylhet and the surrounding areas in the past two years indicate that this is not merely a natural event, but a crisis exacerbated by human actions.

Firstly, the intense rainfall and subsequent floods are indeed influenced by climate change, which is causing abnormal weather patterns and extreme rain in short durations. Every region has a water-carrying capacity—as in how much water it can absorb and channel without flooding. When the rainfall exceeds this capacity, waterlogging and flooding occur, as we have regularly seen in Sylhet.

Sylhet has always been known for its hilly terrain. The region experiences significant rainfall on the high grounds, which then flows down to the lowlands and river basins, our haors. Historically, this water movement was natural, but unplanned and anthropocentric development has disrupted this balance. The region's unique topography and natural habitat have been ignored in the development process, which has led to severe consequences. The huge number of water bodies spread out like spiderwebs have largely been filled up, mostly illegally.

The floods in Sylhet highlight the urgent need for a balance between development and environmental conservation. PHOTO: **SHEIKH NASIR**

In the high-lying region, illegal hill-cutting has been rampant, with hills often levelled completely so people can build infrastructure. This destroys the natural landscape and reduces the land's ability to manage rainwater, leading to worse flooding. Cutting hills in any way is illegal. However, cutting hills at angles up to 30 degrees is still manageable. Cutting over 45 degrees causes significant damage. But we are cutting hills at 180 degrees—completely levelling them and destroying the area's geographic identity.

We are often inconsiderate of the fact that an area does not belong solely to humans. Sylhet's rich ecosystem includes rivers that traverse national boundaries and sustain both human and other lives. Yet, indiscriminate development has ignored environmental considerations, filling up rivers and ponds, and now water has nowhere left to go. This, coupled with poor drainage systems choked by plastic pollution, exacerbates the flooding problem. We cannot confuse flooding with waterlogging. Flooding is a natural phenomenon. Waterlogging here is largely a result of human error and negligence. If we could control plastic pollution, the drainage system would be more efficient and cause less waterlogging.

For my work, I have travelled to various areas around Sylhet. Historically, Sylhet's elderly and Indigenous people recall that the floods we see today are unheard of. This is because the drastic changes in the landscape, driven by unregulated development, have fundamentally altered the region's ability to handle heavy rainfall. Destruction of the natural ecosystem—flattened hills, filled water bodies—has left the area more vulnerable to heavy floods than ever before.

Despite the dire situation, there have been efforts to address the flooding primarily through some big-budget projects. However, such large-scale projects have mostly failed, primarily due to a lack of inclusive planning. Effective development must involve all stakeholders—local communities, academic institutions, and environmental organisations. This participatory approach ensures that the unique needs and concerns of the region are considered and addressed.

In international forums like COP, Bangladesh has advocated for climate justice and the establishment of loss and damage funds for vulnerable nations. However, even if these funds are made available, we lack comprehensive plans to mitigate the flooding and waterlogging crises in Sylhet. There is an urgent need for better climate diplomacy and negotiation to secure adequate funding and formulate effective, inclusive strategies.

Our talks and discussions around climate change are largely about economic damages. We also must consider the non-economic losses caused by flooding. Two years ago, I visited some flooded areas around Sylhet. Many of our folk songs that make up our cultural identity are from that region. It broke my heart to learn that the local women and Bauls had lost their song books, either written by themselves or passed down to them for generations, to the floods. The destruction of cultural heritage represents a loss that is immeasurable. These songs, passed down through generations, form an integral part of our identity. When floods destroy such cultural treasures, the loss transcends monetary value.

To address these challenges, we must rethink our development mentality. Sustainable development involves preserving natural landscapes, maintaining forest covers, and protecting river ecosystems. Projects should not only aim for economic growth but also safeguard cultural and environmental heritage. Inclusion of all stakeholders in development projects fosters a sense of ownership and ensures that diverse perspectives are taken into account. When designing big projects, we should select local leaders and representatives with the help of union parishads and city corporations and make an inclusive project that gives everyone ownership. This will also save money and increase efficiency.

The floods in Sylhet highlight the urgent need for a balance between development and environmental conservation. By adopting sustainable practices and inclusive planning, we can mitigate the impact of extreme weather events and protect both our natural and cultural heritage. The time to act is now, for the sake of our environment, our communities, and our future.

As told to Monorom Polok of The Daily Star.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

The spectre of neo-fascism is haunting Europe

Slavoj Žižek,
professor of philosophy at the European Graduate School, is international director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities at the University of London, and the author, most recently, of 'Christian Atheism: How to Be a Real Materialist.'

SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

The surprise in this month's European Parliament elections was that the outcome everyone expected really did come to pass. To paraphrase a classic scene from the Marx Brothers: Europe may be talking and acting like it is moving to the radical right, but don't let that fool you; Europe really is moving to the radical right.

Why should we insist on this interpretation? Because most of the mainstream media has sought to downplay it. The message we keep hearing is, "Sure, Marine Le Pen, Giorgia Meloni, and Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) occasionally flirt with fascist motifs, but there is no reason to panic, because they still respect democratic rules and institutions once in power." Yet, this domestication of the radical right should trouble us all, because it signals a readiness by traditional conservative parties to go along with the new movement. The axiom of post-World War II European democracy, "No collaboration with fascists," has been quietly abandoned.

The message of this election is clear. The political divide in most EU countries is no longer between the moderate right and the moderate left, but between the conventional right, embodied by the big winner, the European People's Party (comprising Christian democrats, liberal-conservatives, and traditional conservatives) and the neo-fascist right represented by Le Pen, Meloni, AfD, and others.

The question now is whether the EPP will collaborate with neo-fascists. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is spinning the outcome as a triumph of the EPP against both "extremes," yet the new parliament will include no left-wing parties whose extremism is even distantly comparable to that of the far right. Such a "balanced" view from the EU's top official sends an ominous signal.

When we talk about fascism today, we should not confine ourselves to the developed West. A similar kind of politics has been ascendant in much of the Global South as well. In his study of China's development, Italian Marxist historian Domenico Losurdo (also known for his rehabilitation of Stalin) stresses the distinction between economic and political power. In pursuing his "reforms," Deng Xiaoping knew that elements of capitalism are necessary to unleash a society's productive forces. But he insisted that political power should remain firmly in the hands of the Communist Party of China (as the self-proclaimed representative of the workers and farmers).

This approach has deep historical roots. For over a century, China has embraced the "pan-Asianism" that emerged towards the end of the 19th century as a reaction against Western imperialist domination and exploitation. As historian Viren Murthy explains, this project has always been driven by a rejection not of Western capitalism, but of Western liberal individualism and imperialism. By drawing on pre-modern traditions and institutions, pan-Asianists argued, Asian societies could organise their own modernisation to achieve even greater dynamism than the West.

Pan-Asianism tended to oscillate between its socialist and fascist versions (with the line between the two not always clear), reminding us that "anti-imperialism" is not as innocent as it may appear. In the first half of the 20th century, Japanese and German fascists regularly presented themselves as defenders against American, British, and French imperialism, and one now finds far-right nationalist politicians taking similar positions vis-à-vis the European Union.

The same tendency is discernible in post-Deng China, which political scientist A James Gregor classifies as "a variant of contemporary fascism." Harnessing economic impulses for the sake of nationalistic projects is the very definition of fascism, and similar political dynamics can also be found in India, Russia, Turkey, and other countries.

It is not hard to see why this model has gained traction. While the Soviet Union suffered a chaotic disintegration, the CPC pursued economic liberalisation but still maintained tight control. Thus, leftists who are sympathetic towards China praise it for keeping capital subordinated, in contrast to the US and European systems, where capital reigns supreme.

But the new fascism is also supported by more recent trends. Beyond Le Pen, another big winner of the European Parliament elections is Fidias Panayiotou, a Cypriot YouTube personality who previously gained attention for his efforts to hug Elon Musk. While waiting outside Twitter's headquarters for his target, he encouraged his followers to "spam" Musk's mother with his request. Eventually, Musk did meet and hug Panayiotou, who went on to announce his candidacy to the European Parliament. Running on an anti-partisan platform, he won 19.4 percent of the popular vote and secured himself a seat.

Similar figures have also cropped up in France, the United Kingdom, Slovenia, and elsewhere, all justifying their candidacies with the "leftist" argument that since democratic politics has become a joke, clowns might as well run for office. This is a dangerous game. If enough people despair of emancipatory politics and accept the withdrawal into buffoonery, the political space for neo-fascism widens.

Reclaiming that space requires serious, authentic action. For all my disagreements with French President Emmanuel Macron, I think he was correct to respond to the French far right's victory by dissolving the National Assembly and calling for new legislative elections. His announcement caught almost everyone off guard, and it is certainly risky. But it is a risk worth taking. Even if Le Pen wins and decides who will be the next prime minister, Macron, as president, will retain the ability to mobilise a new majority against the government. We must take the fight to the new fascism as forcefully and as fast as possible.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781
EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net
Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222
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Advertisement: 01711623910
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Subscription:
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India's election was an eye-opener for struggling democracies

Brig Gen (retd) Dr M Sakhawat Hussain,
former election commissioner of Bangladesh, is senior fellow at the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG), North South University (NSU).

M SAKHAWAT HUSSAIN

The late Atal Bihari Bajpai, former Indian prime minister and founder of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), has seldom been mentioned in the last 10 years. Lal Krishna Advani, who led the demolition of the 300-year-old disputed Babri Mosque, has remained uninvolved, and even Jagat Prakash Nadda, the current party president, is not given a speck of the spotlight. It's only Prime Minister Narendra Damodar Das Modi who has featured prominently in posters or hoardings. Even the all-powerful Home Minister Amit Shah, regraded as the second man in the BJP hierarchy, was not seen anywhere near the PM in important events like inaugurating the new parliament building, or the spectacular opening of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, where the Babri Mosque once stood.

Over the last 10 years, it has been Modi, Modi and Modi in Indian politics and on the political canvas, even downsizing the images of Gandhi and Nehru.

Narendra Modi ruled India with an iron hand, transforming the nation, perhaps for the first time in its history, into what has been labelled as an "electoral autocracy" and "flawed democracy" by the Sweden-based V-Dem Institute. With no effective opposition in the 16th and 17th Lok Sabha, the BJP government essentially became a one-man show. Consequently, the "largest democracy in the world" slipped further to the 53rd position in the democracy index. Perhaps it was the mistake of the Indian voters who handed a landslide victory to Modi's BJP last time, without any counterforce to act as a check and balance.

However, in the recently concluded 18th Lok Sabha election, Indian voters did not make the same mistake. About 66 crore voted to demote Modi from the status of a self-proclaimed "god-sent avatar" to just a mortal human being. BJP could only secure 240 seats in the 2024 elections, falling short of the 272 seats needed to solely form the government. It had to seek support from its partners in the NDA, particularly from the Janata Dal (United)—headed by veteran politician and nine-time chief minister of Bihar, Nitish Kumar—with 12 seats, and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP)—led by yet another seasoned politician from Andhra Pradesh, Chandrababu Naidu, with 16 seats.

What it means is that Modi, as the third-time prime minister of India, will not head a BJP government as he did in the last two terms. He has to lead a coalition government with two seasoned politicians by his side. It means that he has been brought down from being the single decision-maker of state affairs to a head of a consultative body, as should have been the case in a democracy.

On the other hand, voters have also provided a formidable opposition in the form of the Indian National Congress (INC) with 100 seats (including a rebel MP who joined) and its allies under the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) with 234 seats. This marks the first time in 10 years that a robust opposition has emerged.

Now, the question arises: why did the BJP fall short of securing enough power to form a government when they were confident of achieving an absolute majority of around 400 seats with the strong slogan "*Ab ki bar char sau par*" (this time over 400)? That number would have enabled the BJP to amend the constitution. The party unequivocally expressed its intention to transform India from a secular to a religion-based country (a Hindu state). Their agenda included not only making India a Hindu land but also advocating for the slogan "one country, one election," which meant combining general elections with state elections to perpetuate power for the BJP. It was evident that Hindutva was the rallying cry throughout the two terms of BJP.

Voters line up outside a polling station in Tamil Nadu, India, on April 19, 2024.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Over the past decade, the significant minority of Indian Muslims, comprising over 20 percent of the population, largely marginalised socially, were deliberately targeted. School and college textbooks underwent revisions, with chapters pertaining to the 700-year Muslim period deleted and characterised as invasions. Names of places were altered in some regions. In numerous states, vigilante groups like "*Go Rakshak*" emerged, engaging in unchecked violence against Muslims suspected of consuming beef or participating in related activities. Modi and Amit Shah, collectively referred to as MoSh, branded the country's minority communities as "*Ghus baithi*" (infiltrators) and likened them to "children-producing factories." They even stoked fear among India's Hindu majority, suggesting that if the opposition were to come to power, properties and gold would be seized and distributed among Muslims. Such divisive rhetoric, unprecedented in India's political history, provoked outrage among liberal and secular voters. Modi was branded as the "Divider in Chief" by *Time* magazine in 2019.

It wasn't just Muslims, but also Other Backward Castes (OBCs) of India, particularly Dalits, who were significantly disregarded. It's worth noting that Uttar Pradesh, a state considered to be the stronghold of Hindus and the Hindi belt, is home to the largest population of Dalits and Muslims. Here, Chief Minister Aditya Nath Yogi aimed to secure a minimum of 72 seats but failed to do so. Instead, the BJP lost a significant number of seats, mainly to the OBC-based Samajwadi Party led by Akhilesh Yadav. Moreover, BJP lost seats in Ayodhya, where Modi had inaugurated Ram Mandir a few months prior. Additionally, the party lost five other Lok Sabha constituencies in holy places like Kashi and Varanasi.Losses in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and West Bengal brought down the BJP, making it dependent on other partners of the NDA.

In Ayodhya, BJP ignored the fact that they built the temple with all the religious fervour at the cost of poor Dalits of the area, whose houses and businesses were destroyed without payment of adequate compensation.

Perhaps the party was certain that Indian voters would be mesmerised by the BJP's Hindu card, ignoring the fact that around 40 percent Indians still live below the poverty line. They are grappling with high prices of essential commodities, soaring inflation rates, increasing youth unemployment, and endemic corruption. Meanwhile, the government resorted to silencing opposition voices through coercive measures wielded by the central government. Opposition leaders and activists were harassed and jailed, their funds frozen. The inefficacy of democratic institutions exacerbated the BJP's downfall in 2024. Another factor overlooked by the BJP government was the burgeoning influence of alternative and powerful social media platforms, which countered the decline in press freedom and the dominance of crony media. The contributions of civil society organisations were also remarkable. Despite facing intimidation and fear, these organisations persevered, utilising technology alongside social media to drive home their agendas.

Nevertheless, India's democratic institutions, electoral integrity, and practice of liberal democracy have long served as influential models for postcolonial Afro-Asian countries, especially those in South Asia. However, this influence was disrupted by the regression of democracy in India. The South Asian powerhouse's democratic backsliding did not bode well for the neighbouring countries.

Although Modi has become the prime minister of India for the third consecutive term and may compare himself to Nehru, he now relies on two more secular regional leaders, political tacticians who could potentially outmanoeuvre the Modi-Shah duo. The current NDA government marks the end of the BJP government, at least for the time being. It will face a robust opposition scrutinising and challenging every misstep both inside and outside the parliament. This has brought relief to democratic and liberal Indians of diverse religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds and given them hope that the 18th Lok Sabha may herald the return of a tolerant, secular India reminiscent of the Gandhian-Nehruvian era.

A monologue on the beasts among us

BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza
is professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

The butcher cuts the meat into pieces. It's hard to believe that the hide was concealing so much. Each organ of the animal has its own story, but now it's all history. Just the day before Eid, we bought the animal from a makeshift cattle market. There was visible dissatisfaction everywhere. The traders complained they were not receiving the prices displayed by the online markets, while the buyers believed the traders had entered the market with unrealistic expectations curated by some corporate manipulators. The farmers who fattened their animals realised that most of their customers' wallets were far from fat.

As I stand before the heap of fresh meat, my thoughts turn to the slain politician who was hacked to death, and his body was disposed of like trash. When MP Anar went missing, I cried with his family. His daughter's appeal to find her missing father moved me. I thought he was a simple man who crossed the border in a rickshaw van. Then the truth started coming out of the hide, piece by piece.

The MP turned out to be someone with a notorious past: underground politics, gold smuggling, and racketeering. It was hard to imagine that the face could hide so many secrets. Information came to light byte by byte. The sympathy for the public figure waned, yet his brutal end served as a reminder that, in the end, we live in a jungle where beasts will devour beasts. Once the skins of civilisation peel off, the inner beasts are revealed. Once exposed, the animal becomes a target. The hunter is hunted. You can only pray that you don't become prey.

The pile of meat starts getting bigger and bigger under the blades of our hired butcher. I am manning the mission so that beefs don't get mixed up, pieces don't get missing during the process, and the size of meats remains appropriate for distribution. The animal we bought the day before probably had no clue about our purpose. Even if it did, it was helpless. It followed us, meeting its fate rather naively. Again, I think of the slain parliamentarian. I could have thought of Jamal Khashoggi, but Anar is nearer. They used the same technique, luring Anar into the trap only to hack him into unidentifiable and disposable pieces. Is it true that they marinated Anar's meat with spices to mask the corpse smell? I suddenly lose my appetite, and the meat looks gross despite its holy nuances.

The political animals are full of tricks. They know how to bring other animals into their traps. At times, lust taints the baits, painting them with desire. We hear that the predators lured Anar into a honey trap. The bait unleashed the inner beast within the man who met his demise. Other beasts were waiting to match him.

The baits come in different shapes and sizes. Animal traders know which bait to hook their prey with. Some baits are glorified by focusing on size. The bigger the animal, the larger the display. The spectators wait for the animals' dramatic fall, with resounding thumps that will echo through heaven's doors to announce the sacrifice. Private prayers become public. Instead of sacrificing their inner beasts, some animals prefer displaying their bestial energy when sobriety is required. Some fall for the honeyed words of the traders who have corporatised the trade.

They reimagine Darwinian selectionism—the principle of survival of the fittest. Being fit, on the other hand, entails being intelligent enough to be adaptive. The strongest of animals have disappeared, while we humans have survived, not because we were the strongest, but because we were quick learners. The small can only eat the big if you know how to process it. The animals who are having a field day may very well be devoured by us, the humans. The day may come when our skins will peel off, and we will match the bestiality of other animals.

After all, we are all animals, whether political or biological. Some animals are bigger than others. Some are smarter and more adaptive. Some eat while others are eaten. Someone who drags an animal with a rope may soon find themselves roped in. The one who sharpens the blade can soon be under its edge.

The individuals who fatten their beasts manipulate the egos of their intended victims. They are aware that certain animals are susceptible to being deceived by appearances. Then there are corporate masters who understand the power of images. They import rare breeds to stand out from the crowd. To maximise their profits, they hide import documents. They claim their items are exotic, albeit esoteric. To make claims for their goods, they invent family lineages. Little do they realise that once the meats are processed, it's all the same. The hide will remain on the pavement without any offer. Another syndicate. They'll make you wait so that you can give it away for free.

In the market of sacrifice, it is difficult to distinguish between devotion and devotee. Who sacrifices whom? For whom do the sacrifices take place? When did God require projected pride manifested by the size of the beasts, as opposed to humility and submission? Who buys these animals? Does God sanction the purchase of a holy sacrifice with unholy money? Who uploaded the images with the intention of manipulating the public's perception? The unreal cost of an animal piques the public's interest. The boasting beasts come under scrutiny. The hidden animals get exposed. The father disowns his son—or should I say sacrifice? The analogy becomes a false echo of the original sacrifice. The fallen animal proves to be less intelligent and less adaptive. Darwin wins. Does their former master's sacrifice of the mighty ones reflect God's will? Or is it the will of the political master? Was Anar sacrificed, too? The list of fallen heroes and runaway animals is growing.

The heap starts getting bigger and bigger. The creature has long come out of its hide. It will be consumed. Its energy will be dispersed. The yields will be bagged. The yields will be eaten. The meat will undergo a transformation into various forms of energy. It will reach the bloodstream. It will travel to various cells at different ends. The beast will be reborn.

Everything must come to an end. But who will have the last piece? Who will have the last laugh? Are the fallen false gods and the reign of animals a test of God's will? Pray we don't become prey.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

1	2	3	4	5	■	6	7	8	9	10
11					■	12				
13					■	14				
15			■	16	17		■	18		
19			■	20			■	21		
22			23			■	24			
■	■	25				26			■	■
27	28			■	29				30	31
32			■	33			■	34		
35			■	36			■	37		
38			39		■	40	41			
42					■	43				
44					■	45				

1-27

ACROSS
1 Wise ones
6 Kind of doors or oven
11 Juan Perón's wife
12 Cornhusker city
13 Fleet-based
14 Fishing spots
15 Yale rooter
16 Even score
18 Auditor's org.
19 Swindle
20 They hold power
21 Goose egg
22 "Life of Pi" director
24 Screenwriter James
25 Deluge
27 Santa sound
29 Prefer to
32 Put away
33 Urgent call
34 Seth's mother
35 Hold up
36 Due follower
37 Bridge action
38 Unfettered
40 TV's Sawyer
42 Wed in haste
43 City on the Mohawk River
44 Silver or gold
45 Dev of "Slumdog Millionaire"

DOWN
1 New York tribe
2 Arthurian island
3 Firing
4 Greek vowel
5 Laced with more four-letter words
6 Parcels out
7 Thurman of film
8 Falling for something
9 Sweetheart, in Paris
10 Nuisance
17 Wrong
23 John, to Ringo
24 Leaf carrier
26 Abated
27 Apollo Theater setting
28 "Becket" actor
30 Show clearly
31 Bridge do-over
33 Girder material
39 Health retreat
41 "Give — rest!"

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

E	L	B	O	W	■	S	Q	U	A	D
L	I	E	G	E	■	L	U	S	T	Y
O	P	E	R	A	■	A	I	S	L	E
■	■	R	E	V	A	M	P	■	■	■
E	S	S	■	I	T	S	■	B	R	O
M	U	T	A	N	T	■	R	E	I	N
B	E	E	R	G	A	R	D	E	N	S
E	D	I	T	■	C	O	A	R	S	E
D	E	N	■	R	H	O	■	B	E	T
■	■	■	S	E	E	T	H	E	■	■
J	A	P	A	N	■	F	A	L	S	E
E	X	A	L	T	■	O	L	L	I	E
T	E	N	T	S	■	R	O	Y	A	L

Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to dsopinion@gmail.com

Star
SPORT
DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 22, 2024, ASHAR 8, 1431 BS

I don't think anyone talks much about Bumrah's bowling. He has an idea of what to do and what not to do.

India all-rounder
AXAR PATEL

Reserved approach misfires against Aussies

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh lacked vitality in the Powerplay against Australia yesterday when the chance came to bat first at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, one of the best batting tracks on offer in the ongoing edition.

The top-order's rudderless performances throughout the group-stage was enough evidence for the team management to work out a different approach but they opted for one that did not work.

In what appeared to be at least a 160-170 wicket, Bangladesh looked past putting early pressure on Australia's bowling attack.

The first six overs produced just 39 runs for the loss of one wicket, with opener Liton Das blocking to keep his end locked. During his 25-ball stay, it appeared he was finding rhythm but then the inability to find scoring options, managing just 16 runs, saw him eventually throw his wicket against Adam Zampa.

Bangladesh had in fact wanted to keep wickets in hand for the last six overs of the innings but they couldn't manage to get the momentum they wanted as wickets fell frequently.

Towhid Hridoy hit an impactful 28-ball 40 but there was no support from the other end from any other recognised batter.

When asked about the sluggish and negative approach in the Powerplay, skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto revealed that it was what the team had wanted.

"We had a plan to play carefully by being watchful at the beginning because we were not getting good starts in the previous matches," Shanto told reporters in the post-match press conference.

"So, it was our plan to finish the first six overs by keeping wickets in hand which I think we were able to do. It could have been a little better but we were happy. I think, if I could have played a little more, till the 16-17th over, then we could have scored close to 160-170.

"I would also say that the wicket was a little slow in the beginning. It was not like the ball was not coming to the bat, but as I said it was important to have a set batter."

Bangladesh's unconventional ploy was to use Rishad Hossain's pinch-hitting ability to take out Zampa but he perished to Glenn Maxwell after a four-ball stay. Thus, two quick wickets between the ninth and 10th overs saw the rate of run-scoring take a dip.

The middle-order too did not perform as expected with the wicket offering grip which led to the dismissals of Shakib Al Hasan and Mahmudullah Riyad.

Bangladesh failed to go full throttle at the death overs with, Hridoy the only spark during that phase.

Shanto finally managed to get a few runs but fell in the 13th over after a 36-ball 41 and Bangladesh lost all their momentum. The skipper himself was at a loss to explain why batters did not click.

"It is difficult to say why we were not able to play. I think everyone has the capability, people have played well in different places in the past. But I do not have an answer. Everyone has the freedom to play their natural game but somehow it is not happening," Shanto said.

Australia did exactly what the Tigers couldn't. They piled on the runs in the Powerplay at a brisk rate, showing where improvement is needed for the Tigers to challenge superior oppositions.

Afghans FAIL Bumrah TEST

REUTERS, *Barbados*

Afghanistan coach Jonathan Trott was disappointed with the shot selection of his batters in their defeat by India in Thursday's T20 World Cup Super Eight match and said they failed to execute their plans for facing Jasprit Bumrah.

Bumrah was almost unplayable once again, India's pace spearhead claiming three Afghan wickets and conceding only seven runs in four impeccable overs at Kensington Oval.

Bumrah deceived Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Afghanistan's leading scorer in the tournament, with clever change of pace and got the better of the other opener, Hazratullah Zazai, with an off-cutter that resulted in a leading edge at point.

"Obviously disappointed with a few of the shots or the decision-making," Trott said after their 47-run loss in the Group 1 contest.

"Obviously, Bumrah is going to be a key bowler for any side. For India, he's crucial and we needed to play him better. His figures suggest we didn't play him very well.

"We'd obviously spoken about it and how we were going to play him. So, we weren't able to execute that and, yeah, that's very disappointing."

BAN V IND
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

Bangladesh will be searching for their first win over India in T20 World Cup when they meet today in a Super Eight clash in Antigua. The Tigers lost all four of their encounters with India in the mega event.

The Tigers, however, suffered two close defeats against India in the T20 mega event -- the first being the agonising one-run defeat in Bengaluru in 2016 and the other one was when the two sides last met in the 2022 edition, with Bangladesh falling short by five runs (DLS) despite a quickfire Liton Das fifty.

Liton's 27-ball 60 in that 2022 T20 World Cup game in Adelaide is the highest and the only fifty by any Bangladesh batter against India in the showpiece event.

India also hold a clear advantage in overall T20I head-to-head records against Bangladesh, winning 12 of the 13 matches played between the two sides. The only win for Bangladesh came in 2019 in Delhi during a bilateral series.

T20
ICC
MEN'S T20
WORLD CUP
WEST INDIES & USA 2024

Tigers lose impetus with 'bonus' mentality

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

A significant mismatch on paper was the theme for Bangladesh ahead of their T20 World Cup Super 8 fixture against Australia in St. Lucia and the Tigers could do very little to overturn the notion with their on-field display yesterday.

A lacklustre attitude, particularly with the bat, saw Bangladesh succumb to a 28-run defeat in DLS method against the 2021-winners but more than the result itself, it was the manner in which the Tigers approached the game that left the fans raising a toast to disappointment.

It won't be a stretch to presume that even the most ardent of fans would humbly expect to see Bangladesh produce fighting displays and moments of courage and go toe-to-toe against the top sides in Super 8s more than they would perhaps anticipate a positive result. But against the mighty Aussies, there was hardly any attitude shown that would suggest that the Tigers came to the ground looking for a fight.

Bangladesh gave their opposition all and maybe more respect than they were looking to get and it seemed like this particular group of Tigers was rather intimidated by the Kangaroos, so much so it induced a mental barrier because of which they forgot to prowl let alone go for the kill.

Fear loomed large and the idea of a lost battle encapsulated the Tigers' camp, especially on the batting front. On a good wicket, the Tigers laboured hard but only managed a paltry 140-8 and in reply, Australia raced off to 100-2 in 11.2 overs before rain prompted umpires to call for a result via the DLS method. Batting first, no batter other than Towhid Hridoy, who scored a 28-ball 40, looked to make a game out of the difficult situation Liton Das's 25-ball 16 had put the Tigers in and at no point could one say that the Aussies were forced to break a sweat or resort to any defensive measure.

> **Bangladesh's performance was a prime example of what head coach Chandika Hathurusingha had said about the Super 8s being a bonus for the Tigers, underlining that the objective of qualifying for the second round had already been achieved.**

The proactive body language and the attitude of hunting down oppositions for the desired victory -- features that were evident in the lead-up to the Super 8s -- were lacking. The Tigers seemed to have used up all their aggression in making their way to the Super 8s and suffered from stage fright when they were due to take the big stage.

Bangladesh's performance was a prime example of what head coach Chandika Hathurusingha had said about the Super 8s being a bonus for the Tigers, underlining that the objective of qualifying for the second round had already been achieved.

Ironically, none of what Hathurusingha said had found a reflection in Bangladesh's performances. Most of his troops couldn't play with an ounce of freedom nor could they execute their roles.

Even the thunderous bowling that helped the Tigers win three matches in the group-stage looked blunt. Starman Shakib Al Hasan continued to avoid bowling to left-handers as he did not bowl an over in the match. Meanwhile, vice-captain and lead pacer Taskin Ahmed's perennial habit of getting cold feet in ICC events has returned as his early tournament sizzle has all but worn off in the past two games. With in-form pacer Shoriful Islam, who is yet to feature in the tournament, raring to go, will the team management take a bold decision in this regard?

Starc goes top

Australia pacer Mitchell Starc has become the most prolific wicket-taker in World Cup history, claiming his 95th wicket in World Cups -- ODI and T20 -- against Bangladesh in Antigua on Friday.

MOST WICKETS IN WORLD CUPS

PLAYER	ODI WC	T20 WC	TOTAL
Mitchell Starc (Aus)	65	30	95
Lasith Malinga (SL)	56	38	94
Shakib Al Hasan (Ban)	43	49	92
Trent Boult (NZ)	53	34	87
Muttiah Muralitharan (SL)	68	11	79

Spin key in crucial Australia-Afghanistan contest

STAR SPORTS DESK

The Australia-Afghanistan T20 World Cup Super Eight clash at the Arnos Vale Ground in Kingstown today is potentially a must-win contest for Rashid Khan and Co as a defeat will see the Afghans hoping for other outcomes going their way in order to qualify for the semis.

Meanwhile, Australia can ill-afford to slip up as they would be looking to further boost their chances of progressing from Group 1 following a 28-run win (DLS) in their first Super Eight fixture against Bangladesh in Antigua on Friday.

Another reason why the Aussies will be desperate to avoid an upset against Afghanistan is that Mitchell Marsh and Co will then be left with the prospect of confirming their semifinal spot through a win in a high-voltage final Super Eight game against India in St.Lucia on June 24.

Australia might have to tinker with their eleven for the game, considering they will be going against a spin-heavy Afghanistan on the spin-friendly wicket of Kingstown in St Vincent. In the three matches played at this venue so far in this World Cup, spinners have ruled the roost with 27 wickets against pacers' 17.

Australia are wary of the fact as pacer Pat Cummins mentioned that even taking the first hattrick of the ongoing edition -- in their last game against Bangladesh -- may not save him from the axe when Australia line-up against Afghanistan.

In order to bolster their spin prowess, any one of Cummins, Josh Hazlewood or Mitchell Starc -- all of whom had started against Bangladesh -- might have to sit out the game in favour of another spinner.

"Yes, potentially. We've been pretty open with that, that anyone in the squad's ready to play and the bowling line-up might change at different times," said Cummins who has played in three of his team's five games so far.

"It's got to be adaptable. We feel like we've got all bases covered. So yeah, we'll rock up there. And I mean, the best thing of all this is I'm not captain or selector or anything, so I just turn up and have no worries."

The Aussies have not been afraid of chopping and changing according to the demands of the conditions in this World Cup. They played just one frontline fast bowler in the first-round win over Scotland with Adam Zampa, Glenn Maxwell and Ashton Agar providing spin options.

In the victory over England, Cummins, Starc, and Hazlewood all played just as they did against Bangladesh.

Starc sat out the match against Namibia with Cummins and Hazlewood getting the nod.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan will definitely be confident with the likes of Rashid, Noor Ahmad, and Mohammad Nabi providing them one of the most envious spin arsenal, but it is their batters who will need to crank it up a notch if they are to stun the 2021 T20 World Champions.

Afghanistan were bundled out for 114 and 134 in their big-margin losses to co-hosts West Indies and India in their previous two matches, respectively. Avoiding such batting mishaps will be key if Afghanistan are to put up a fight against the mighty Aussies.

PHOTO: AFP

Had no idea about hat-trick feat: Cummins

AGENCIES

Pat Cummins created history in Antigua on Thursday when he became just the second Australian player and seventh overall to claim a hattrick in an ICC Men's T20 World Cup match on Friday.

Cummins picked up two wickets from the final two deliveries of his third over against Bangladesh and then completed the feat with the opening ball of his last over when he had Towhid Hridoy caught at short fine leg, helping Australia to a 28-run win (DLS) in a Super Eight fixture in Antigua.

It meant Cummins joined compatriot Brett Lee as Australian bowlers to have taken a hat-trick at a Men's T20 World Cup, after the legendary right-armer achieved the feat against Bangladesh in 2007.

After the match, Player of the Match Cummins said, "I had no idea (regarding the hattrick), then saw when it came up on the screen.

What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV	T SPORTS	
T20 World Cup	Euro	Copa America
USA vs West Indies	Turkey vs Portugal	Peru vs Chile
Live from 6:30 am	Live from 10:00 pm	Live from 6:00 am
India vs Bangladesh	Belgium vs Romania	Ecuador vs Venezuela
Live from 8:30 pm	Live from 1:00 am (Sunday)	Live from 4:00 am (Sunday)

Spain and their king buzz with confidence

REUTERS, *Gelsenkirchen*

Spain fans - including King Felipe - purred with a growing belief that their team can go all the way and be crowned Euro 2024 winners after an utterly dominant victory over defending champions Italy.

"Two weeks ago, I thought it was impossible for Spain to win this European Championship. Now I even think it is probable," Inako Díaz-Guerra, sports editor for El Mundo newspaper, said.

Having defeated Croatia 3-0 in their opening match, La Roja beat the Azzurri in their second group game by a narrow 1-0 margin on Thursday with the only goal coming from Italy defender Riccardo Calafiori who put the ball into his own net.

But the scoreline did not do justice to Spain's complete control of the game from start to finish with young wingers Nico Williams and Lamine Yamal cutting through Italy's defence time and again and Italy chasing shadows in every area of the pitch.

Coach Luis de la Fuente's side would have racked up a string of goals were it not for Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma and the width of the crossbar which denied Williams what would have been a stunning goal to double Spain's lead.

"Despite the narrow result and the own goal, the dominance was constant, and not that boring kind of dominance of holding the ball during the infamous tiki-taka period, but one of flow and real danger," Diaz-Guerra wrote.

Spain's King Felipe was in Gelsenkirchen's Arena AufSchalke for the game.

After the final whistle, the Spanish King told the players that their performance had been spectacular.

"If you keep playing like that, there will be celebrations," he said to applause and cheers in the changing room.

Spain's win guaranteed them the top finishing spot in Group B regardless of the outcome of their last match in the opening phase against Albania on Monday.

They will play a third-placed side from another group in the last 16.

Fans are already expecting to meet hosts Germany in the quarter-finals.

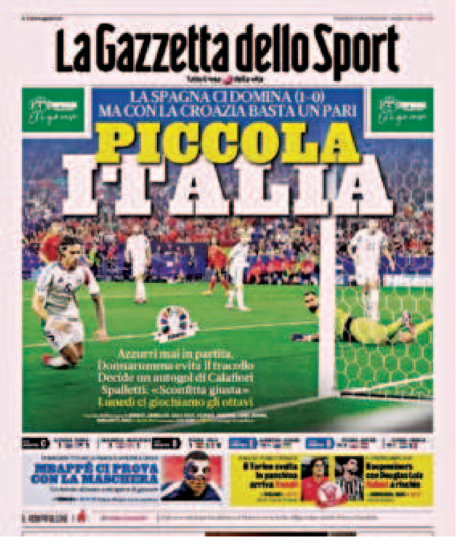
Spanish newspapers said coach de la Fuente was likely to give many of his first-choice players a rest for the Albania game as they plotted their campaign further ahead in the tournament.

"Spain is pure art," exclaimed a headline in As, a sports daily.

Spain's Alvaro Morata, Lamine Yamal and Dani Carvajal celebrate their winning goal during their 1-0 victory against Italy in a Euro 2024 Group B fixture at Arena AufSchalke in Gelsenkirchen on Thursday.
PHOTO: STAR

'Little Italy lucky to avoid TOTAL COLLAPSE'

The Italian press were in full agreement with manager Luciano Spalletti's damning assessment of his country's 1-0 loss to Spain on Thursday in Euro 2024, a scoreline which in no way reflected Spain's utter domination of the game.



La Gazzetta dello Sport

LA SPAGNA CI DOMINA (1-0)
MA CON LA CROAZIA BASTA UN PARI

PICCOLA ITALIA

Azzurri mai in partita.
Donnarumma evita il tracollo
Decide un autogol di Calafiori
Spalletti: «Sconfitta giusta»
Lunedì ci giochiamo gli ottavi

MBAPPÈ CI PROVA CON LA MASCHERA

REUTERS, *Leipzig*

Riccardo Calafiori's own goal was the only difference between the sides on the scoresheet, but the gulf in class was apparent to all, as a young, exciting, Spanish side threatened to run riot against what Spalletti described as a tired Italy.

"Little Italy" was the headline in La Gazzetta dello Sport which greeted Italians on Friday morning, a clear indication of just how the Spanish had overrun Spalletti's jaded looking team.

The front page also told how "the Azzurri were never in the game", that keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma prevented a total collapse as Spain dominated Italy, but with a note of hope; "a draw with Croatia will be enough".

Former Italy and AC Milan manager Arrigo Sacchi, writing for La Gazzetta dello Sport, said that the difference between the two sides is enormous, but he feels that the manager is not at fault.

"(Spanish manager Luis) De la Fuente's national team plays dominant football, has technical and tactical knowledge, knows how to move and above all, does it with the right timings," Sacchi wrote.

"Italy, unfortunately, is not yet a team: it takes time, it takes patience. We should learn a lot from this defeat, and I hope that we will try to learn from the mistakes we have made and not be caught up in the usual presumption.

"Let's make one thing clear right away: Spalletti is not to blame. He is a coach who has been working for less than a year, he has inherited a complicated situation and is trying to give a style to a country that has never had one."

Tuttosport went with the headline: "And it still worked out well" - a clear reference to how Spain peppered Italy with 20 shots compared to Italy's four, but the Italians somehow escaped with a narrow defeat.

Corriere dello Sport went with the plain and simple "Reset", saying Italy need to forget the Spanish defeat, again referencing how Italy need just a draw to reach the last 16.

Outside of the sports media, the daily newspapers also featured Italy's downfall on the front pages. "Azzurri dominated, Spain are superior" read La Repubblica, with La Stampa going with "Spanish punishment".

La Stampa also referenced Italy's 4-0 humbling by Spain in the Euro 2012 final, "Only Donnarumma prevents the ghosts of 2012", with the keeper the only player to come away with any praise after the performance in Gelsenkirchen.

Scaloni angry, Marsch upset

AGENCIES

Argentina head coach Lionel Scaloni hit out at the temporary grass surface installed for Thursday's Copa America opener against Canada, which his side won 2-0, saying it was unsuited for a major tournament game.

The field at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium is made of artificial turf but organisers installed grass sod on top for this tournament after June 15.

"Thank goodness we won, because otherwise it would have been a cheap excuse to sit here and say this but we've known we were going to play here for seven months and they changed the surface two days ago," said Scaloni.

"It's not good for the spectacle. I'm sorry, it's not an excuse, but it's not a pitch. The stadium is beautiful and with the synthetic turf it should be spectacular, but with the (grass) turf today. Honestly, it's not suitable for this kind of players."

The grass was installed after Atlanta United's last home game on June 15. Meanwhile, Canada coach Jesse Marsch said Argentina should be fined for emerging five minutes late from the dressing room for the second half.

"When they were waiting, I knew that they were looking at video and they were analysing how they wanted to play against us. Now, I wish again the referees would manage that," Marsch said.

"If we were five minutes late, we'd get a fine. There would be a big problem. Let's see what happens with Argentina, I think they have to be fined. How late were they? 20 minutes? 30?

"It was a long time. But they had that time to prepare how they wanted to play against us in the second half, which if we would have known ahead of time that we could have an extra 10 minutes then we could have prepared some things more."

SHORT CORNER

Denmark's men footballers refuse salary rise to secure equal pay for women

Denmark's male footballers have refused a salary increase for playing for the national side to gain their female counterparts equal basic pay, the players' union said on Friday. "The men's team chose not to ask for a salary increase ... to improve the conditions of the women's team," union spokesperson Magnus Hviid told AFP.

Messi becomes most capped player in Copa America history

Argentina star Lionel Messi became the most-capped player in Copa America history on Thursday as he reached 35 appearances in the opening match of the tournament against Canada, which the defending champions won by 2-0 in Atlanta.

Italy legend Roberto Baggio injured in burglary

Italy's 1993 Ballon d'Or winner Roberto Baggio had stitches inserted in a head wound after being struck on the head during a burglary as he watched Euro 2024 at home with his family, Italian media reported on Friday. Five armed individuals broke into his home near Vicenza in northeastern Italy.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website*

After a frustrating outing where Cristiano Ronaldo failed to contribute in a 2-1 win against Czechia, the Portugal captain would look to turn things around against tonight Turkey, who started their campaign with a 3-1 win against Georgia. The Turks, leading Group F on goal difference, will look for inspiration from their midfield talisman Hakan Calhanoglu (Inset).
PHOTO: AFP/INSTAGRAM

Another youth football league to begin without a purpose

SPORTS REPORTER

The BFF Under-18 Football League is set to get underway today in three separate venues with youth squads of nine Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) outfits, who are taking part seemingly just to fulfil a condition and avoid the federation's fine.

The purpose behind the youth team is that all top flight clubs would train and maintain youth teams round the year to strengthen the pipeline and then participate in the junior league with their respective youth teams. However, other than Bashundhara Kings, no other team has an active youth team.

Just like the previous four editions of the competition – the first three being held in a tournament format – all clubs except Bashundhara Kings held trials at the last minute to form a squad for the tournament.

The scheduling of the tournament also reflects the neglect it is receiving from the game's local governing body, as the 36-match-long tournament will be completed in less than a month, forcing the players to risk injuries by playing matches with little rest period in between.

The club officials and coaches said that financial constraint, accommodation problem and an overall lack of a systemic process were the main reasons why they did not have permanent youth squads.

"There is no system in place to develop the professional league and the youth league. The federation is holding the youth league and we are also participating in it, otherwise the federation will fine the club Tk 20 lakh," said Mohammedan SC manager Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib.

Nakib also informed that they formed their squad in less than two weeks by selecting some players from trials, who will join 10-12 players who played for Mohammedan in the 2021-22 season, the last edition of the youth competition.

"I think the clubs can train the junior players round the year if they really want to do it, though there is a crisis of accommodation and financing," Abahani assistant coach Pranotosh Kumar said.

"The young players are leaving the clubs after one-and-half month's training and the competition. The players hardly benefit with this short period of training," he added.

The former national player also thinks that the hectic schedule may hamper the purpose of the league as the players won't get enough time to recover.

Fortis FC manager Rashedul Islam sees the league format a positive change that will give the players an opportunity to play eight matches instead of three to four matches they would otherwise get in the tournament format.

"Some 10-12 junior players have been with our senior team but all of them except one were ruled out in the medical test. So, we conducted a five-day trial with some 400 players to pick 30 players for the league," Rashedul said.

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Tigers face India with backs to the wall

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Less than 48 hours after losing to Australia, Bangladesh will be up against another tournament favourites in India today with their chances of progressing to the semifinals of the ICC T20 World Cup hanging in the balance.

In their Group 1 Super Eight match in Antigua yesterday, the Tigers put up 140-8 on the board but could hardly test the Aussies, who raced to 100-2 in 11.2 overs in a rain-interrupted chase and were eventually declared winners by 28 runs in DLS method.

The ease with which Australia batted against the Bangladesh attack, which has been the team's strongest department throughout

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

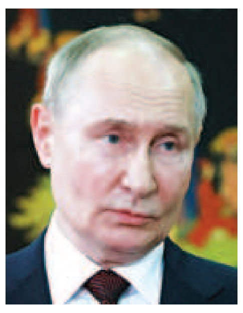
South Africa players celebrates their thrilling seven-run victory against England in their Twenty20 World Cup Super Eight match at Daren Sammy National Cricket Stadium in Gros Islet, Saint Lucia yesterday. After posting 163 for six, the Proteas restricted England to 156 for six in 20 overs.

PHOTO: AFP

Putin threatens to arm North Korea

US 'incredibly' concerned; Seoul summons Russian envoy over pact with Pyongyang

CNN ONLINE



Vladimir Putin has threatened to arm North Korea if Western countries continue providing military aid to Ukraine, as the Russia president's new defence pact with Pyongyang sparked a series of diplomatic reverberations in the region.

Putin's remarks, at the end of a state visit to Vietnam, capped off a week in which Moscow sought to rattle the West and project strength from a part of the world in which his influence still carries weight.

"Those who supply these weapons believe that they are not at war with us. I said, including in Pyongyang, that we then reserve the right to supply weapons to other regions of the world," Putin told reporters Thursday at the end of his trip to Hanoi, in response to a question on whether the supply of Western long-range weapons could be considered an act of aggression.

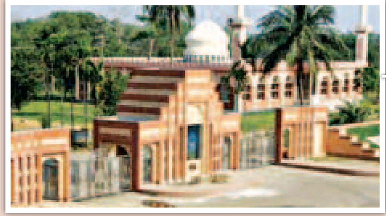
"Where they will go next?" he said, suggesting those countries could then sell the weapons to Western adversaries.

"It is incredibly concerning," US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller told a news briefing when asked about Putin's remarks about possible arms supplies to North Korea.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

JU lost 40pc waterbodies in 35 years

Says a study; vegetation area shrank by 26.5pc between 1988 and 2023



- 172.5 acres converted into built-up areas
- Original master plan neglected during structural development

SHEIKH TAJUL ISLAM TAJ

Jahangirnagar University campus, known for its verdant fields, woods, and waterbodies, has lost nearly 40 percent of its waterbodies over the last three and a half decades.

The university's vegetation cover has also shrunk by 26.5 percent during the same period, according to a study.

In contrast, the JU saw its built-up area going up by 159.3 percent. Around 172.5 acres of land were converted into built-up areas, said the study published in the Bangladesh Journal of Environmental Research, a peer-reviewed journal.

The research titled "35 Years of Land Use and Land Cover Change in Jahangirnagar University: Challenges of Achieving Sustainable Green University Campus" analysed data on JU from 1988 to 2023.

It shows that waterbodies covered an area of 122.4 acres in 1988, but the figure dropped to 73.58 acres last year. The vegetation area of 388.80 acres shrunk to 285.88 acres over the same period.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Israeli forces step up strikes across Gaza

Engage in close-quarter combat with Hamas fighters

REUTERS, *Cairo*

Israeli forces pounded Rafah in southern Gaza yesterday, as well as other areas across the enclave, killing at least 32 Palestinians as troops engaged in close-quarter combat with Hamas fighters, residents and Israel's military said.

Residents said the Israelis appeared to be trying to complete their capture of Rafah, which borders Egypt and has been the focus of an Israeli assault since early May.

Tanks were forcing their way into the western and northern parts of the city, having already captured the east, south and centre. Israeli forces fired from planes, tanks and ships off the coast, forcing a new wave of displacement from the city, which had been sheltering more than a million displaced people, most of whom have been forced to flee again.

Later yesterday, Palestinian health officials said at least 12 Palestinians were killed in Mawasi in western Rafah in what Palestinians said was a tank shelling that hit a tent housing displaced families.

Palestinian health officials said at least 32 Palestinians had been killed in separate Israeli military strikes yesterday.

The Israeli military said it was looking into the reported strikes on Mawasi and a separate incident in Gaza City.

It said its forces were conducting "precise, intelligence-based" actions in the Rafah area, where troops were involved in close-quarter combat and had located tunnels used by Hamas members.

The military also said that over the past week its forces had targeted a university that it said served as a Hamas headquarters from which Hamas fighters fired on its soldiers and had found weapons and barrel bombs. It did not name the university.

In nearby Khan Younis, an Israeli air strike yesterday killed three people, including a father and son, medics said.

Another Israeli air strike on a Gaza City municipal facility killed five people, including four municipal workers, the territory's Civil Emergency Service said. It added that rescue teams were searching the rubble for more missing victims.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that more than 37,463 people have been killed in the territory during more than eight months of offensive.

Meanwhile, Armenia has officially recognised a Palestinian state, the Armenian foreign ministry said in a statement yesterday, the latest country to do so despite opposition from Israel.

Armenia supports a United Nations resolution on an immediate ceasefire in Israel's offensive in Gaza and is in favour of a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the same statement said.

In a separate development, Qatar said yesterday it was continuing mediation efforts to "bridge the gap" between Israel and Hamas to secure a ceasefire in Gaza and the release of Israeli hostages held there.

- 32 more Palestinians killed
- Armenia recognises Palestinian statehood
- Israeli troops trying to complete their capture of Rafah: residents

Couple killed in landslide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

A man and his pregnant wife died in a landslide in Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Anwar Hossain, muezzin of a local mosque, and his wife, Maimuna Akhter.

Maimuna was seven months pregnant, reports UNB.

They lived at the foot of a hill in Badsha Ghona area under the upazila.

Incessant rain over the past few days had saturated the hill, adjacent to their house, which finally gave way and collapsed onto their tin-roofed house around 3:00am.

Helal Uddin Kabir, councilor of Ward 9 under Cox's Bazar Municipality confirmed the matter.

The couple, sleeping at the time, got trapped under the debris. Locals later recovered their bodies from the rubble.

The victims were taken to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital, where they were declared dead on arrival.

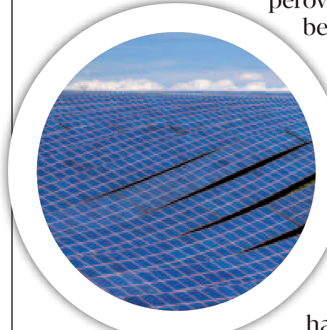
Cox's Bazar has been experiencing heavy rainfall over the past several days.

Solar panel achieves world record with 'miracle material'

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A new efficiency world record for converting sunlight into electricity has been set, in what researchers claim is a huge boost for renewable energy.

Researchers at Longi, the world's biggest solar panel manufacturer, achieved a 34.6 percent power conversion efficiency using a tandem perovskite-silicon solar cell, beating the previous record by 0.7 percent.



The new record is also more than 7 percent more efficient than the record for a standard silicon solar cell, which is found in most commercial solar panels.

Perovskite has been hailed as a "miracle material" for its potential to vastly improve everything from batteries to telecommunications and renewable energy.

With current silicon solar panels reaching their physical limits, researchers are now looking to next-generation tandem cells to better harness the Sun's energy.

Perovskite-silicon cells have a theoretical efficiency limit of 43 percent – far exceeding the 29 percent limit of standard silicon cells.

Argentina superstar Lionel Messi had a rare off-day in front goal but made up for it by being involved in both goals in the Albiceleste's 2-0 win over Canada in their opening Copa America fixture at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium yesterday. The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner was involved in the build-up of the first goal scored by Julian Alvarez, and then turned assist provider for his side's second which was netted by Lautaro Martinez.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Messi's bright start in latest quest for glory

REUTERS

Lionel Messi's latest quest for international glory in the twilight of his career is off to a smooth start with Argentina's 2-0 win over Canada at the Copa America opening.

Despite winning accolades galore at club level from an early age, it took Messi until 34 to triumph with Argentina at a major international tournament, lifting first the 2021 Copa America then the 2022 World Cup.

Now, with fans wondering if this is his last dance on the big stage, Messi's Argentina are red hot favourites to win a successive Copa America.

The stage appears set for Messi, who turns 37 next week.

Perennial rivals Brazil are on a poor run of form while Argentina are brimming with talent all around, headlined by their captain, and the July 14 Copa final

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Star WR
WEEKEND READ
DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 22, 2024
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The Daily Star

Third-grader Sabbir and his friend Kakon trying to beat the final boss in "Cadillacs and Dinosaurs". The photo was taken in Rayer Bazar recently.

Cricket has become popular in arcade gaming.

PHOTO: MD ZAHIDUR RABBI

In Dhaka's secret alleys, lone arcades hint at a bygone era

A boy playing a game at an arcade machine at Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur.

From outside, you can hear hushed laughter, a street slang hurled, an almost loud shriek that quickly fades into giggles, and an unlikely combination to the rest of the orchestra -- the clacking of keyboards and chiptunes. The red curtain, as it turns out, hides a gaming arcade.

MD ZAHIDUR RABBI

The unassuming, narrow, winding alley in Dhaka's Geneva Camp reeks of a pungent mix of mosquito coils and incense. A maze of tangled overhead electric wires blocks the sun here any time of the year. A bare-bones eatery sells piping hot "singaras" with questionable hygiene from dawn to dusk. There's a cacophony of conversations in mixed Urdu and Bangla that gets doused in old hindi songs from a speaker somewhere.

To a stranger, this alley -- like the rest of the camp -- is an all-out attack on the senses.

At the dead end of this alley, nestled between the worn-out brick buildings that house "variety stores", a bright red curtain hides a dusty little establishment. From outside, you can hear hushed laughter, a street slang hurled, an almost loud shriek that quickly fades into giggles, and an unlikely combination to the rest of the orchestra -- the clacking of keyboards and chiptunes.

The red curtain, as it turns out, hides a gaming arcade.

THE DENS THAT HIDE 'MOSTOFA'

Inside one of the four remaining gaming arcades in Dhaka's Geneva Camp, the race is on to beat the high score in EA Sports Cricket 07. Second grader Ayan, an avid arcade gamer, smashes the keyboard controls to hit back-to-back sixes. He must beat his friend Nandu, who is on the bowling end with another set of controls.

This is an everyday scene at Usman's gaming arcade, who has been operating the business out of the same spot for the last 25 years. For just five bucks, gamers like Ayan and Nandu can immerse themselves in the virtual world of gaming for 15 minutes.

> "
> **The arcade gaming business was very popular back in the day. Sometimes I used to earn about Tk 2,000-3,000 in a single day. Now I am only able to earn about Tk 300-400 a day, operating from 9:00am to 11:00pm. I am unable to even keep up with the rent.**
>
> **Ashraf**
> Owner of an arcade gaming centre at Geneva Camp

There was a time when almost every alley or "para" in Dhaka had at least four to five gaming arcades. However, as smartphones and computers became more accessible with time, the crowds started waning at the arcades. These days, arcades are rare, and most of the ones that are surviving, like Usman's, have ditched the old arcade machines for computers.

There was a time when almost every alley or "para" in Dhaka had at least four to five gaming arcades. However, as smartphones and computers became more accessible with time, the crowds started waning at the arcades.

These days, the arcades are rare, and most of the ones that are surviving have ditched the old arcade machines for computers.

However, an arcade is no arcade without the familiar retro machines. The solution? Fitting in a monitor, a keyboard, and the entire setup inside a makeshift arcade machine body made in the local markets.

The facades hold up just fine with no bother; it's the games inside that really matter. "Cadillacs and Dinosaurs", or "Mostofa" as everyone in Bangladesh loved to call it, and other classic hits like Street Fighter II, now gave way to the more popular sports genre games like Cricket '07, FIFA, and occasionally, Grand Theft Auto.

Some old-school, machine run arcades, however, still remain in Dhaka at various spots. At the capital's Rayer Bazar, one arcade still harbours the old machines operated by coins.

Here, third-grader Sabbir and his friend Kakon were found trying to beat the final boss in "Cadillacs and Dinosaurs". Every day, Sabbir sells kitchen mittens after school, earning, on average, Tk 35 in profits. He saves some for daily expenses and the rest goes into the arcade machine. For Sabbir and his friend, the arcade is a place to forget all of the hardships of the day and enjoy simple laughter and good times together.

THE LOOMING END OF OLD ARCADES

Ashraf, owner of one of the arcade gaming centres at Geneva Camp, shared troubling insights about the business. "The arcade gaming business was very popular back in the day. Sometimes I used to earn about Tk 2,000-3,000 in a single day. Now I am only able to earn about Tk 300-400 a day, operating from 9:00am to 11:00pm. I am unable to even keep up with the rent," he shared.

"I am thinking about selling the machines and retiring as the business has now become a burden and I have also become an old man," Ashraf added.

Unable to keep up with the inflation and the downed popularity of the arcades, Khokon, owner of the arcade at Rayer Bazar, now doubles as a shoe-seller on the footpath just outside his shop. He shared how his profits have gone down from a Tk 1,000 to just Tk 300-400. He blames the rise of smartphones for his dwindling profits.

Ashraf's gaming shop at the Geneva Camp.

He also mentions that often he falls victim to extortion from local gangs. "I try my best to keep them out of my business but it is getting more and more difficult every day," Khokon said.

These days, there are rising gaming arcades or hubs that have ditched the old models altogether to make ways for PlayStations, usually targeted towards higher end customers.

GamenationBD is one such modern arcade that has PlayStation 4 that can be rented on an hourly basis. Yousuf, who works at GamenationBD, said, "The hourly rent costs Tk 60 per hour and if you play multiplayer, every player must pay Tk 50. We have games like Mortal Kombat, Street fighter, Need for Speed, GTA V, FIFA, and more."

"Most of our customers are between the ages of 16 and 25," he shared.

HOW ARCADES CHANGED AND HOW THEY CHANGED US

These arcades that once riddled the alleys of Dhaka, and now hide in secret corners of the city, shaped an entire generation in the country. The impact, no matter how one perceives it, was undeniable.

Md Golam Rafsan Jani, a tech enthusiast who is currently working as a learning designer at Optimizely, said, "I used to regularly play arcade games about 17 or 18 years ago. Each coin was about Tk 1 and the most hyped game was 'Mostofa'."

> "
> **I used to regularly play arcade games about 17 or 18 years ago. Each coin was about Tk 1 and the most hyped game was 'Mostofa'. All of these experiences had motivated me to buy a personal computer for gaming back in 2006.**
>
> **Md Golam Rafsan Jani**
> A tech enthusiast

"I also used to play Mario on TV cards at my home back in the day. All of these experiences had motivated me to buy a personal computer for gaming back in 2006," he shared.

While arcade gaming has lost its golden era, it continues to impact the lives of youngsters, particularly in the underbellies of Dhaka. For the children in Geneva Camp, an hour of gaming in the arcade is an escapade from the harsh realities of life. To others, they remain the reminders of a nostalgic bygone era.

FICTION

JISHU

Jishu's elder sister then appeared with her retired husband, expressing that their mother didn't want to leave Jishu's side. They couldn't keep her at their flat as she was very attached to Jishu and couldn't sleep without him.

HASNAT ABDUL HYE

1.

After the previous tenant vacated the house, Khan E Alam decided not to accommodate any younger residents. They often chat and socialise with friends, causing disturbances during his sleep. Even after the noise subsides in the afternoon, its effects linger, disrupting his peace of mind long into the night. One day, as Khan E Alam was reading the newspaper, a young man entered the drawing room with a casual air, sporting sunglasses like a cinema hero, and inquired, "I noticed a 'To-Let' sign. Is the house still available?"

Glancing up from the newspaper, Khan E Alam replied, "Yes, but it's not available to you."

Surprised, the young man asked, "Do you know me? You've never seen me before, yet you've already declined. Please explain."

"It's because you're too young. I've decided not to rent to younger individuals."

"Why? What's wrong with them? Why can't you rent to me? Weren't you once my age?"

"I won't rent to younger individuals because they tend to make noise and disturb my sleep. Although I was once young like you, I wasn't as loud as today's youth."

ILLUSTRATION: **AMREETA LETHE**

The young man countered, "But how do you know I make noise? You've never met me."

"It's your age that gives it away", Khan E Alam replied irritably.

The young man persisted, "You're assuming. But the problem is, your assumption is wrong. Despite my youth, I don't make noise. And neither do my friends when they visit, because my 82-year-old mother lives with me. Are you an octogenarian?"

Moved by this revelation, Khan E Alam regarded the young man with newfound importance. A young man who cared for his elderly mother was undoubtedly responsible. After a moment of contemplation, Khan E Alam changed his demeanour and courteously invited the gentleman to take a seat.

As the young man sat down, Khan E Alam inquired, "Who else lives with you, apart from you and your mother?"

"It's just the two of us", he replied. "My mother and I."

"Only two of you? Then why such a large flat?"

"My mother enjoys reading. She has a vast collection of books. And I work on software development, so I need ample space."

"Do you have assistants who come to your house?" Khan E Alam asked, his eyes filled with curiosity.

"Yes, they do come when needed, but I usually communicate with them over the phone", the young man replied.

"Does that mean there's a lot of coming and going?" Khan E Alam inquired, scrutinising him.

"Yes, exactly. It's like the ebb and flow of a river. People come and go", he responded with a smile. "But they don't make noise. My mother wouldn't tolerate it, and I would ensure they don't."

Impressed by his responsible demeanour, Khan E Alam decided to rent the house to him. He then apologised for not asking his name earlier.

"I'm Jishu", the young man replied.

"Jishu Chowdhury?" Khan E Alam asked in surprise. "Just Jishu? No other part to your name?"

"No, that's it. My late father was a simple man who disliked complications, even in naming his children. I'm Jishu, my brother is Sishu, my elder sister is Mishu, and the younger one is Nishu."

"Ah, it seems your father liked rhymes. By the way, where do your siblings live?" Khan E Alam inquired.

After learning about Jishu's siblings, Khan E Alam abandoned the idea of seeking references and asked when he planned to settle in.

"The sooner, the better", Jishu replied. "And about the advance?"

"Hmm, alright", Khan E Alam hesitated before accepting the cash offered by Jishu. "Bring your mother. An 82-year-old woman who reads books is no joke."

2.

Jishu appeared two days later with his mother, bringing along boxes of books, several broad bookshelves, branded computers, and three laptops. It was clear to Khan E Alam that Jishu was a computer enthusiast. Khan E Alam felt elated to have such an educated and technologically savvy tenant for the first time, eagerly anticipating meeting Jishu's mother.

After some days, Khan E Alam noticed a significant number of young men on motorcycles visiting Jishu's flat daily. They didn't stay long and left quietly. Despite the frequent visitors, there was no disturbance or noise, which relieved Khan E Alam. He felt reassured that he hadn't made a mistake in renting the flat to Jishu; he believed Jishu to be a good person, and his visitors seemed to come from respectable backgrounds.[a]

One day, Jishu took Khan E Alam to his flat where his elderly mother was in the drawing room, wearing a white sari and thick glasses. Despite her imposing presence, Khan E Alam felt respectful and greeted her by touching her feet. She blessed him, evoking a sense of traditional respect.

The house help brought a plate of snacks, and Jishu's mother warmly entertained Khan E Alam. Despite his hesitation, Khan E Alam declined, but Jishu's mother insisted he take whatever he liked. He felt as if he were listening to his own mother's voice.

Khan E Alam inquired about the type of books she liked to read, to which she replied that she tried to read but found her eyes getting tired quickly.

Jishu's elder sister then appeared with her retired husband, expressing that their mother didn't want to leave Jishu's side. They couldn't keep her at their flat as she was very attached to Jishu and couldn't sleep without him.

Jishu's mother affirmed her attachment to her youngest son, stating that she needed to stay with him by rule.

The elder sister lamented that Jishu hadn't married yet, which saddened their mother, who often scolded them for not getting him married. Khan E Alam mentioned that Jishu could marry at his own discretion, but the elder sister explained that Jishu believed he wasn't settled yet and thus wasn't interested in marriage.

Khan E Alam suggested that Jishu was doing well in his software business and could consider marriage, ensuring that their mother would be taken care of. However, the elder sister revealed that they had tried convincing him, but he didn't listen.

When Khan E Alam inquired about Jishu's elder brother in the USA, the elder sister became upset, revealing that he, too, was unmarried. She explained that being twins, they shared a dramatic life, facing challenges and fears together, even death.

Khan E Alam offered to intervene and talk to Jishu about marriage, which delighted the elder sister. She shared that Jishu had a close friendship with a girl named Baani and suggested that Mishu could marry her if Khan E Alam could manage Jishu.

Understanding his responsibilities as the owner of the flat, Khan E Alam didn't feel uneasy about the situation.

This is an excerpt. Read the rest of the story on Star Literature and *The Daily Star*'s websites.

Translated by Alamgir Mohammad from Bangla from the short story "Keno, Oi Toh Jishu".

Hasnat Abdul Hye *is a Bangladeshi writer and novelist. He was awarded the Ekushey Padak in 1995 for his contribution to Bangla literature.*

Alamgir Mohammad *teaches literature at the Department of English, Bangladesh Army International University of Science and Technology, Cumilla. He has published 17 titles in both Bangla and English translation.*

PHOTO: **MAISHA SYEDA**

POETRY

The first downpour will be my cue

TAHSEEN NOWER PRACHI

Raindrops whisper on the tin roof's drum,
A symphony that calls me finally home.
There you'll be, a shawl draped round your form,
Lost in memories weathering life's storm.
A thousand teardrops, like the falling rain,
Glimmer in your eyes, a heart etched with pain.
Do you know, dear one, the clouds we see now,
Hold echoes of sunlight, a forgotten vow?
When you see me, weathered by distant shores,
Can you speak of the laughter we held before?
Old photographs blur, a face half-unknown,
Is this who I was, a seed long sown?
Through the drumming rain, I'll find my way back,
To stories whispered beneath the eaves' crack.
"Where have you wandered?" your voice, soft and low,
I'll say, "I sought myself, but you helped me grow."

Tahseen Nower Prachi *is a writer whose head is a koi pond of micro tales too scattered to come down to her keyboard. For more of her little pieces follow The Minute Chronicles on Facebook.*

FICTION

MARZIA RAHMAN

The journey

If you travel on a bus, always take the window seat. You may want to peek outside, maybe later, in more peaceful hours. But for now, you let your head, full of worries, and a throbbing heart haggle with each other. Whether or not you have made the right decision to begin a voyage you are not sure how and where it will end.

DESIGN: **MAISHA SYEDA**

If you travel on a bus, take an empty seat with a broken one next to you; you can travel without company, uninterrupted. If it's a window seat, you may look out, maybe later, when all your thoughts will go to sleep. But for now, you let your painted toenails rest next to your embroidered handbag. Closing your eyes, you listen to the loud Hindi songs blaring on the bus, wishing you were somewhere else before drifting off.

A sudden brake and the bus conductor's shouts jerk you up. You open your eyes, remembering only half of the dream. The other half swirls in the sultry air before flying outside. It is then that you look out.

A sudden brake and the bus conductor's shouts jerk you up. You open your eyes, remembering only half of the dream. The other half swirls in the sultry air before flying outside. It is then that you look out.

The green countryside stretches out under a blazing sun like a tapestry. You pass coco-palms, betel-nuts, brick houses, a woman in a red printed sari with a pitcher on her waist, a few naked kids playing in the sand, peasants irrigating their fields, a hermit lost in thought under a banyan tree, a small white duck sitting on the back of a cow and a lone man in a bicycle. As you pass the small, thatched mud huts nestled among banana and mango groves in village after village, you wonder what kind of lives, what joys, what sorrows, what stories, what songs are hidden behind them. And you wonder if there are other daughters, once exiled and outcast, are going back home too?

The exiled DAUGHTER

Is it true that when we migrate, we lose a few people from our past? Is it a fact or a fiction that with migration, a new life takes shape, erasing the memories of bygone days? Can we ever cut our ties to the ancestral home?

I stand in the courtyard facing the L-shaped one-story house. I look at the tinned roof where bougainvillaea blooms in white, pink and yellow colours. And at night, a single moon and a thousand stars glow and the fragrance of hasnahena flowers washes over the senses in waves. Here, in this courtyard, a century old banyan tree stands still and in silence, watching over the house like a mother. And under the shade of this very banyan tree, a very old grandmother used to lie down on a cot and grin with a toothless mouth, watching a six-year-old girl run amok, chasing a naughty cat.

I stand in the courtyard and watch life playing in flashback—a giggling child in her mother's arms, a defiant teenage girl, a young bride in a red sari. This house and this courtyard bear witness to the lives of my grandparents and my parents. Here, my brother's children and their children will be born and raised. Here, under this very banyan tree, History may come with a broad smile on her face, her pockets brimming with stories of three generations and one exiled daughter.

Marzia Rahman *is a flash fiction writer and translator. Author of two books,* The Aftermath *and* Dot and Other Flashes, *she has been published widely in both print and online journals.*

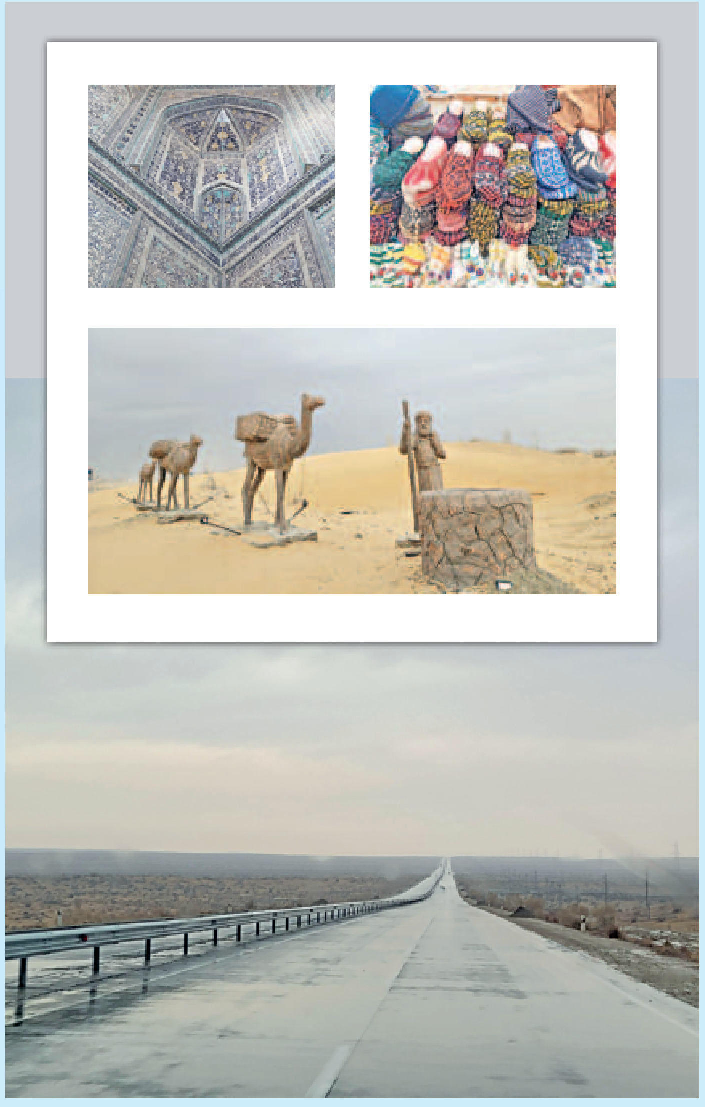
PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

KHIVA
a Central Asian gem on Silk Road

Want to share your travel experiences with us? Please send your stories to

holiday@thedailystar.net

ELIZA BINTE ELAHI has so far visited more than 50 countries across the globe. Eliza, who teaches at the University of South Asia as an adjunct faculty, considers herself a history and heritage lover.



10 days in Uzbekistan

It won't be an exaggeration to say the cities of this ancient country -- Khiva, Samarkand, Bokhara, Tashkent, Ferghana, Andijan, Margillon, and Kokand -- have deeply influenced human history and civilisations. Iranians, Turks, Tatars, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Mongols -- these cities have witnessed the rise and fall of great empires and enriched and inspired cultures and history through tales of heroism, greatness, violence, knowledge, science, art, creation, and diversity.

How much one can even comprehend the enormity of all these in 10 days? One can only have a glimpse of those and store as much as one can in the memory. That's it.

I started my journey from the capital city of Tashkent. From this ancient city, I went to Samarkand, a city that may give you the impression that time has frozen here. My next destination was Bukhara, a noise-free lively city. If solitude had a place to live, it would have been here.

Next was Khiva.

I got a taste of the Silk Road on the road trip to Khiva through the steppe. Ah! Seeing the barren lands I read in Bengali translations of Russian literature felt unreal. Yes, childhood dreams do come true indeed!

Then, in the next couple of days, I had remarkable train and road trips to Andijan, Margillon, and Kokand. But those are stories for another day. Let's explore Khiva for now.

PHOTO: **ELIZA BINTE ELAHI**

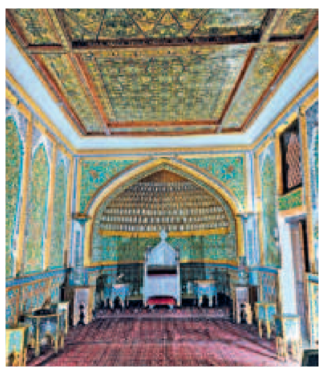
ELIZA BINTE ELAHI

The destination was Khiva, one of Uzbekistan's most well-preserved ancient cities on the Silk Road.

Like Bukhara, Khiva is a Unesco World Heritage Site hosting a wealth of history and culture dating back 2,500 years.

It is approximately 480 kilometres from Bukhara. We started our road trip at 8:00am. The 7-8 hour drive in a mini-van across the diverse Uzbek landscape promised to be a thrilling one.

As we left the city behind, our journey through the steppe started. Contrary to the image of a barren desert, the steppe offers a unique beauty with its sparse vegetation and wide-open spaces. Two hours into the journey, we took a coffee break, savouring the tranquillity of the barren region. Suddenly, the sky turned ominously dark, and a rare desert rain began to fall. It's not an ordinary event as we were told by our driver and guide, Mirza Beg. It was a first time experience for them too.



After the rain, we enjoyed the road trip witnessing small towns and villages with a clear blue sky on the backdrop.

We arrived at Khiva around 4:00. After checking into our hotel in Ichan-Kala, the old city, we quickly set out to explore the area before daylight faded.

ABOUT KHIVA AND THE SILK ROAD

Khiva is a charming city located in the western Khorezm region of Uzbekistan. This small isolated ancient city is rich in culture and history that spans over a millennium.

Khiva can be best explored walking. There are two parts of this city -- Ichan-Kala or the inner city and Dishankala or the outer city. We chose to stay in Ichan-Kala as it would be convenient for us to explore the city. Ichankalai is old Khiva. Among the cities located on the Silk Road I have visited, Khiva still retains some of its oldest forms.

Central Asia was an important centre of trade during the golden age of the Silk Road trade. The overland routes of the Silk Road passed through the cities and deserts of Central Asia, bearing the footprints of world travellers, merchants, bandits, and warriors. This Central Asian route was a bridge between East and West for a long time. Culture, religion, philosophy have been exchanged along this route shaping civilisations and cultures.

Due to its important geographical location, numerous empires developed here - the Muslim Khawarism Empire, the Mongol Empire of Genghis Khan, the Timurid Empire of Timur and his descendants. The region's Muslim thinkers made unforgettable contributions to mathematics, astronomy, language, literature, and art during their time under Islamic rule.

Contributions of Muhammad Ibn Musa Al-Kharizmi in algebra, Omar Khayyam in mathematics and poetry, Imam Bukhari in Hadith, Al Farabi in philosophy are continuing to enrich the world.

THE CHARM OF ICHAN-KALA

Visiting Ichan-Kala is like stepping into a living museum. The city's layout and architecture speak of its rich past, with every stone path and old wooden door telling a story.

It is a meticulously preserved area that feels almost other-worldly. Much of the city has been rebuilt, but those renovations have done in such a way that it kept the essence of its glorious past.

The absence of noise and litter, along with the friendly locals, creates a welcoming atmosphere. Sound pollution is so less that if you shout name from one end of the city that voice will be heard from the other end almost two kilometres away.

Within Ichan-Kala's walls are several remarkable structures the Kunia-Ark Citadel, Islam Khodja Minar and Madrasa, Muhammad Amin Khan Madrasa, Tosh-Hovli Palace, Juma Mosque, Pakhlavan Mahmud's Tomb, Pahlavan Mohammad Gates, Syed Alauddin's Tomb, Tosh-Darbhoja Gate, and Allakuli Khan Caravanserai. The city's similarity to Bukhara is striking.

KHIVA'S HANDMADE HATS

By the time I came out of the accommodation, evening was approaching fast. And with that the temperature dropped too. It was 3-4 degrees Celsius, and the wind was picking up. Local shopkeepers, mostly women, set up stalls selling handmade hats called Chugirma, made from sheep wool. The hats were not just beautiful but also a testament to the harsh winters of Khiva.

THE TOSH-HOVLI PALACE

The next day began with a visit to the Tosh-Hovli Palace, constructed in 1834. The palace's mosaics and woodwork are breathtaking. With 166 rooms, it's impossible to see them all, but seeing the opulent quarters of the king and his queens were enough to leave a lasting impression. The vast courtyard offered a glimpse into the grandeur of the past.

ISLAM KHODJA MINARET

When we arrived at the Islam Khodja complex, the first thing that caught my eyes was the towering minaret basking in the golden morning sun. This towering structure, adorned with turquoise tiles and intricate geometric patterns, stands as a symbol of Uzbekistan's rich cultural heritage. When the awe-inspiring 57-meter-high (187 ft) minaret was built in the 20th century, it was the tallest minaret in Central Asia. It is not just a minaret but a true marvel of medieval engineering.

The minaret's unique architecture allows light and air to flow through its narrow staircase, showcasing the exceptional craftsmanship of its builders. The minaret honours Islam Khodja, a revered religious leader, educator and advisor to the Khanate (state) of Khiva.

KUNYA-ARK FORTRESS

As we stood in front of the Kunya-Ark, a 17th-century fortress, Mirza, our guide, informed us that it was built by the rulers of Khiva, especially under Muhammad Amin Khan, to protect the city from outside threats. The fort also served as the residence of the Khiva Khans and the administrative centre of the Khanate.

It is said that Muhammad Amin Khan wanted to build a minaret that surpassed all other minarets in the region, overlooking all the avenues of the rival city of Bukhara.

Climbing to the top of the fort, we enjoyed a panoramic view of Khiva, with its ancient structures inside the wall and sprawling cityscape outside.

BREAD: A SYMBOL OF LOVE

Walking through Ichan-Kala thinking of the timeless architectural marvels, I came across a woman making bread, a common yet heart-warming sight in Uzbekistan.

She greeted me with a bright smile, embodying the local tradition of hospitality. Bread is integral part to Uzbek culture, symbolising love and respect. It is served at every meal, often accompanied by green tea. Mirza explained that there are numerous types of bread, but abi naan and patir are the most popular.

Though bread is a staple food in lots of countries in central Asia, Middle East and North Africa that I visited, in Uzbekistan, it is more than a food. It's a part of their culture symbolising love and respect. They break and distribute bread with hands; using knife might be seen as a sign of disrespect here.

FAREWELL TO KHIVA

My next destination was Urgench, from where a domestic flight would take me to Tashkent. That's a different story.

Khiva offered me a unique glimpse into the past. I, as a lover of archaeology and history, felt a deep connection to this part of the Silk Road.

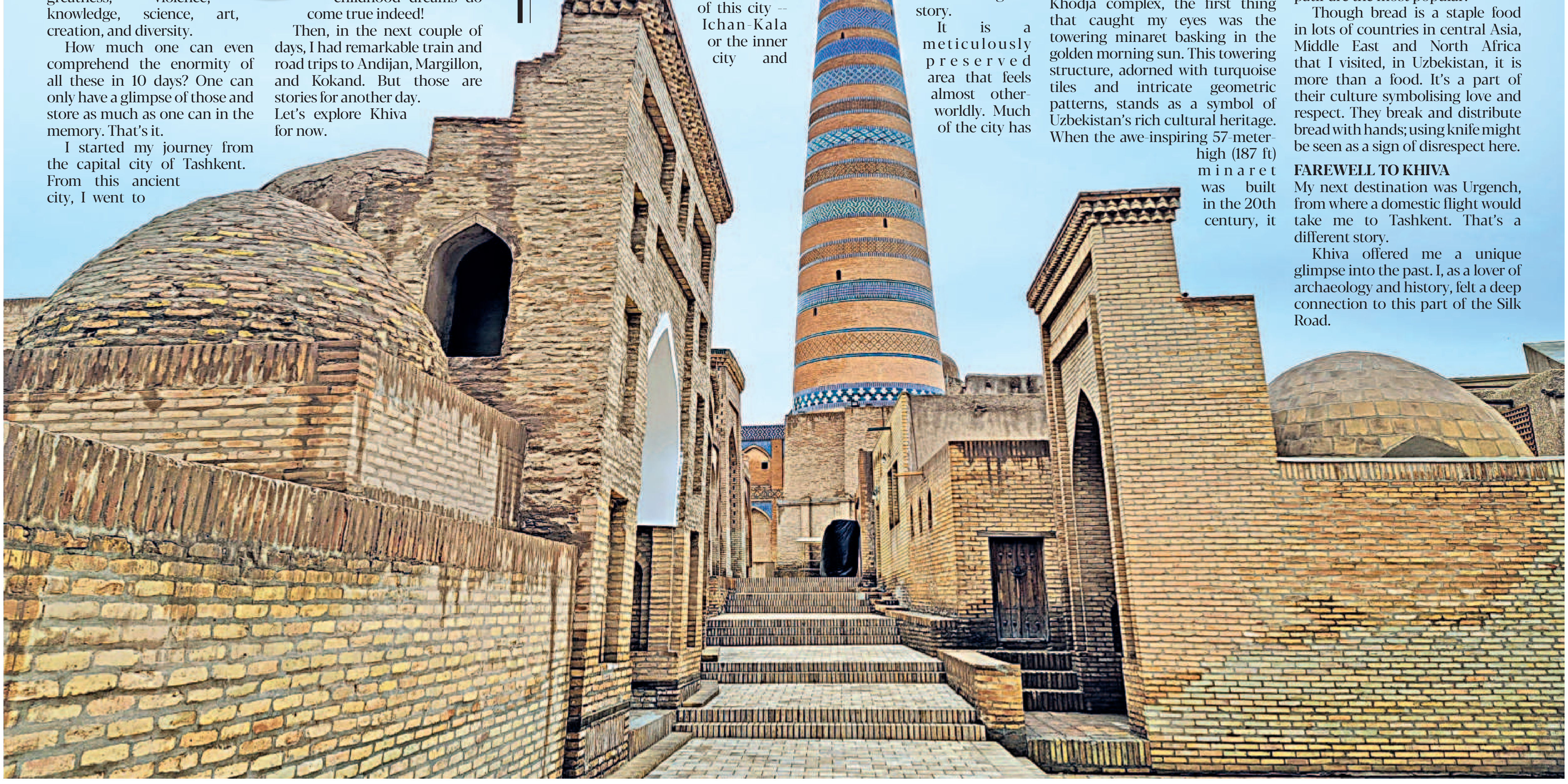


PHOTO: LALTANLIAN PANGKHUA

FROM BARE TO BOUNTIFUL

Chittagong Hill Tracts transform into a new hub of agriculture

The three hilly districts -- Rangamati, Khagrachhari, and Bandarban -- now produce about 20 percent of the total fruit in Bangladesh, according to officials of the Department of Agricultural Extension.

JAGARAN CHAKMA

"You are being transferred to the Chittagong Hill Tracts."

This was a popular dialogue in the climactic scene of Bengali movies in the 1990s, when the hilly regions were looked upon as the backwoods of the nation, a place where government employees would be posted as a punitive measure.

However, the 'backwards' CHT of the past now stands as a beacon of massive economic, educational, and social progress. Once, thousands of acres were uncultivated in the CHT. Now, the areas are full of various crops and fruits.

A few hundred years ago, rice, tea, and oilseeds were cultivated in the plains between the valleys of the CHT, earning it the acclaim of being known as Karpas Mahal (land of cotton) during the Mughal Empire.

But as times changed, so did the mode of cultivation. Jhum cultivation, also known as slash and burn agriculture, was the dominant force in the region in the past. While it remains a tradition, it is no longer the way of life.

Now, the region is filled with all kinds of crops throughout the year as the community cultivates cashew nuts, coffee, pineapples, mangoes, jackfruits, bananas, oranges, guavas, dragon fruits, strawberries, lemons, papayas, custard-apples, wood apples, ginger, and turmeric.

Vegetables are also produced, with most being organic as they hardly apply fertilisers since the soil is fertile and naturally yields abundantly. At present, orchards upon orchards of fruit are being cultivated in the hills.

The three hilly districts -- Rangamati, Khagrachhari, and Bandarban -- now produce about 20 percent of the total fruit in Bangladesh, according to officials of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE). This is a result of modern farming methods.

Once a rare sight in the CHT, power tillers, pumps, and tractors combined with modern irrigation systems and the use of improved seed varieties have replaced the traditional farming system.

Mohammed Basirul Alam, acting deputy director of the DAE of Khagrachhari, said there are around 3,500 people in the district who cultivate mangoes on around 4,150 hectares.

According to DAE estimates, Khagrachhari will produce around 49,000 tonnes of mangoes this year. Alam believes mangoes worth around Tk 200 crore are grown in the district annually.

Md Altaf Hossain, chief scientific officer of the Hill Agriculture Research Station under the Bangladesh Agriculture Research Station in Khagrachhari, said fruit production increased substantially in the three hill districts in the past 15 years on the back of the improvement in the communication systems and growing entrepreneurial mindset.

He is also the project director of the "Cashew nut and coffee research project".

Once, mangoes would be brought to the CHT from Rajshahi, but according to Hossain, the three districts now meet over 20 percent of the country's demand for the delicious fruit.

Although it would be impossible to pinpoint the moment that things began to shift, the introduction of mobile networks to the region in 2008 undoubtedly shaped its economic destiny. Numerous infrastructure development projects since 2009, including the widening of roads and bridges boosted connectivity in the remote areas of the CHT. That played a major role, as did the connection to the national electricity grid.

Such bold initiatives brought a change in the mindset of the educated young generation, who began investing and profiting. Seeing that success, the next generation was encouraged to invest in agriculture.

Take the example of Debashish Chakma, who lives in Shantipur village in the Panchari upazila of Khagrachhari. After completing his master's from the department of anthropology at the Chittagong University, he worked in various organisations for about 10 years.

After saving up, he started gardening fruits like mangoes, mandarin oranges, and guavas over 15 acres of his family land in 2012.

Chakma, president of the Panchari Fruits Garden Owners Association, said once he started turning a profit from the garden, he quit his job and became a full-time agribusiness entrepreneur.

He earns around Tk 25 lakh per year and at least 10 people work year-round in his garden. He said there are more than 1,000 higher-educated agribusiness entrepreneurs in the district who were contributing to the economy and creating jobs.

"I believe these entrepreneurs will change the economy of the CHT as their capital is growing. This will help establish an agro-processing industry."

Chakma also said the introduction of modern technologies has made farming commercially viable for entrepreneurs. Even highly educated individuals have put their talents to the business.

Prue Nue Mong, who completed LLB under the National University, opted not to practise law but rather become an agro-entrepreneur. He developed an interest in agriculture in his childhood as agriculture was his family's main source of income.

However, he said his family would not use technology or modern cultivation methods. "I think the agriculture sector in the hilly areas has bright prospects, and this can change the livelihood of the people."

He also said investing in agriculture provides a quick return on investment.

Mong invested a nominal amount and gradually established a fruit garden over an area of 280 decimals in Kuhalong Headman Para in Kuhalong union of Bandarban sadar upazila.

He added that a decade ago he used to cultivate mandarin oranges, guavas and dragon fruits before successfully developing the garden. "I have earned at least Tk 8 lakh annually for the past six years."

A project for coffee and cashew nuts

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Seeing the huge potential in agriculture, the government is implementing a Tk 211.84 crore project in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region to introduce modern technologies and enhance research initiatives with a view to promoting coffee and cashew nut cultivation.

The project, which is being implemented jointly by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), has targeted to expand the area under cashew nut and coffee cultivation from 2,000 hectares at present to a combined 6,000 hectares. It is expected to boost production by 50 percent.

Md Altaf Hossain, project director of the cashew nut and coffee research project, said high-yielding varieties of cashew nuts and coffee had been developed under the project.

A modern field lab has been set up at the BARI in Khagrachhari. According to Hossain, the state-run agency has already started distributing high-yielding varieties of coffee saplings.

He said this would make a positive impact in the economy and the livelihood of farmers in the area as coffee can be grown on unused land at a low investment.

According to project documents, the government also plans to increase the country's export earnings on the back of the two products.

Coffee has already been cultivated on around 220 hectares of land in different areas of the CHT region under the project.

According to Hossain, it is possible to earn Tk 5 lakh from 40 decimals of land by cultivating coffee. "There is huge potential for coffee cultivation in the three hill districts, particularly on unused land."

In Bangladesh, the demand for coffee is high because consumption is on the rise. However, the requirement is met largely through imports. Therefore, if coffee can be produced locally, it will not only cater to the domestic demand, the item can also be exported.

"Additional coffee production can be an alternative source of income for those in the hilly regions of Bangladesh," Hossain said.

He said Bangladesh's climate is suitable for the production of the Robusta variety of coffee and is more resistant to disease than other varieties.

It generally thrives at altitudes of 500-1000 metres above sea level and with 1,000-2,000mm of rainfall. Thus, the BARI is aiming to expand cultivation in the hilly areas.

Additionally, many of the 75 horticulture centres scattered across Bangladesh under the horticulture wing of the DAE are now producing commercial coffee seedlings and selling them at government-fixed prices.

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SECOND EDITION
DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 23, 2024
REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 151 | ASHAR 9, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | ZILHAJJ 16, 1445 HIJRI | 16 PAGES: TK 15.00

KSRM
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Dhaka, Delhi eye shared prosperity

Connectivity, defence figure high in Hasina-Modi talks; focus shifts to Teesta project from water sharing

STAR REPORT

Away from Teesta water sharing, over which Bangladesh and India have been in a deadlock for years, the latter now focuses on water conservation and management of the river inside Bangladesh.

The development came as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi held one-on-one and delegation-level meetings at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi yesterday.

Briefing reporters after the meetings, Modi said India would send a technical team to Bangladesh to review the protection and management of the Teesta.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra then said a technical team has been formed to look into how Bangladesh can conserve Teesta water with Indian assistance.

Conservation of the Teesta requires technical management, Kwatra said, adding: "It is less about the water sharing part, but more about management of water flow within the Teesta river."

It is the understanding between the two leaders that a technical team would undertake efforts to make progress on this, he said.

Dhaka and Delhi almost signed a deal on sharing the Teesta water in 2011, but it did not happen due to West Bengal

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3 SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Spectrum of ties widens

SHAHAB ENAM KHAN

The resounding applause in Delhi during Sheikh Hasina's visit to India was a testament to the vision and goals the two nations share.

In a world of increasing geopolitical uncertainty and power tilts, this visit and the bilateral talks underscored the necessity of pragmatic cooperation in the evolving fields of trade, technologies, infrastructure, and connectivity.

Strategically speaking, Delhi has understandably focused on sub-regionalism

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is greeted by her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi as she arrives at Hyderabad House in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- India will start e-medical visa facility for Bangladeshis
- New assistant high commission of India to be set up in Rangpur
- Train service between Rajshahi and Kolkata
- Bus service between Chattogram and Kolkata
- Commencement of goods train services between Gede-Darshana and Haldibari-Chilahati upto Dalgaon
- Construction of an inland container depot in Sirajganj with grant
- Export of 40MW of power from Nepal to Bangladesh via Indian grid
- Joint technical committee for discussions on renewal of the Ganga water treaty
- Visit of a technical delegation for a project on conservation, management of Teesta

NEW MoUs SIGNED

- Shared vision for India-Bangladesh digital partnership
- Shared vision for India-Bangladesh green partnership
- Military education on strategy and operations
- Cooperation in shared satellites
- Better railway connectivity between two countries
- Support in research in oceanography
- Cooperation in maritime and blue economy

MoUs RENEWED

- Cooperation in healthcare and medicine
- Cooperation in disaster management, mitigation, and resilience building
- Cooperation in improving fisheries

75TH ANNIVERSARY

It's high time AL went into introspection

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The Awami League, one of the oldest and largest political parties in the country, is set to celebrate its 75th founding anniversary today.

It had been at the forefront of almost all democratic movements before and after the birth of Bangladesh. It also led the the nation to independence.

On June 23, 1949, East Pakistan Awami Muslim League was founded by the likes of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, Shamsul Haque and Ataur Rahman Khan. To make it more pluralistic and non-communal, the word "Muslim" was dropped from its name in 1955, and it was renamed Awami League.

The party played key roles in the Language Movement in 1952, Jukta Front election in 1954, anti-Ayub movement, Education Movement in 1962, Six-Point Movement in 1966, and the students' 11-point movement

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bridge collapse kills nine of a wedding party

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

The journey to a wedding party ended in tragedy yesterday after the microbus carrying the bridal party plunged into a canal after an iron-made bridge collapsed, killing at least nine.

Three others were still missing at the time of going to print, according to the victims' family members.

The deceased are: Farida Begum, 55, her daughter-in-law Raiti, 30; Raiti's mother Rumi Begum, 40; their relative Munni Begum, 40; Munni's two daughters Tasfia, 11, and Tahiya, 7; their relatives Fatema Begum, 40; Zakia

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

How Lucky got so lucky!

Wealth, source of income of NBR official Matiur's wife don't add up

JAHIDUL ISLAM JOY *and* **ZYMA ISLAM**

Laila Kaniz Lucky is the upazila parishad chairman of Narsingdi's Raipura and a retired teacher of a government college.

It has now emerged that the former Bangla literature teacher has, in her name, a huge amount of properties, which do not match with her known source of income, indicating someone may have used her wallet as a safe place to stash wealth.

Lucky is the wife of Dr Matiur Rahman, a member of the National Board of Revenue, who came under the spotlight after his son posted on social media a photo of a sacrificial goat that he claimed to have bought for Tk 12 lakh.

Matiur is now president of the NBR's Customs, Excise and VAT Appellate Tribunal, a grade-1 job, with a basic monthly salary of Tk 78,000.

Media reports, NBR sources and a number of documents seen by The Daily Star suggest that the highly-connected NBR official and his close and distant family members have great wealth, including significant stakes in various companies.

Matiur did not respond to this newspaper's calls, but denied any wrongdoing while talking to other media outlets.

Lucky's tax files submitted to the Election Commission before this year's Narsingdi upazila pollsclaim she is worth Tk 10.31 crore, but a closer look indicates she may have understated her wealth by dozens of times.

According to her wealth statement, she owns more than eight acres of mostly non-agricultural land and five flats in Dhaka, but the combined value of all this was shown at only Tk 5.19 crore.

This innocuous-looking list does not even mention her palace-like home in Raipura upazila's Marjal village -- an omission that raises eyebrows due to the opulence of the residence.

The much-talked-about, high-walled compound and two-storey bleached white mansion sits beside neighbours who live in small one-storey homes or huts made of corrugated tin sheets.

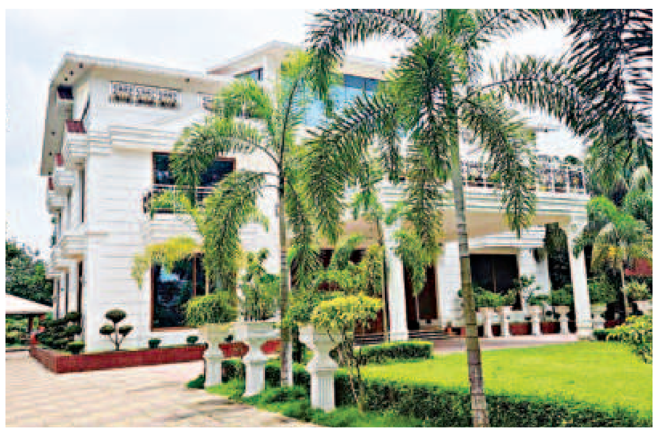
The Laila Kaniz Lucky Road, named after her, leads to her mansion.

Shamim Iqbal Munna, of Raipura's upazila engineering office, said that the 123-metre road was built in 2014 at a cost of Tk 14 lakh.

Multiple teachers at the nearby Md Bashir High School, all requesting anonymity, said the land acquisition for that road was done using the school fund, and not with Lucky's money. They said she used her influence to have the road named after her.

Lucky retired as an associate professor of Bangla at Government Titumir College in the capital four years ago, and according to her tax filings, she gets a pension of only Tk 4.65 lakh per year.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



A GLIMPSE INTO LUCKY'S WEALTH

- Net wealth: Tk **10.31**cr
- Cash in hand/bank: Tk **3.56**cr
- Loan: Tk **2**cr
- Non-farmland: **7** acres worth Tk **5.16**cr
- Farmland: **1.5** acres (value not shown)
- Two luxury homes in Dhaka Narsingdi, multiple flats

জয় বাংলা
জয় বঙ্গবন্ধু
বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের
৭৫ প্লাটিনাম জয়ন্তী

মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধের নেতৃত্বদানকারী বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের ঐতিহাসিক পথ পরিক্রমায় জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের আদর্শের উত্তরসূরী মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী ও বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের সভাপতি জননেত্রী শেখ হাসিনার অকুতোভয় ও সুযোগ্য নেতৃত্বে রূপকল্প-২০৪১ বাস্তবায়নের অগ্রপথিক হিসেবে গৌরবোজ্জ্বল ভূমিকার স্বাক্ষর

২৩শে জুন
বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের
৭৫ তম প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকীতে জানাই
শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন

এ.এইচ.এম খায়রুজ্জামান (লিটন)
সভাপতিমণ্ডলীর সদস্য, বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ
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TEESTA BOAT CAPSIZE

Girl's body recovered, five still missing

UNB, *Kurigram*

The body of a two-and-a-half-year-old girl, who went missing after a boat sank in the Teesta River on Wednesday night, was recovered from the river at Jigabarir Char in Ulipur upazila of Kurigram yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Kulsum Satalashkar, daughter of Koyjor Ali.

With this, the death toll from the boat capsize rose to two.

Enamul Haque, a member of Bazra union parishad, said locals spotted Kulsum's body floating in the river and rescued it in the morning.

Ulipur Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Ataur Rahman said Kulsum and six others went missing when a boat carrying 26 people sank in the Teesta river on Wednesday evening.

Later, divers from a local firefighting unit rushed to the spot and recovered the body of a child.

Four people are still missing. They are Anisur Rahman, 30, his wife Rupali Begum, their 9-year-old child Irin, their niece Hira Moni, 9, and Shamim Hossain, 5, son of Azizur Rahman.

The Gowainghat-Pirojpur-Sonarhat road in Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila has been severely damaged by heavy rains and hilly torrents, rendering it unusable for both vehicles and pedestrians. In the past three weeks, Sylhet city has been inundated five times, affecting many areas and causing untold sufferings to locals. At least 21.08 lakh people have been affected by the flash floods in Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Moulvibazar districts, with 53,244 people living shelter centres as of yesterday afternoon. PHOTO: COLLECTED

AL MPs blast govt move for allowing legalisation of black money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two lawmakers from Awami League and one from Jatiya Party yesterday in parliament criticised the government for keeping the provision of whitening black money in the proposed national budget for 2024-25 fiscal.

Participating in the general discussion on the proposed budget, Pran Gopal Datta from Cumilla-7, Zahid Maleque from Manikganj-1, and Nurun Nahar Begum, a JP MP from a reserved seat for women, said there will be a reluctance from taxpayers to pay taxes if the provision for whitening black money is kept.

"As a taxpayer, I have to pay more than 30 percent tax if I have Tk 30 lakh. But those who did not show their money [in their tax returns] last year would legalise that undisclosed income by paying a 15 percent tax. This will make the taxpayers reluctant to pay taxes," said Pran Gopal, a renowned physician and also a former VC of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

He said the finance minister in his budget speech did not say anything about informal economy.

Zahid, a former health minister, said he does not want to see the provision of whitening black money in the proposed budget.

"We will have to curb corruption and cut the tax rate to reduce black money."

He said it is not the low-income people or industrialists but the white-collar people who have black money.

It's high time

FROM PAGE 1

in 1969, and thus came out as the most authentic voice of the people.

The AL faced a crisis following ideological conflicts between Suhrawardy and Bhashani in the late 50s. In the early 60s, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, already popular among students, emerged as a promising leader.

Later, under his leadership, Bangladesh went on to become independent.

The AL faced an existential crisis after August 15, 1975, when its supreme leader Bangabandhu and most of his family members were killed.

Sheikh Hasina, Bangabandhu's elder daughter, returned home from abroad in 1981 and rebuilt the party.

She has been leading the organisation for 43 years as its longest serving chief. Under her leadership, the party has assumed power five times.

Besides, the achievements of Hasina's government are unparalleled compared to those of any other government.

However, some fundamental questions can still be raised as the AL turns 75 today.

Is the party doing justice to its name? Awam, an Urdu word from which its name was derived, means "the people".

Is the party still the "voice" of the people like it was in the past? Is it still true to its ideals today?

The activities of the AL in recent years show that the party has deviated a lot from its core ideals. The party that once considered itself as an activist-oriented organisation has shifted its dependency towards the bureaucracy and law enforcement agencies. It always spoke in favour of people's fundamental rights, but now it is mostly confined to making rhetorical statements on the government's development activities.

Businesspeople are now gaining more influence in the party ranks surpassing the politicians. The party that had fought to ensure people's voting rights has now developed a system of electing public representatives unopposed and holding electoral contests among the AL members amid boycott by a large number of opposition parties.

In many of his speeches during 1972-75, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had mentioned corruption as the main evil hindering the country's development. He had dreamt of a corruption- and exploitation-free secular Bangladesh.

But according to the latest Household Income and Expenditure Survey, income inequality is all-time high in the country. The top 10 percent of the wealthiest households now hold 40.92 percent of its total income.

Former and current bureaucrats, law enforcers, politicians, businesspeople and other professionals now hog the headlines for allegations of corruption.

Within six years after its founding, the word "Muslim" was dropped from party's original name. But its deal with Khelafat Majlish in 2006, its policy to appease Islamist group Hefajat-e-Islam and dropping of contents written by Hindu and freethinking writers from school textbooks following Hefajat's demands raised questions about the AL's secular character.

Party leaders always claim that no one can defeat a united AL. But the question remains how united the party actually is. In the absence of activities by opposition parties, it seems AL itself has become its main enemy.

In its 2018 electoral manifesto, the AL's two major promises were to contain price hike of essentials and take effective action against corruption. In its electoral manifesto in 2024, the party reiterated its pledge to cut the prices of commodities and keep those within an affordable range.

After forming the government in January this year for a fourth consecutive term, the AL took some initiatives to keep the prices of essentials under control, but they seem inadequate.

According to the latest data of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, food inflation surged 54 basis points to 10.76 percent from 10.22 percent while non-food inflation slipped 15 basis points to 9.19 percent from 9.34 percent in April, which is the highest rise on the Consumer Price Index in seven months.

The government's steps to check corruption did not meet people's expectations. Over the last 15 years, loan scams and indiscipline ruled the financial sector.

In its manifesto in 2008, the AL had vowed to make the wealth statements of ministers, MPs and their family members public every year, but it did not make good on the pledge. This promise was not mentioned in the three subsequent electoral manifestos.

The party had pledged to enforce laws to recover defaulted loans. However, Bangladesh Bank data shows that defaulted loans at banks hit an all-time high of Tk 1,82,295 crore at the end of March this year.

The AL had also assured the people of building a reliable electoral system. But it had to field dummy candidates in the January 7 national election to make sure the polls look participatory. It also had to restrain from fielding candidates in this year's upazila parishad elections to make sure the polls look participatory.

Due to the party's electoral strategy, AL men fought against their fellow party colleagues in the national and local elections.

And whenever any AL member is found involved in any wrongdoing, party leaders make the same old claim -- "some infiltrators from BNP-Jamaat are tainting Awami League's image".

Does the AL know who are its tested men, how many of its supporters are loyal to its core ideals and how many of them will respond to the party's call in the event of a crisis?

As AL celebrates its 75th founding anniversary, people expect that it will do justice to its name and gain strength to build a secular and democratic Bangladesh.

Bridge collapse

FROM PAGE 1

Begum, 30, and her daughter Hridi, 5, the police said.

Four others were rescued alive from the spot, said police and firefighters.

Survivors said they were en route to the wedding to be held at the bridge groom's residence in Gurdal village under Amtali upazila in a microbus from the bride's residence at Shibchar upazila.

Around 2:30 pm, the bus was crossing a bridge over a canal in the Haldia Bazar area.

"When our vehicle came to the middle of the bridge, it collapsed," said Mahbub Khan, one of the survivors.

The microbus fell into the water.

"The canal was filled with water hyacinth. I became senseless. Later, I found myself in a hospital bed when I regained my sense," he told The Daily Star.

On information, firefighters and police rushed to the spot and started a rescue operation with the help of locals, said Saiful Islam Sohel, a local union parishad member.

However, rescue operations were delayed due to heavy rain, said firefighters.

So far, nine bodies have been retrieved and four were rescued alive, said Noor Hossain, station manager of Amtali Fire Service and Civil Defence station.

The rescue operation was suspended in the evening and will resume today, he said.

Neither the bride nor the bridegroom was in the microbus.

The bridge was constructed by the Local Government Engineering Department in 2008, said Asaduzzanan Mintu Mallick, Haldia union parishad chairman.

The bridge, which was in a dilapidated condition, was not repaired, he said.

Abdullah Al Mamun, engineer of LGED's Amtali upazila office, could not reached for comment despite repeated attempts.

Dhaka, Delhi eye shared prosperity

FROM PAGE 1

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's last-minute objections.

People in the northern part of Bangladesh have for years been suffering from floods in monsoon and water scarcity in winter.

At the joint briefing, Hasina and Modi agreed to a shared vision for the two countries as well as cooperation to make the region prosperous and stable.

Hasina said, "Today, our two sides had very productive meetings where we discussed politics and security, trade and connectivity, the sharing of water from common rivers, power and energy, and regional and multilateral cooperation, among other issues of mutual interest.

"We agreed to collaborate with each other for the betterment of our people and countries... We charted the future course of action to ensure a smart Bangladesh by following Vision 2041 and Viksit Bharat by 2047."

Modi said Bangladesh "lies at the confluence of our 'Neighbourhood First' policy, Act East Policy, Vision SAGAR and the Indo-Pacific Vision".

Noting that the two countries completed many important projects for public welfare in the last year alone, he said, "I reiterate India's commitment to realising Bangabandhu's vision of a stable, prosperous and progressive Bangladesh."

The two leaders witnessed the signing of 10 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs).

It was Hasina and Modi's first bilateral meeting after the January 7 election in Bangladesh. For India, it was the first visit by the head of a foreign government after the national elections there.

Hasina's two-day visit on June 21-22 took place before her planned visit to China in early July.

RIVERS

The two countries have decided to start talks at the technical level for the renewal of the Ganges River treaty that will expire next year.

In 2020, Bangladesh requested China to support the implementation of a nearly $1 billion Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project. China showed interest at the time.

The project was discussed at yesterday's meeting, Kwatra said.

There are 54 transboundary rivers between Bangladesh and India. The two countries have a water sharing treaty regarding the Ganges only.

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) issued separate statements later.

The Indian statement said, "Recognising the importance of water resource management in our bilateral relationship, we will continue to engage in prioritising the exchange of data and formulating the framework for interim water sharing based on the recommendations of the Joint Rivers Commission."

MOFA in its statement said Bangladesh also reiterated the early conclusion of Teesta Water Sharing Treaty.

Asked about this, former ambassador M Humayun Kabir told this correspondent the idea of conservation and management of the Teesta is fine, but ignoring the sharing of water means ignoring the fundamental rights of Bangladeshi people.

"The share of Teesta water is important as it has larger implications," he said.

OTHER MATTERS

Addressing the joint press briefing, Modi said with focus on connectivity, commerce, and collaboration in the last 10 years, the two countries restored the connectivity that existed before 1965.

"We will now focus on digital and energy connectivity even more. This will speed up the economies of both countries," he said.

Modi welcomed Bangladesh's decision to join the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative. "We will also continue our cooperation in other regional and international forums."

The Indian premier said the two leaders had detailed discussions from defence production to modernisation of armed forces and decided to strengthen cooperation over counterterrorism, fundamentalism and peaceful management of the border.

The MEA statement said both the countries will explore defence industrial cooperation for modernisation of the Armed Forces of Bangladesh, to strengthen its capability for defence, and work closely for military engagements of exercises, training and capability development.

As part of sub-regional connectivity initiatives, India will extend transit facilities for movement of Bangladesh goods to Nepal and Bhutan through railway network, it added.

India will continue to expand power and energy collaboration and the countries will together develop intra-regional electricity trade, including competitively-priced power generated from clean energy projects in India, Nepal and Bhutan, through the Indian electricity grid.

"Based on availability and to the best of its abilities, India will also support Bangladesh with supply of essential commodities."

Describing India as Bangladesh's major neighbour, trusted friend, and regional partner, Hasina said Bangladesh greatly values the relations with India.

She recalled with gratitude India's contribution to Bangladesh's independence.

Hasina invited Modi to visit Bangladesh.

She also called on Indian President Droupadi Murmu and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar in New Delhi before leaving for Dhaka last night.

Meanwhile, Vinay Kwatra made several announcements including the introduction of e-visa for patients from Bangladesh.

At the media briefing, he said India takes the issues of fatalities or injuries at the border with great sensitivity and it has been taking measures to ensure that the fatalities are reduced. The measures include using non-lethal weapons.

Kwatra said that the two leaders at the meeting discussed the Rohingya crisis, which affects both Bangladesh and Myanmar. India offered assistance in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

He said the two countries agreed to commence negotiation on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement that will include the issues of tariff, inclusion of new goods and services in trading.

M Humayun Kabir told The Daily Star that it was not clear what the framework for Bangladesh to join India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative would be.

WONDER PARK

Dr Matiur Rahman

Laila Kaniz Lucky

লায়লা কানিজ
লাকি সড়ক

Top left, the Wonder Park and Eco Resort in Narsingdi where Lucky and her family members have stakes. *Left,* a road in Narsingdi named after Lucky which leads to their mansion.

PHOTO: STAR

How Lucky got so lucky!

FROM PAGE 1

The affidavit also does not mention that she is one of the co-owners of Wonder Park and Eco Resort, a sprawling green expanse with a lake, and lakeside cottages.

This newspaper contacted the eco resort and they confirmed that Lucky's children Ahmed Taufiqur Rahman and Farzana Rahman Ipshita are co-owners.

The eco resort took over certain sections of land from a community graveyard that lies adjacent to it, Altaf Hossain, a local union parishad member, told the newspaper.

The Daily Star visited the spot and located three graves inside the boundary of the eco resort.

The total value of the land of about 133.5 decimals, on which the eco resort is built, is shown at Tk 53.9 lakh -- a figure rejected by Altaf Hossain. He said every decimal of land in the area costs about Tk 5 lakh. This puts the valuation of just the land at least Tk 6 crore.

In addition, Lucky stated in her affidavit that she has a 5 katha Rajuk plot in Dhaka, the value of which is "only Tk 14 lakh". Depending on the location, per katha price of Rajuk plots is much higher.

She also has 155 decimals of farmland, but her affidavit did not mention the value.

Lucky first became upazila chairman uncontested after the then chairman Abdus Sadek died of cancer in December 13, 2022.

Raipura was supposed to go to polls again on May 29 this year, but the Election Commission postponed voting after a candidate died in the run-up to the election.

Lucky's affidavit also shows she owns a flat worth TK 55 lakh in Bashundhara Residential Area, which appears to be an undervaluation.

According to property databases, the price per square feet for flats in the area is upwards of Tk 10,000, meaning even a small 1,000 square feet apartment would cost more than Tk one crore.

In addition, Lucky owns four flats in Sheltech Bithika, a condominium in Mirpur -- the combined value of which was shown at Tk 1.6 crore.

A floor plan obtained from the real estate project's website shows that the flats are 1,525 square feet each, and according to property listings, the price per square feet is Tk 6,850. This puts the total value of the four flats at Tk 4.18 crore -- about four times the amount stated.

A glaring example such undervaluation is the value of her furniture shown in her tax files -- just Tk 75,000.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Lucky said that she and her family are being victimised out of jealousy.

"We're very upset about the events that are unfolding. We're innocent people. Efforts are underway to frame us by dishing out lies along with some truths. My husband did well in his job. Those who are jealous of his professional success have hatched a conspiracy to accuse him of corruption. I don't want to say more."

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DON'T PANIC refrain from killing Russell's Viper

Environment, health ministries urge people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid growing concerns over the recent sightings of Russell's Viper (Chandrabora) in various parts of the country, the environment and health ministries have urged people to remain calm and refrain from killing snakes.

The environment ministry have also issued a set of guidelines in this regard.

STAY CALM AND INFORMED

Health Minister Dr Samanta Lal Sen yesterday urged all not to panic over the presence of Russell's Viper snakes. At a virtual meeting with health officials, he said timely intervention can fully and quickly cure snakebite victims. He also instructed public hospitals to maintain an adequate stock of anti-venom.

"The most important task is to take snakebite victims to a doctor at the quickest possible time... timely medical intervention can fully cure snakebite victims through proper treatment, said the minister.

ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

The environment ministry advised the public to avoid destroying the habitats of Russell's Viper. According to the ministry, natural predators like mongoose, monitor lizard, forest cat, eagle and crane help control the viper population. The killing of these predators has contributed to an increase in viper numbers.

Russell's Viper is protected under the Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act, 2012, as it plays a crucial role in controlling rodent population and its venom is used to produce life-saving medicines. Killing these snakes is a punishable offense.

HABITAT AND BEHAVIOUR

Russell's Viper typically inhabits lowland grasslands, thickets, open forests, and agricultural areas, generally avoiding human settlements.

Their earth-coloured bodies make them difficult to spot, increasing the risk of accidental encounters.

These snakes are good swimmers and can spread to different regions through river currents and floods. The public is advised to be cautious, especially in flood-prone areas.

MISINFORMATION AND MISIDENTIFICATION

In several districts, fear of Russell's Viper has led to the mistaken killing of other snakes. In Chattogram, locals killed a five-foot-long Burmese python, mistaking it for a viper.

Mahmud Hossain, an officer at Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, attributed the incident to misinformation on social media.

"There is a lot of misinformation circulating on social media on Russel's Viper, which led people killing the python. Even though no such snakes [viper] are in the area, people are panicked and getting misled by Facebook posts," he added.

Shahriar Caesar Rahman, CEO of Creative Conservation Alliance, emphasised the need for proper research to confirm any increase in viper numbers. "Killing a snake is not a solution, we need to focus more on medical treatment," he added.

SAFETY GUIDELINES TO PREVENT SNAKEBITES

- Avoid tall grass and bushes
- Wear protective clothing
- Carry torch, flashlight at night
- Maintain clean surroundings
- Handle fallen debris with care
- Do not confront snakes
- If needed, call National Helpline at 333

STEPS TO TAKE AFTER SNAKEBITE

- Minimise movement
- Clean the wound
- Remove restrictive items
- Avoid harmful interventions
- Seek immediate medical help
- Stay calm, do not panic
- Antivenom is available at govt hospitals

The Eid vacation is over. Holidaymakers have started returning to the capital after celebrating Eid-ul-Azha with their families at their hometowns. The photo was taken at Kamalapur train station yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Climate budget still not enough

Speakers tell event; propose 5pc pollution tax

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The allocation for the environment ministry has decreased by 2.35 percent in the upcoming budget compared to last year, if inflation is accounted for, said experts at a programme yesterday.

Despite needing 5 percent of GDP for climate issues, only 0.706 percent has been allocated for climate action, down from last year, they added.

"Climate-related funding is declining despite an increase in heatwaves, floods, and cyclones," said M Zakir Hossain Khan, founder and chief executive of Change Initiative.

He pointed out that although the proposed budget for the environment ministry is Tk 52 crore higher than the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the allocation has effectively decreased due to inflation.

At a press conference organised by CHANGE Initiative in the capital yesterday, Zakir presented findings of a research.

He said while Bangladesh aims to achieve 4,114.2 megawatts of renewable energy by 2030, the proposed 2024-2025 budget allocates only Tk 100 crore, or 3.2 percent, for this goal.

Bangladesh faces a climate financing gap of $23.4 billion per year, which rises to around $40 billion per year when considering the economic impact of lost working days due to disasters.

"International funding is significantly insufficient to cover this shortfall," he added.

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the operating budget of the environment ministry was 8.61 percent of the total budget. This has decreased to 6.78 percent in the upcoming proposed budget.

FLASH FLOOD IN RANGPUR

Teesta water recedes but still flowing above danger level

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

While the water level of the Teesta river has receded significantly in the last 24 hours, it is still flowing above the danger level in Rangpur's Kaunia upazila.

As of yesterday, the river was flowing 20 centimetres above the danger level at Kaunia point. It was flowing 52cm above the danger level on Friday, according to the Water Development Board (WDB) in Rangpur.

The water level at the upazila's Dalia point has decreased significantly due to no rain, but it is very close to the danger mark.

Following torrential rains upstream, about

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Abul Hossain displays his specialised fishing nets, known locally as "Khepla Jaal," at a haat in Khulna. With 54 years in the trade, his handcrafted nets sell for Tk 1,200-2,000 each, depending on size and quality. The photo was taken in Dumuria upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

DHAKA, DELHI RAIL TRANSIT

Trial run to begin next month

Says Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An Indian goods train will begin its trial run through Bangladesh next month, as the two neighbouring countries have agreed to utilise each other's rail lines under rail transit facilities.

The train will travel from Gede [West Bengal] - Darshana [Bangladesh] to Chilahati [Bangladesh] - Haldibari [West Bengal] cross border interchange point, said Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra.

Besides, a new train service would be launched between Rajshahi and Kolkata and a bus service between Chattogram and Kolkata, he said.

He was briefing media after the two countries signed and renewed 10 MoUs during Prime Miniter Sheikh Hasina's two-day visit to India.

One of these MoUs was signed between Bangladesh and the Indian railways ministry for railway connectivity.

Currently, Indian trains, under the transshipment facility, carry goods and passengers up to the India-Bangladesh border. From there, Bangladesh Railway's locomotives pull the coaches into Bangladesh and drop off passengers or unload goods before taking the coaches back to the border.

Once India is allowed rail transit through Bangladesh under the new MoU, its trains will be operated from one part of India to another via Bangladesh.

"We believe that connectivity can transform geographical proximity into new economic opportunities, not just between India and Bangladesh but also for

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Besides, a new train service would be launched between Rajshahi and Kolkata and a bus service between Chattogram and Kolkata, he said.

Vested quarter trying to create 1/11 situation

Says Quader

BSS, *Dhaka*

Urging all to remain alert Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said a vested quarter wants to create an environment like the one-eleven.

He also said AL does politics for the country's people.

"The message of the 75th founding anniversary of Awami League is to implement its election manifesto. Politics is for people and Awami League will always remain beside the people," he said.

Quader said this after visiting the venue of the party's public rally to be held today at Suhrawardy Udyan.

He said all leaders and activists of AL from central to root level are ready to celebrate the party's founding anniversary..

Mobile network should be disconnected at night

AL MP tells JS citing health issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should disable mobile networks in rural areas between 10:00pm and 6:00am, said ruling Awami League MP and ENT specialist Pran Gopal Datta yesterday.

The excessive use of mobile phones could lead to disabilities in the younger generation, he told parliament.

He said the government should find ways so that mobile networks are limited to purposes such as freelancing or earning foreign currency during nighttime.

He said most of his patients, including children as young as ten, experience hearing issues due to excessive use of mobile phones.

"People are complaining that they can't listen and can't focus on studying. Something should be done to keep our young generation away from this technology during late hours," he added.

He also criticised the commercialisation of the health sector.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 23

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-52	8-17
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

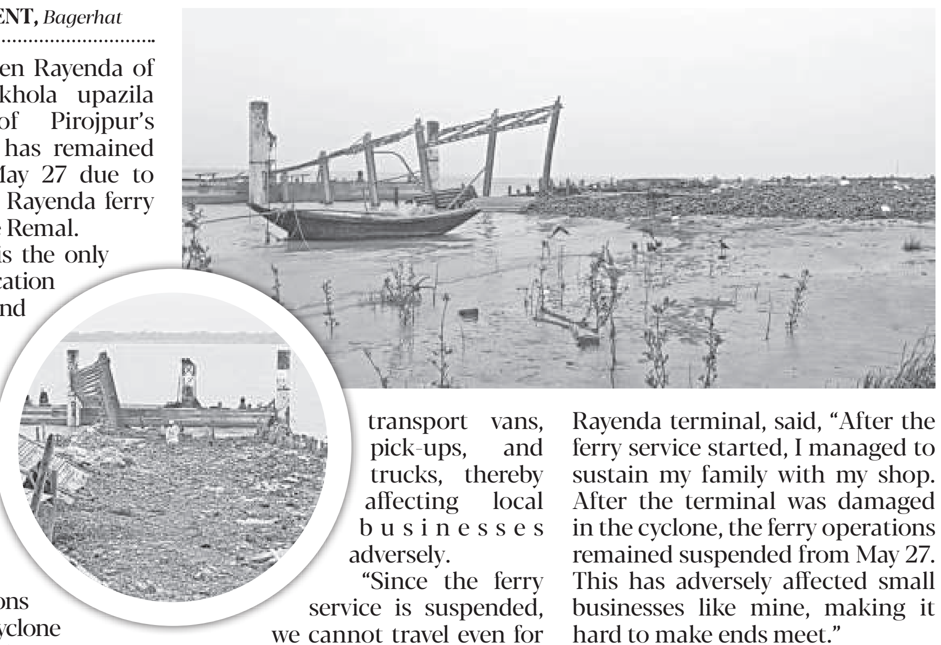
Illegally parked auto-rickshaws, locally known as Leguna, crowd near the busy Farmgate intersection, contributing further to traffic congestion. This haphazard parking creates significant disruptions for commuters, highlighting the need for stricter enforcement of parking regulations.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

REMAL AFTERMATH

People suffer as ferry service suspended since May 27

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bagerhat*



Ferry service between Rayenda of Bagerhat's Sharankhola upazila and Machhua of Pirojpur's Mathbaria upazila has remained suspended since May 27 due to damages caused to Rayenda ferry terminal by Cyclone Remal.

This ferry route is the only means of communication between Rayenda and Machhua.

The ferry route, which started operations on November 10, 2021, used to serve 20,000-25,000 people and over a thousand vehicles daily.

On-site observations revealed that the cyclone caused significant damages to the pontoon, connecting road, and steel railings of the terminal. The adjacent roads were washed away into the river, while local shops were also damaged.

Although an alternative trawler terminal is operational, the boats are charging a higher fare than usual, alleged locals.

Besides, trawlers cannot transport vans, pick-ups, and trucks, thereby affecting local businesses adversely.

"Since the ferry service is suspended, we cannot travel even for urgent needs. Using trawlers costs Tk 60-100, and they depart as per their convenience," said Mizan Sheikh, a resident of Rayenda.

Jamal Uddin, a local from Machhua, said, "During Eid, many couldn't visit their relatives. No one from Rayenda could come here."

Fayzul Islam, a regular commuter on the route, echoed him.

Halim, a shopkeeper near Rayenda terminal, said, "After the ferry service started, I managed to sustain my family with my shop. After the terminal was damaged in the cyclone, the ferry operations remained suspended from May 27. This has adversely affected small businesses like mine, making it hard to make ends meet."

Jalil Sheikh, a cattle trader in Rayenda, said, "We used the ferry to take our cattle to Mathbaria for sale ahead of Eid-ul-Azha. This time, we couldn't transport cattle before Eid."

Md Farid Uddin, executive engineer of Roads and Highways Department in Bagerhat, said, "We have sent a proposal for allocation to the higher authorities for necessary repairs to resume the ferry services."

30 hurt in AL factional clash in Rajshahi

UNB, *Rajshahi*

At least 30 people were injured in a clash between two groups of the Awami League in Bagha upazila of Rajshahi yesterday.

Several hand bombs were detonated during the clash. Police fired 50 rounds of tear gas shells to bring the situation under control.

Among the injured are Bagha municipality mayor Akkas Ali, Bagha upazila AL general secretary Ashraful Islam Bablu, Ardani union chairman Rafiqul Islam, and former vice chairman Shafiur Rahman Shafi.

Eyewitnesses said the clash started during a human chain organised by local AL leaders protesting alleged irregularities and nepotism involving Mayor Akkas Ali.

On the other hand, another group of AL brought out a protest procession against extra money collected in the name of Dalil Lekhak Samity of sub-register office.

The two sides clashed when the procession crossed the human chain.

Man, child die as bus hits bike

5 more killed in 4 districts

STAR REPORT

A man and his son were killed and his wife was injured as an oncoming bus hit their motorbike on Bagerhat-Khulna highway at Piljanga in Fakirhat of Bagerhat yesterday morning.

Khalilur Rahman Rari, 35, from Garia in Patuakhali; and his one-year-old son died on the spot. The injured, Minu Begum, 30, was taken to Fakirhat Upazila Health Complex for treatment.

Fakirhat Fire Service Station Leader Monirul Islam said the accident happened while Khalilur along with his wife and son was travelling to his in-laws' house in Jashore.

In Munshiganj, two people were killed and three injured when a Nababganj-bound passenger bus and a Dhaka-bound CNG-run auto-rickshaw collided head-on in Sirajdikhan upazila yesterday.

The accident took place on Dhaka-Nababganj road in Kharsur Taltola area, said police.

Sheikh Abdur Rahman, 58, and Shahin Hossain, 26, died on the spot, said Shekhernagar police investigation centre in-charge Jashim Uddin.

He said the CNG-run auto-rickshaw was carrying six people including the two.

Besides, Md Rasul, 40, died as he lost control over his bike on Dhaka-Khulna highway in Rajbari and got hit by an unidentified vehicle yesterday.

In Mymensingh, Raju Ahmed, a construction worker, was killed when a bus hit him on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway yesterday morning.

In Faridpur, a teenager was killed as his motorcycle, a rickshaw-van and another vehicle collided on Dhaka-Bhanga expressway on Friday night. The deceased is Rana Matubbar, 18.

The mangled motorbike after a bus hit it on Bagerhat-Khulna highway yesterday morning, killing a father and son.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Trial run to begin

FROM PAGE 3

the entire region," said the Indian foreign secretary.

Replying to a question about railway-related MoU, he said there are six cross-border railway links between India and Bangladesh.

"Another crucial aspect of this railway connectivity is the transit... between different parts of India through the territory of Bangladesh," Vinay said.

And the trial run of the goods train is a part of the issue, he said.

The related point is that Bangladesh would get sub-regional transit to Bhutan and Nepal, part of which already exits but would be further expanded and strengthened, he said.

India has been pursuing rail transit for the last few years and Indian Railways in 2022 submitted a proposal to the BR for carrying out trial runs of a freight train from West Bengal's Gede to Haldibari via Bangladesh.

BR's Director General Sardar Shahadat Ali told The Daily Star yesterday that a committee will be formed to finalise the modalities, routes, charges and other issues related to the railway transit.

Asked about the Rajshahi-Kolkata train service, he said as BR has shortage of carriages, they have to seek rakes from the Indian Railway to start the service. Besides, some preparatory work is needed before launching the services, he added.

Teesta water recedes but still

FROM PAGE 3

10 villages in the low-lying areas of the upazila went underwater, leaving about 20,000 people stranded for the last two days.

Residents of the flood-hit Balapara and Dhepamadhupur unions were compelled to leave their homes and shift to higher lands with their cattle. However, they are now struggling to access freshwater for drinking.

Meanwhile, rescue and aid remain a far cry for these flood victims, said Aminul Islam, the chairman of the aforementioned unions.

Additionally, 11 shoals on the river have been gravely affected by the flood as houses and arable land remain submerged.

As per Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mahidul Haque, the district commissioner's office allocated about 200 packets of dry food. "We are ready to combat this crisis," he said.

However, the WDB officials said the Teesta, Dudhkumar, and Dharla rivers may swell in the next 24-72 hours as heavy rain is likely in the northern areas of Bangladesh and West Bengal.

A warning was issued in this regard on Friday as the flood situation is expected to worsen in Rangpur, they said.

Climate budget

FROM PAGE 3

operating budget of the environment ministry was 8.61 percent of the total budget. This has decreased to 6.78 percent in the upcoming proposed budget. Similarly, the allocation for climate issues has dropped from 8.61 percent to 6.78 percent during the same period.

Zakir suggested imposing a 5 percent pollution tax on plastic, brick kilns, buildings, polluting industries, and deforestation. This could generate additional revenue of Tk 2,900 crore, he estimated.

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Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of The Director
Chittagong Medical College Hospital
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Memo No: CMCH/Tender/2024-2025/e-GP/Non-MSR (Diet & Non-MSR)/7081 Date: 22-06-2024.

Invitation for e-GP Tender

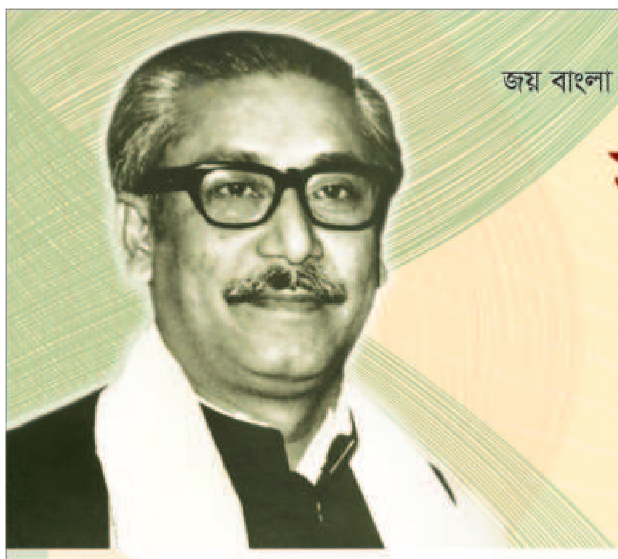
This is an online tender, where only e-tenders will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted To submit e-tender, please register on e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd), For more details, please contact support desk contract numbers. e-Tender are invited in e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Brigadier General Mohammed Taslim Uddin, Director, Chittagong Medical College Hospital, Chattogram for the Procurement of:

SL. No.	Tender Id	Name of Description	Tender/Proposal Last Selling Date &Time	Tender/Proposal Closing & Opening Date &Time
1	999515	Procurement of Diet goods (Potato, Pumpkin, Gourd etc) for the fiscal year 2024-2025	07-July-2024 14:00	08-July-2024 14:00
2	999516	Procurement of Diet goods (Cabbage, Radish, Bean etc) for the fiscal year 2024-2025	07-July-2024 14:00	08-July-2024 14:00
3	999520	Procurement of Diet Goood s (Dairy Products, Tomato Sauce & Apple etc) for the fiscal year 2024-25	07-July-2024 14:00	08-July-2024 14:00
4	999521	Procurement of Diet goods (Rice - Cini gura, Sugar, Cumin Seeds etc) for the fiscal year 2024-25	07-July-2024 14:00	08-July-2024 14:00
5	999522	Procurement of Washing Dirty linen Items & Ironing for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025	07-July-2024 14:00	08-July-2024 14:00
6	999514	Procurement of Diet goods (Rice, Onion, Garlic etc) for the fiscal year 2024-2025	14-July-2024 14:00	15-July-2024 14:00
7	999519	Procurement of Diet Goods (Dressed Fish etc) for the fiscal year 2024-25	14-July-2024 14:00	15-July-2024 14:00
8	999517	Procurement of Diet goods (Milk, Bread, Egg, Banana etc) for the fiscal year 2024-2025	21-July-2024 14:00	22-July-2024 14:00
9	999518	Procurement of Diet Goods (Dressed Mutton & Chicken Meat etc) for the fiscal year 2024-2025	21-July-2024 14:00	22-July-2024 14:00

Further Information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk @eprocure.gov.bd).

(Brigadier General Mohammed Taslim Uddin)
Director
Chittagong Medical College Hospital
Telephone: 0241356220
E-mail: cmch@ hospi.dghs.gov.bd

GD- 1019



জয় বাংলা

আল্লাহ্ সর্বশক্তিমান

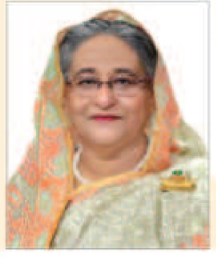
জয় বঙ্গবন্ধু

সংগ্রাম সংকল্প সতত শপথে জনগণের সঙ্গে

(৭৫) বছরে বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ

২৩ জুন, বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের

প্রতিষ্ঠা বার্ষিকী



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

প্রধানমন্ত্রী
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
০৯ আষাঢ় ১৪৩১, ২৩ জুন ২০২৪

বাণী

১৯৭৫ সালের ১৫ আগস্ট স্বাধীনতাবিরোধী ও যুদ্ধাপরাধী চক্র আওয়ামী লীগকে নেতৃত্বশূন্য করতে তৎকালীন রাষ্ট্রপতি, জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানকে সপরিবারে নির্মমভাবে হত্যা করে। এই হত্যার মধ্য দিয়ে তারা বাঙালি জাতির ঐতিহ্য, সংস্কৃতি ও অগ্রযাত্রাকে স্তব্ধ করার অপপ্রয়াস চালায়। ঘাতকদের উদ্দেশ্যই ছিল অসাম্প্রদায়িক গণতান্ত্রিক বাংলাদেশের রাষ্ট্রকাঠামোকে ভেঙে আমাদের কষ্টার্জিত স্বাধীনতাকে ভূলুণ্ঠিত করা। এই জঘন্য হত্যাকাণ্ডের সঙ্গে জড়িত স্বাধীনতাবিরোধী চক্র হত্যা, ক্যু ও ষড়যন্ত্রের রাজনীতি শুরু করে। তারা ইনডেমনিটি অর্ডিনেন্স জারি করে জাতির পিতার হত্যার বিচারের পথকে বন্ধ করে দেয়। বিদেশে থাকায় আমি এবং আমার বোন শেখ রেহানা প্রাণে বেঁচে যাই। জিয়াউর রহমান অবৈধভাবে ক্ষমতা দখল করে মার্শাল ল' জারির মাধ্যমে গণতন্ত্রকে হত্যা করে; সংবিধানকে ক্ষত-বিক্ষত করে। বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবের হত্যাকারীদের পুরস্কৃত করে। বিদেশে দূতাবাসে চাকুরি দেয়। স্বাধীনতাবিরোধী-যুদ্ধাপরাধীদের নাগরিকত্ব দেয়; রাষ্ট্রক্ষমতার অংশীদার করে। ব্যবসা করার সুযোগ দিয়ে তাদের বিপুল অর্থের মালিক করে দিয়ে রাজনৈতিক ও সামাজিকভাবে পুনর্বাসিত করে। বিদেশে থাকা অবস্থায় '৮১ সালের ১৩-১৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি সম্মেলনে আমাকে আওয়ামী লীগের সভাপতি নির্বাচিত করে। নানা বাধা উপেক্ষা করে '৮১ সালের ১৭ মে আমি দেশে ফিরে এসে দলের দায়িত্বভার গ্রহণ করি এবং আওয়ামী লীগের নেতৃত্বে স্বৈরাচারী সরকারের বিরুদ্ধে জনমত গঠন ও গণতন্ত্র পুনরুদ্ধারের আন্দোলন শুরু করি।

জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিক চক্রান্ত এবং স্বাধীনতাবিরোধী চক্র ও অবৈধ সেনাশাসকদের নির্যাতন আর নিপীড়নের মাধ্যমে ধ্বংস করার চেষ্টা করা হয় জনগণের সংগঠন, বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগকে। কিন্তু আওয়ামী লীগের তৃণমূল নেতা-কর্মী, সমর্থকেরা জীবন দিয়ে সকল প্রতিকূলতা, ষড়যন্ত্র মোকাবিলা করে দলকে টিকিয়ে রেখেছে, শক্তিশালী করেছে। গণতন্ত্র ও ভোটের অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠায় দীর্ঘ আন্দোলন-সংগ্রামের পর ১৯৯৬ সালের ১২ জুনের সাধারণ নির্বাচনে বিজয়ী হয়ে সরকার গঠন করে বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ। আমরা শুরু করি অর্থনৈতিক মুক্তি অর্জন ও দেশ গড়ার নবতর সংগ্রাম। আওয়ামী লীগের নেতৃত্বে উন্নয়ন ও অগ্রগতির পথে ঘুরে দাঁড়ায় বাংলাদেশ। ১৯৯৬-২০০১ মেয়াদে আমরা খাদ্য ঘাটতির দেশকে খাদ্য উদ্বৃত্তের দেশে পরিণত করি। গণতন্ত্রকে প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক রূপ দেই। আইনের শাসন ও মানবাধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠা করি। আমরা 'দায়মুক্তি অধ্যাদেশ বাতিল আইন, ১৯৯৬' সংসদে পাশ করে জাতির পিতার হত্যার বিচার শুরু করি। আওয়ামী লীগ সরকারের আন্তরিক উদ্যোগ ও প্রচেষ্টায় মহান '২১ ফেব্রুয়ারি' আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা দিবসের মর্যাদা পায়। ভারতের সঙ্গে গঙ্গার পানি চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরিত হয়। কারও মধ্যস্থতা ছাড়াই স্বাক্ষরিত হয় পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম শান্তি চুক্তি। আওয়ামী লীগ সরকারের এই পাঁচ বছরে দেশে আর্থ-সামাজিক উন্নয়নের এক নব দিগন্তের সূচনা হয়। ২০০১ থেকে ২০০৬ বিএনপি-জামাত জোট সরকারের দুঃশাসন, অত্যাচার নির্যাতন ও দমন নিপীড়নের বিরুদ্ধে আন্দোলন-সংগ্রাম এবং ২০০৭ থেকে ২০০৮ অগণতান্ত্রিক তত্ত্বাবধায়ক সরকারের সকল ষড়যন্ত্র মোকাবিলা করে বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ 'দিন বদলের সনদ' ঘোষণা দিয়ে ২০০৮ সালে জাতীয় সংসদ নির্বাচনে জনগণের ভোটে পুনরায় নিরঙ্কুশ বিজয় অর্জন করে এবং ২০০৯ সালের ৬ জানুয়ারি সরকার গঠন করে।

২০০৯ সাল থেকে শুরু করে ধারাবাহিক সরকারে গত সাড়ে ১৫ বছর আমরা দেশের প্রতিটি সেক্টরে কাঙ্ক্ষিত অগ্রগতি অর্জন করেছি। বাংলাদেশ এখন উন্নয়নশীল দেশ। ২০০৬ সালে বিএনপি-জামাত জোট সরকারের শেষ বছর এবং আওয়ামী লীগ সরকারের টানা ১৫ বছরের শেষ বছর–২০২৩ সালের তুলনা করলে সাফল্যের তথ্য-চিত্র আমাদের সামনে ভেসে উঠবে। এসময়ে প্রবৃদ্ধি ৭.২৫ শতাংশ, মাথাপিছু আয় ৫ গুণ, বাজেটের আকার ১২ গুণ, বার্ষিক উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচি ১৩ গুণ, জিডিপির আকার ১২ গুণ, বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা রিজার্ভ ৩৬ গুণ, রপ্তানি আয় ৫ গুণ, রেমিটেন্স ৬ গুণ, এফডিআই ৫ গুণ, কৃষি-শ্রমিকের ক্রয় ক্ষমতা ৩ গুণ, শ্রমিকদের মজুরি ৯ গুণ বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে। দারিদ্র্য হার ৪১.৫১ শতাংশ থেকে ১৮.৭ শতাংশে হ্রাস পেয়েছে। অতি দারিদ্র্য কমেছে ৫ গুণ। মানুষের গড় আয়ু হয়েছে ৭২.৮ বছর। এসময়ে বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদন সক্ষমতা ৮ গুণ এবং বিদ্যুৎ সুবিধা ভোগের হার ২৮ শতাংশ থেকে ১০০ শতাংশ বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে। সাক্ষরতার হার বেড়েছে ৭৬.৮ শতাংশ। ২০০৯ সালে জিডিপির পরিমাণ ছিল মাত্র ১০২ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার। ২০২৩ সালে জিডিপির পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি পেয়ে ৪৫০ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার ছাড়িয়ে যায়। আমরা নিজস্ব অর্থায়নে পদ্মা সেতু নির্মাণ করেছি। পদ্মা সেতুর উপর দিয়ে রেল যোগাযোগ শুরু হয়েছে। ১০০টি বিশেষ অর্থনৈতিক অঞ্চল গঠন, বঙ্গোপসাগরের বিশাল জলরাশিতে আমাদের সার্বভৌমত্ব প্রতিষ্ঠা, মেট্রোরেল, এলিভেটেড এক্সপ্রেসওয়ে, রূপপুরে পারমাণবিক বিদ্যুৎকেন্দ্র, হযরত শাহজালাল আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দরের তৃতীয় টার্মিনাল, বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান টানেল ও বঙ্গবন্ধু স্যাটেলাইট-১সহ দেশব্যাপী অগণন উন্নয়ন কর্মকাণ্ডের বাস্তবায়ন করেছি। আমরা দেশের সকল ভূমিহীন-গৃহহীনকে বাড়ি নির্মাণ করে দিচ্ছি। আশ্রয়ণ প্রকল্প ও অন্যান্য কার্যক্রম দ্বারা এ পর্যন্ত ৮ লাখ ৬৭ হাজার ৯০৪টি পরিবারের ৪৩ লক্ষ ৪০ হাজার মানুষকে পুনর্বাসন করা হয়েছে। আমরা জঙ্গিবাদ, সন্ত্রাসবাদ ও মাদক নির্মূলে 'জিরো টলারেন্স' নীতিতে কাজ করে যাচ্ছি। সকল ষড়যন্ত্র প্রতিহত করে আমাদের সরকার জাতির পিতার হত্যার বিচারের রায় কার্যকর করেছে। এ হত্যাকাণ্ডের বিচারের রায় কার্যকরের মধ্য দিয়ে জাতি কলঙ্কমুক্ত হয়েছে। 'আন্তর্জাতিক অপরাধ ট্রাইব্যুনাল' প্রতিষ্ঠার মাধ্যমে যুদ্ধাপরাধীদের বিচার করেছে এবং রায়ও কার্যকর করা হচ্ছে। সংবিধানে পঞ্চদশ সংশোধনীর মাধ্যমে জনগণের ভোটের অধিকার নিশ্চিত করেছে, ফলে অবৈধভাবে ক্ষমতা দখলের পথ বন্ধ হয়েছে। ২০৩০ সালের মধ্যে 'টেকসই উন্নয়ন অভীষ্ট' অর্জন, ২০৪১ সালের মধ্যে উন্নত-সমৃদ্ধ স্মার্ট বাংলাদেশ এবং ২১০০ সালের মধ্যে 'ডেল্টা পরিকল্পনা' বিনির্মাণে আমরা নিরলস কাজ করে যাচ্ছি।

জাতির পিতার আদর্শ এবং মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধের চেতনাকে ধারণ করে আমাদের নেতা-কর্মী ও সমর্থকরা লড়াই-সংগ্রাম ও মানুষের আস্থা অর্জন করে আওয়ামী লীগকে জনমানুষের সংগঠনে পরিণত করেছে। আমি বিশ্বাস করি, আমাদের নেতা-কর্মীদের মেধা, পরিশ্রম, ত্যাগ ও দক্ষতায় আওয়ামী লীগ আরও গতিশীল ও শক্তিশালী হবে এবং জাতির পিতার স্বপ্নের ক্ষুধা-দারিদ্র্যমুক্ত ও সুখী-সমৃদ্ধ সোনার বাংলাদেশ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হবে। স্বাধীনতাবিরোধী সাম্প্রদায়িক গোষ্ঠী এবং উন্নয়ন ও গণতন্ত্র বিরোধী দেশি-বিদেশি অপশক্তি এখনও নানাভাবে চক্রান্ত-ষড়যন্ত্র করে যাচ্ছে। এই অপশক্তির যে-কোনো অপতৎপরতা-ষড়যন্ত্র ঐক্যবদ্ধভাবে মোকাবিলা করে উন্নয়নের ধারাবাহিকতা ও গণতন্ত্র রক্ষার জন্য সর্বদা প্রস্তুত থাকতে আমি দলের সকল স্তরের নেতা-কর্মীদের প্রতি আহ্বান জানাচ্ছি।

আমি বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের ৭৫তম প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকী উপলক্ষে গৃহীত সকল কর্মসূচির সর্বাঙ্গীণ সাফল্য কামনা করছি।

জয় বাংলা, জয় বঙ্গবন্ধু
বাংলাদেশ চিরজীবী হোক।

শেখ হাসিনা

বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ: সংগ্রাম, স্বাধীনতা ও সমৃদ্ধির প্রতীক

কামাল চৌধুরী

আধুনিক রাষ্ট্রব্যবস্থায় রাজনৈতিক দলের ভূমিকা অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। প্রাচীন বা মধ্যযুগে কেন্দ্রীভূত রাজ্য বা আঞ্চলিক শাসনকাঠামোয় রাজনৈতিক দলের অস্তিত্ব খুঁজে পাওয়া যায় না। রাজনৈতিক দলের ধারণা আধুনিক কালের সৃষ্টি—ব্রিটিশ আগমনের পূর্বে ভারতবর্ষেও কোনো রাজনৈতিক দল ছিল না। ব্রিটিশ শাসনের শুরুর কিছুকাল পরে প্রথমে ক্লাব বা অ্যাসোসিয়েশনের আকারে কিছু সংস্থা গঠিত হয় সেগুলি ছিল প্রধানত মধ্যবিত্ত বা অভিজাত সুবিধাবাদী শ্রেণির দাবি আদায়ের জন্য গঠিত, উদাহরণস্বরূপ কলকাতায় ১৮৫১ সালে ব্রিটিশ ইন্ডিয়া অ্যাসোসিয়েশন এবং ১৮৫২ সালে বোম্বে অ্যাসোসিয়েশন গঠনের কথা বলা যায়। সার্বিক বিচারে ১৮৮৫ সালে গঠিত ভারতীয় জাতীয় কংগ্রেসই প্রথম রাজনৈতিক দল। পরবর্তী সময়ে ভারতবর্ষে আরো অনেক রাজনৈতিক দল আমরা দেখি, তবে কংগ্রেস ও মুসলিম লীগ এ দুটি দলই উপমহাদেশের রাজনীতিতে মূল কুশীলব হিসেবে আবির্ভূত হয়। সেই প্রেক্ষাপটে ধর্মীয় জাতীয়তাবাদ ও হিন্দু মুসলিম বিভাজনের রাজনীতির অনিবার্য ক্রিয়া হিসেবে ভারত ও পাকিস্তান নামে দুটি রাষ্ট্রের জন্ম ঘটে। ১৯৪৭ সালে ভারতবর্ষের বিভক্তির মাধ্যমে এই উপমহাদেশের রাজনীতির গতিধারা বদলে যায়; বাংলা ভাগের ফলে পূর্ব বাংলার মানুষ পাকিস্তানের অন্তর্ভুক্ত হয়, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ পরিগণিত হয় ভারতের অংশে।

২. পাকিস্তান প্রতিষ্ঠার অব্যবহিত পর থেকেই পূর্ববাংলার প্রতি পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানিদের বৈষম্যমূলক নীতি স্পষ্ট হতে থাকে, যা বাঙালিদের অসন্তোষের কারণ হয়ে দাঁড়ায়। তখন পাকিস্তানে মুসলিম লীগ সরকারকে চ্যালেঞ্জ করার মতো তখন কোনো কার্যকর বিরোধী দল ছিল না। সে সময়ে কিছু তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ ঘটনা ঘটে যা ছিল পূর্ববাংলার মানুষের ধূমায়িত ক্ষোভেরই বহিঃপ্রকাশ: ১৯৪৮ সালের ৪ঠা জানুয়ারি পূর্ব পাকিস্তান মুসলিম ছাত্রলীগ গঠন, বাংলা ভাষার মর্যাদা প্রতিষ্ঠার দাবিতে ১৯৪৮ সালের ১১ই মার্চ প্রথম ধর্মঘট ও শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানসহ ছাত্র নেতৃবৃন্দের গ্রেফতার, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে মোহাম্মদ আলী জিন্নাহর 'উর্দুই হবে পাকিস্তানের একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রভাষা' ঘোষণার প্রকাশ্য প্রতিবাদ, ১৯৪৯ সালের জুন মাসে টাঙ্গাইলের উপনির্বাচনে মুসলিম লীগ প্রার্থী খুররম খান পন্নীকে পরাজিত করে শামসুল হকের জয়লাভ, ১৯৪৯ সালে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের চতুর্থ শ্রেণির কর্মচারীদের আন্দোলনে নেতৃত্বদানের অভিযোগে শেখ মুজিবসহ কয়েকজনকে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে বহিষ্কার—এসবের প্রেক্ষাপটে ১৯৪৯ সালের ২৩ ও ২৪শে জুন ঢাকার কে এম দাস লেনের রোজ গার্ডেনে মুসলিম লীগের একাংশের কর্মী সম্মেলনে পূর্ব পাকিস্তান আওয়ামী মুসলিম লীগ প্রতিষ্ঠা ও প্রথম বিরোধীদলের আত্মপ্রকাশ। নবগঠিত এই দলের সভাপতি নির্বাচিত হন মাওলানা আব্দুল হামিদ খান ভাসানী, সাধারণ সম্পাদক শামসুল হক ও যুগ্ম সম্পাদক শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান। বঙ্গবন্ধু তখন ছিলেন জেলে। অসমাপ্ত আত্মজীবনীতে এই দল গঠনের প্রেক্ষাপট সম্পর্কে তিনি লিখেছেন:

'আমার সাথে যোগাযোগ করা হয়েছিল, আমার মত নেওয়ার জন্য। আমি খবর দিয়েছিলাম, "আর মুসলিম লীগের পিছনে ঘুরে লাভ নাই এ প্রতিষ্ঠান এখন গণবিচ্ছিন্ন সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানে পরিণত হয়েছে। এরা আমাদের মুসলিম লীগে নিতে চাইলেও যাওয়া উচিত হবে না। কারণ এরা কোটারি করে ফেলেছে। একে আর জনগণের প্রতিষ্ঠান বলা চলে না। এদের কোন কর্মপন্থাও নাই" আমাকে আরো জিজ্ঞেস করা হয়েছিল আমি ছাত্র প্রতিষ্ঠান করব, না রাজনৈতিক প্রতিষ্ঠান গঠন হলে তাতে যোগদান করব? আমি উত্তর পাঠিয়েছিলাম ছাত্র রাজনীতি আমি করব না, রাজনৈতিক প্রতিষ্ঠানই করব। না করব কারণ বিরোধী দল সৃষ্টি করতে না পারলে এদেশে একনায়কত্ব চলবে।' (অসমাপ্ত আত্মজীবনী: পৃষ্ঠা ১২০)

আওয়ামী মুসলিম লীগের প্রতিষ্ঠা পাকিস্তানি শাসকগোষ্ঠীর একনায়কসুলভ আচরণের বিরুদ্ধে পূর্ব বাংলার মানুষের প্রতিবাদের প্রথম প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক রাজনৈতিক অভিব্যক্তি। সেই থেকে আজ ৭৫ বছর অতিক্রান্ত কিন্তু ইতিহাসের নিরিখে এই উপমহাদেশে ভারতীয় জাতীয় কংগ্রেস প্রতিষ্ঠার মতোই তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ ঘটনা এটি। বাঙালির আন্দোলন সংগ্রামের প্রতিটি কালপর্বে আওয়ামী লীগই বাঙালির আশা আকাঙ্ক্ষার প্রতীক দল হিসেবে নিজের অবস্থান সুদৃঢ় করেছে। ১৯৫১ সালে হোসেন শহীদ সোহরাওয়ার্দীর নেতৃত্বাধীন নিখিল পাকিস্তান জিন্নাহ আওয়ামী লীগও আওয়ামী লীগের সঙ্গে একীভূত হয়, ১৯৫৪ সালের নির্বাচনে যুক্তফ্রন্টের মূলশক্তি ছিল আওয়ামী লীগ। এর ধারাবাহিকতায় বঙ্গবন্ধুর নেতৃত্বে আওয়ামী লীগ অল্পসময়ের মধ্যে বাঙালির আশা আকাঙ্ক্ষার প্রতীক দলে পরিণত হয়। জন্মলগ্নে আওয়ামী মুসলিম লীগে নানা পন্থীদের সমাবেশ ঘটেছিল, তাদের আদর্শগত বৈপরীত্য দলে নানা সংকটেরও সৃষ্টি করেছে। বাস্তব কারণে শুরুতে 'মুসলিম' শব্দটি দলের নামে যুক্ত থাকলেও দলকে অসাম্প্রদায়িক করার লক্ষ্যে ১৯৫৫ সালে অনুষ্ঠিত বার্ষিক কাউন্সিল অধিবেশনে মুসলিম শব্দটি বাদ দেয়া হয়। ১৯৫৭ সালে কাগমারী সম্মেলনে দলের অভ্যন্তরীণ মতবিরোধ প্রকাশ্যে আসে, যার ফলে জুলাই মাসে মাওলানা ভাসানী ন্যাপ গঠন করে আওয়ামী লীগ থেকে আলাদা হয়ে যান।

৩. আওয়ামী লীগের প্রতিষ্ঠালগ্ন থেকে তারুণ্যের প্রাণশক্তি ছিলেন শেখ মুজিব। ১৯৫৪ সালে নির্বাচনে হক ভাসানী সোহরাওয়ার্দী যুক্তফ্রন্টের নেতৃত্বে থাকলেও তরুণ নেতা শেখ মুজিব ছিলেন অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। পরবর্তী সময়ের ঘটনা প্রবাহে আমরা দেখি আওয়ামী লীগ ও শেখ মুজিবের উপর বিভিন্ন সময় নেমে এসেছে জেল জুলুম নির্যাতন। ১৯৫৭ সালে পাকিস্তানে 'মার্শাল ল' জারি করা হয় এবং সকল রাজনৈতিক দল নিষিদ্ধ ঘোষণা করা হয়। শেখ মুজিবসহ নেতৃবৃন্দকে গ্রেফতার করা হয়। আওয়ামী লীগের রাজনীতিতে বড় মোড় পরিবর্তন ঘটে ১৯৬৪ সালে শেখ মুজিব কর্তৃক আওয়ামী লীগ পুনরুজ্জীবনের মাধ্যমে।

১৯৬৬ সালে বাঙালির মুক্তির সনদ ছয় দফা দাবি উত্থাপনের মাধ্যমে স্বাধীনতার স্বপ্নবীজ বপন করেন তিনি। ছয় দফাকে তিনি বলেছিলেন 'আমাদের বাঁচার দাবি'। সমস্ত আইয়ুব শাহী তাঁকে বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদী, পাকিস্তানের দুশমনসহ নানা আখ্যা দেয় কিন্তু কিছুই দমাতে পারেনি তাঁকে। ১৯৬৬ সালের ১৮ই মার্চ আওয়ামী লীগের কাউন্সিলে উদ্বোধনী সংগীত ছিল রবীন্দ্রনাথের 'আমার সোনার বাংলা আমি তোমায় ভালোবাসি' গানটি। এটিও তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ এই কারণে যে পরবর্তী সময়ে এই গানটিকে বাংলাদেশের জাতীয় সংগীত হিসেবে নির্বাচন করেছেন বঙ্গবন্ধু। ১৯৬৯ সালে শহীদ সোহরাওয়ার্দীর মৃত্যুবার্ষিকীতে আওয়ামী লীগের আলোচনা সভায় পূর্ব বাংলার নাম তিনি দেন বাংলাদেশ।

তবে বাঙালির ইতিহাসের চূড়ান্ত বাকবদল ঘটে ১৯৭১ সালের মার্চ মাসে। ৭ই মার্চে যখন বঙ্গবন্ধু জাতিকে স্বাধীনতা যুদ্ধের প্রস্তুতি গ্রহণের আহ্বান জানিয়ে ঘোষণা দেন 'এবারের সংগ্রাম আমাদের মুক্তির সংগ্রাম, এবারের সংগ্রাম স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম' তখনই বদলে যায় বাংলাদেশের ইতিহাসের গতিধারা। ২৫শে মার্চে গণহত্যার রাতের অব্যবহিত পরে ২৬শে মার্চ প্রথম প্রহরে বঙ্গবন্ধু স্বাধীনতা ঘোষণা করেন। পাকিস্তান সামরিক জান্তা তাঁকে গ্রেপ্তার করে। বন্দীদশায় থেকেও যুদ্ধের নয় মাস তিনি ছিলেন মুক্তিযুদ্ধের সার্বক্ষণিক প্রেরণা, তাঁর অনুসারীরা আওয়ামী লীগের নেতৃত্বে প্রবাসে বাংলাদেশ সরকার গঠন করে। বঙ্গবন্ধুকে রাষ্ট্রপতি, সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম অস্থায়ী রাষ্ট্রপতি ও তাজউদ্দীন আহমদকে নবগঠিত সরকারের প্রধানমন্ত্রী হিসেবে নির্বাচন করা হয়। আওয়ামী লীগের নেতৃত্বে সংগঠিত ও পরিচালিত হয়েছে মুক্তিযুদ্ধ।

১৯৭২ সালের ১০ই জানুয়ারি পাকিস্তানি বন্দীদশা থেকে মুক্ত হয়ে স্বাধীন বাংলাদেশে ফিরে আসেন বঙ্গবন্ধু। দেশ পুনর্গঠনে মাত্র তিন বছরের কিছু বেশি সময় পেয়েছিলেন তিনি। এ সময়ে অনেক গুরুত্বপূর্ণ কাজ সম্পাদিত হয়েছে যার তালিকা দীর্ঘ—সংবিধান প্রণয়ন, যুদ্ধবিধ্বস্ত ভৌত অবকাঠামো রাস্তাঘাট ব্রিজ নির্মাণ, প্রশাসনিক অবকাঠামো নির্মাণ, আইন-শৃঙ্খলা প্রতিষ্ঠাসহ শরণার্থী পুনর্বাসন, অর্থনীতিতে প্রাণসঞ্চারসহ নানাবিধ কাজ সম্পাদিত হয়েছে তখন। বাংলাদেশের অর্থনীতিতে সর্বোচ্চ প্রবৃদ্ধি ঘটে তখন ১৯৭৩ সালের সাধারণ নির্বাচনে আওয়ামী লীগ সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতা অর্জন করে।

সে সময় একাত্তরে পরাজিত শক্তির ষড়যন্ত্র, বৈজ্ঞানিক সমাজতন্ত্র প্রতিষ্ঠার নামে হঠকারী রাজনীতি, দেশি-বিদেশি নানা ষড়যন্ত্র মোকাবেলা করতে হয়েছে তাকে। আজীবন শান্তির অন্বেষণকারী ছিলেন তিনি, চিন্তা-চেতনায় ছিলেন সমন্বয়বাদী—এই উপলব্ধি থেকে ১৯৭৫ সালে সকলকে ঐক্যবদ্ধ করে দ্বিতীয় বিপ্লবের কর্মসূচি ঘোষণা করেছিলেন। ১৯৭৫ সালের ১৫ই আগস্ট বঙ্গবন্ধুকে পরিবারের অধিকাংশ সদস্যসহ হত্যার পরে ঘাতক কবলিত বাংলাদেশে একটি দীর্ঘ ও পরিকল্পিত ইতিহাস বিকৃতির কাল শুরু হয়। আওয়ামী লীগের জন্য সেটি ছিল সবচেয়ে বড় দুঃসময়—কাণ্ডারিবিহীন নৌকার ঘুরে ঘুরে চলা! ৩রা নভেম্বর ১৯৭৫ সালে জেলখানায় নির্মমভাবে হত্যা করা হয় আওয়ামী লীগের চার জাতীয় নেতা সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম, তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ, ক্যাপ্টেন মনসুর আলী, এএইচএম কামারুজ্জামানকে। ১৯৮১ সালের ১৭ই মে একটি ঝড়ো দিনে লক্ষ লক্ষ মানুষের শোক ও অশ্রু ভেজা অভ্যর্থনায় সিক্ত হয়ে বঙ্গবন্ধুকন্যা শেখ হাসিনা নির্বাসন কাল থেকে দেশে ফিরে আসেন। আওয়ামী লীগের রাজনীতিতে যুগান্তর ঘটে তখন। তাঁর নেতৃত্বে ২১ বছর পরে আওয়ামী লীগ পুনরায় রাষ্ট্র পরিচালনার সুযোগ পায়।

৪. পিতা থেকে কন্যা—এ এক মহাকাব্যিক উপাখ্যান। পিতা দিয়েছে স্বাধীন স্বদেশ কন্যা দিয়েছে আলো। বঙ্গবন্ধুর অসাম্প্রদায়িক জীবনবোধ, সাহস ও মানব মুক্তির দর্শন ধারণ করে দেশরত্ন শেখ হাসিনা বাংলাদেশের রাজনীতিতে নতুন মাত্রা যোগ করেছেন। তাঁর নেতৃত্বে আমাদের প্রিয় মাতৃভূমি 'স্বপ্নের সোনালি অধ্যায়' অতিক্রম করছে। মোট পাঁচবার তিনি প্রধানমন্ত্রী হিসেবে নির্বাচিত হয়েছেন, তন্মধ্যে একটানা চতুর্থবার। উন্নয়ন এবং অগ্রগতির নানা সূচকে বাংলাদেশ এখন আদায় করে নিয়েছে বৈশ্বিক সমীহ। বাংলাদেশ এখন বিশ্বের ৩৩তম বৃহৎ অর্থনীতি। বিদ্যুৎ, শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, প্রযুক্তি, কৃষি, যোগাযোগ অবকাঠামো, সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা ও দারিদ্র্য নিরসন , অনগ্রসর জনগোষ্ঠীর সুরক্ষা, গৃহহীনদের গৃহ দেয়া, খাদ্য নিরাপত্তা, বৈদেশিক সম্পর্ক, নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন ও শিশু কল্যাণ, বঙ্গবন্ধু হত্যাকারীদের বিচারসহ সকল ক্ষেত্রে সাফল্য বাংলাদেশেকে উচ্চ মর্যাদায় আসীন করেছে।দেশের অভ্যন্তরে নানামুখী স্রোতকে তিনি যেমন দক্ষতার সঙ্গে সমন্বয় করেছেন তেমনি মোকাবেলা করেছেন বৈশ্বিক নানা চাপ। করোনা বিশ্বমারি রাশিয়া ইউক্রেন যুদ্ধ ও বর্তমানে গাজায় ইসরাইলের আগ্রাসনের মুখে তাঁর সুচিন্তিত ও সাহসী পদক্ষেপ এখন সর্বত্র প্রশংসিত। দেশের অভ্যন্তরে জঙ্গিবাদ, বিএনপি জামাতের বোমা ও অগ্নিসন্ত্রাস, হত্যা, নাশকতা ও অপপ্রচার মোকাবেলা করেছেন দৃঢ় হাতে। তাঁর নেতৃত্বে রাজপথেও সমান সক্রিয় থেকেছে আওয়ামী লীগ।

২০০৮ সালে ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ গঠনের লক্ষ্যে দিন বদলের সনদ ঘোষণা করেছিলেন তিনি। ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ এখন বাস্তবতা। তার ধারাবাহিকতায় ২০২৪ সালের নির্বাচনী ইশতেহারে স্মার্ট বাংলাদেশ গঠনের ঘোষণা দিয়েছেন যার লক্ষ স্মার্ট নাগরিক, স্মার্ট অর্থনীতি, স্মার্ট সরকার এবং স্মার্ট সমাজ। ১৯৭১ সালে বঙ্গবন্ধুর নেতৃত্বে রাজনৈতিক মুক্তির দর্শন থেকে ২০২১ সালে অর্থনীতির মুক্তির দর্শন মধ্যম আয়ের ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ, ২০৪১ সালে সাংস্কৃতিক মুক্তির দর্শন অসাম্প্রদায়িক প্রগতিশীল, অন্তর্ভুক্তিমূলক, উন্নত সমৃদ্ধ স্মার্ট বাংলাদেশ, ২০৭১ সালে সমৃদ্ধির সর্বোচ্চ শিখর স্বাধীনতার ১০০ বছর পূর্তি এবং ২১০০ সালে নিরাপদ বদ্বীপ ডেল্টা প্ল্যান—শেখ হাসিনার নেতৃত্বে আওয়ামী লীগের স্বদেশ নির্মাণের পথমানচিত্র।

৫. আওয়ামী লীগের ৭৫তম জয়ন্তী শুধু বাংলাদেশে নয় উপমহাদেশের রাজনীতিতেও একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ মাইল ফলক। দীর্ঘ পথপরিক্রমায় আওয়ামী লীগ জনমনে একটা গভীর আস্থা তৈরি করেছে। সময়ের প্রয়োজনে দলের গঠনতন্ত্র বদলেছে—অঙ্গীকার ও প্রত্যাশায় যুক্ত হয়েছে সময়ের নানা দাবি—কিন্তু নীতিতে কোনো পরিবর্তন হয়নি, অবিচল থেকেছে রাষ্ট্রের চার মূলনীতি— গণতন্ত্র সমাজতন্ত্র জাতীয়তাবাদ ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতার প্রতি।

সারাদেশে, দেশের বাইরে প্রবাসে কোটি কোটি কর্মীর আত্মত্যাগ ও শ্রমে বঙ্গবন্ধুর হাতে গড়া বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ আজ তাঁর কন্যা শেখ হাসিনা'র নেতৃত্বে সমৃদ্ধ দেশ গঠনের কাজে ব্যাপৃত। আওয়ামী লীগ ও এর সহযোগী সংগঠনের কোটি কোটি কর্মী ও জনগণের আস্থা ও সমর্থন আওয়ামী লীগের মূলশক্তি। বিগত দিনে আওয়ামী লীগ যেমন প্রতিকূল কঠিন সময় অতিক্রম করে এগিয়ে গেছে তেমনি সকলের প্রত্যাশা এই যে আগামী দিনেও সমৃদ্ধ বাংলাদেশ গঠনের অঙ্গীকারে অব্যাহত থাকবে এই অগ্রযাত্রা।

জয় বাংলা, জয় বঙ্গবন্ধু।

ওবায়দুল কাদের, এমপি
সাধারণ সম্পাদক
বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ

সাধারণ সম্পাদকের কথা

দক্ষিণ এশিয়ার অন্যতম প্রাচীন, ঐতিহ্যবাহী রাজনৈতিক দল বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ। মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধে নেতৃত্ব দানকারী দলটি জন্মলগ্ন থেকে জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের প্রজ্ঞাবান নেতৃত্বে গড়ে উঠেছে। বাঙালি জাতির মুক্তিদাতা মহান নেতা শেখ মুজিব নিজের জীবনকে উৎসর্গ করেছেন দেশমাতৃকার মুক্তির সংগ্রামে এবং আওয়ামী লীগকে একটি সমতা ও সম্প্রীতির আদর্শনির্ভর দল হিসেবে নির্মাণের কাজে। বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের সম্মানিত সভাপতি দেশরত্ন শেখ হাসিনা তাঁর একটি অনবদ্য লেখায় যথার্থভাবে তুলে ধরেছেন কী অসাধারণ মিথস্ক্রিয়ায় বঙ্গবন্ধুর নেতৃত্বে একটি জাতিরাষ্ট্রের জন্মের সঙ্গে যুক্ত হয়ে গিয়েছিল একটি দলের আদর্শভিত্তিক অভিযাত্রা। তিনি লিখেছেন, 'অহিংস অসহযোগ আন্দোলন আর সশস্ত্র মুক্তিযুদ্ধের অভূতপূর্ব সমন্বয়ে আমাদের স্বাধীনতা অর্জন।' যুগপৎ এই দুই রাজনৈতিক কৌশলের সমন্বয়, মিশ্রণ ও বিজয় অর্জন পৃথিবীর ইতিহাসে এক বিরল ঘটনা, যা সম্ভব করেছে গণমানুষের দল–আওয়ামী লীগ। জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের বলিষ্ঠ নেতৃত্বে বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ সংগঠনের নিবেদিত বিশাল কর্মী বাহিনীর দেশপ্রেম ও আত্মত্যাগই এই অসম্ভবকে সম্ভব করতে পেরেছে।

আজ আমরা এক মাহেন্দ্রক্ষণে এসে পৌঁছেছি–এদেশের মানুষের আশা ও ভরসার স্থল বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ প্রতিষ্ঠার ৭৫ বছর উদ্‌যাপন করছে।

১৯৪৯ সালে যাত্রা শুরুর পর থেকে বাংলাদেশে আওয়ামী লীগের সাড়ে সাত দশকের পথচলা মুক্তির আলোকবর্তিকা হয়ে উদ্ভাসিত থাকার গৌরবোজ্জ্বল ইতিহাস। বায়ান্নর ভাষা আন্দোলন, আমাদের মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধ ও গণতন্ত্র প্রতিষ্ঠার সংগ্রামে নেতৃত্ব প্রদানকারী দল। আওয়ামী লীগের প্রতিটি নেতাকর্মীর জন্য এটি অত্যন্ত আনন্দময় মুহূর্ত। আজকের এই শুভক্ষণে গভীর শ্রদ্ধাভরে স্মরণ করছি সর্বকালের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালি জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান ও তাঁর পরিবারের শহিদ সদস্যদের। স্মরণ করছি কেন্দ্রীয় কারাগারে ঘাতকের বুলেটে নিহত জাতীয় চার নেতা সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম, তাজউদ্দীন আহমদ, এম মনসুর আলী এবং এএইচএম কামারুজ্জামানকে। বিনম্র শ্রদ্ধা জানাই মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধে ৩০ লাখ শহিদ ও সম্ভ্রম হারানো তিন লাখ মা-বোনের প্রতি। সুদীর্ঘ এই অভিযাত্রায় যাদের ঘাম-শ্রম-মেধা আর আত্মত্যাগে গড়ে উঠেছে আজকের বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ, শ্রদ্ধা জানাই সেই সব মহৎ প্রাণের প্রতি।

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের বলিষ্ঠ নেতৃত্ব ও আওয়ামী লীগের নেতাকর্মীদের ত্যাগ-তিতিক্ষায় বিশ্ব মানচিত্রে স্বমহিমায় উদ্ভাসিত হয়েছে বাঙালি জাতির হাজার বছরের লালিত স্বপ্ন স্বাধীন সার্বভৌম বাংলাদেশ।

দক্ষতা ও দৃঢ়তার সঙ্গে সদ্য স্বাধীন যুদ্ধবিধ্বস্ত দেশ পুনর্গঠনের কাজ করেছিলেন বঙ্গবন্ধু। কিন্তু বাঙালি জাতিকে নেতৃত্বশূন্য করে একটি ব্যর্থ ও অকার্যকর রাষ্ট্রে পরিণত করতে '৭১-এর পরাজিত শক্তি সপরিবারে জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান ও জাতীয় চার নেতাকে হত্যা করে। পথ হারায় মুক্তিযুদ্ধের চেতনার প্রিয় বাংলাদেশ।

এমনি এক প্রেক্ষাপটে আওয়ামী লীগের হাল ধরেন বঙ্গবন্ধুকন্যা জননেত্রী শেখ হাসিনা। তাঁর এই ঐতিহাসিক ও যুগান্তকারী সিদ্ধান্ত দিশেহারা জনগণের মধ্যে নতুন আশার সঞ্চার ঘটায়। নবোদ্যমে সংগঠিত হয় সারাদেশের আওয়ামী লীগের নেতাকর্মীরা। জননেত্রী শেখ হাসিনার সাহসী ও সুদূরপ্রসারী নেতৃত্বে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয় জনগণের সাংবিধানিক ও গণতান্ত্রিক অধিকার। ধ্বংসের দ্বারপ্রান্তে থাকা দেশটি '৯৬ সালে প্রধানমন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনার নেতৃত্বে আবার ঘুরে দাঁড়ায়। মানুষের জীবনে নেমে আসে স্বস্তি। কিন্তু এই অগ্রযাত্রা আবারো বাধাগ্রস্ত হয়। ২০০১ সাল থেকে ২০০৮ পর্যন্ত বিএনপি-জামাত অপশক্তি আওয়ামী লীগকে নিশ্চিহ্ন করতে চেয়েছিল। ২০০৪ সালের ২১ আগস্ট বঙ্গবন্ধুকন্যাকে হত্যার উদ্দেশ্যে বর্বরোচিত গ্রেনেড হামলা চালিয়েছিল।

সকল ষড়যন্ত্র, সকল অপচেষ্টাকে প্রতিহত করে ২০০৯, ২০১৪, ২০১৯ এবং ২০২৪ সালে সর্বকালের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালি, জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের সুযোগ্য কন্যা মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনার নেতৃত্বে বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ জনগণের রায় নিয়ে টানা চারবার সরকার গঠন করে। মাত্র ১৫ বছরে হতদরিদ্র বাংলাদেশের চেহারাটা আমূল পাল্টে দিয়েছে। যে বাংলাদেশ ছিল অবহেলিত, দারিদ্র্যপীড়িত, যে বাংলাদেশকে নিয়ে পশ্চিমা বিশ্ব উপহাস করতো 'তলাবিহীন ঝুড়ি' বলে, মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী দেশরত্ন শেখ হাসিনার দূরদর্শী, সুদক্ষ, সৃজনশীল ও সাহসী নেতৃত্বের ফলেই সেই বাংলাদেশ আজ সারা বিশ্বে উন্নয়নের বিস্ময়কর রোল মডেল। জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান যে সোনার বাংলার স্বপ্ন আমাদের দেখিয়েছিলেন, তাঁর সেই স্বপ্ন আজ বাস্তবায়িত হচ্ছে তাঁরই কন্যা দেশরত্ন শেখ হাসিনার নেতৃত্বে দেশকে স্মার্ট বাংলাদেশে রূপান্তরের মাধ্যমে, স্বল্পোন্নত থেকে উন্নয়নশীল দেশে উন্নীত করার মাধ্যমে এবং দেশকে খাদ্যে উদ্বৃত্ত দেশে পরিণত করার মাধ্যমে। সুশাসন, স্থিতিশীল অর্থনীতি, কৃষি উৎপাদন বৃদ্ধি, উন্নয়নে গতিশীলতা, ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ, শিক্ষার প্রসার, স্বাস্থ্যসেবা নিশ্চিতকরণ, কর্মসংস্থান, বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদন বৃদ্ধি, সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা বেষ্টনী, খাদ্য নিরাপত্তা, নারীর ক্ষমতায়নসহ বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে এসেছে অভূতপূর্ব সফলতা। উন্নয়নের এই ধারাবাহিকতায় বাংলাদেশের অর্থনীতি আজকে একটি শক্ত ভিত্তির উপর দাঁড়িয়েছে। বাংলাদেশ এখন দ্রুত উন্নয়নশীল দেশগুলোর মধ্যে সামনের কাতারে। বিশ্বজুড়ে প্রশংসিত হচ্ছে বাংলাদেশের এই সাফল্য ও অর্জন।

জন্মলগ্ন থেকে এখন পর্যন্ত আওয়ামী লীগের শক্তির উৎস জনগণ, শক্তির উৎস সংগঠনের তৃণমূল পর্যায়ের নেতাকর্মীরা। নেতা-কর্মীদের ইস্পাতদৃঢ় মনোবল এবং ঐক্যবদ্ধতার ফলে আওয়ামী লীগের বিরুদ্ধে কোনো ষড়যন্ত্র সফল হয়নি, কোনোদিন হবেও না।

বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ এ মুহূর্তে বাংলাদেশের সর্ববৃহৎ ও সবচেয়ে শক্তিশালী রাজনৈতিক সংগঠন। আওয়ামী লীগের নিবেদিত নেতাকর্মীরা আজ বঙ্গবন্ধুর সুযোগ্য কন্যা দেশরত্ন শেখ হাসিনার নেতৃত্বে ঐক্যবদ্ধ।

আমার বিশ্বাস, আমাদের সংগঠনের সর্বস্তরের নেতাকর্মীরা বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগকে একটি প্রশিক্ষিত, সুশৃঙ্খল ও সুসংগঠিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে পরিণত করে সংগঠনের গৌরবময় অতীত ঐতিহ্যকে সমুন্নত রাখতে সক্ষম হবে।

জয় বাংলা, জয় বঙ্গবন্ধু
বাংলাদেশ চিরজীবী হোক।

ওবায়দুল কাদের, এমপি

প্রকাশনায়: প্রচার ও প্রকাশনা উপ-পরিষদ

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

'Baaji' delivers high-stakes drama in cricket's shadow

SAEED KHAN SHAGOR

In ***Baaji***, director Arifur Rahman crafts a narrative that unfolds against the backdrop of intense drama and societal complexities, using the mysterious death of rising cricket star Apu, in Captain Abir's (Tahsan Khan) local team, as its pivot point.

In one scene, Inspector Topu (Manoj Pramanik) and his subordinate drink in a bar. Topu's life is murky, struggling to reconcile with the inevitable compromises of personal and family life. The solo of ***Teka O Pakhi*** plays in the background. In its lyrics, the song reflects the elusive nature of money and the high cost of chasing it; ***Baaji*** seems to serve as a solemn reminder of this familiar truth.

Released on the OTT platform Chorki during Eid-ul-Azha, the star-studded web-series has become one of the festive highlights starring the former celebrity couple Tahsan Khan and Rafiath Rashid Mithila. It also features Mim Mantasha, Nazia Haque Orsha, Shahadat Hossain, Partho Sheikh, Tasnuva Tisha, Abrar Athar, Azharul Hoque Adil, and Manoj Pramanik.

Penned jointly by Aditya Sengupta and Hasanat, the plot unfolds with the mysterious death of rising cricket star Apu, who dies under suspicious circumstances after delivering a stellar performance as Man of the Match.

In investigating his brother's death, Topu begins to unravel a series of puzzles, including rumours linking the country's biggest cricket star Abir to the incident. Topu's informal entry into an exclusive cricket practice session, despite being a nobody in the team, serves as a pivotal yet illogical subplot, driving the story. The episodes are aptly titled with cricket-based jargon like Powerplay, Decision Pending, Strategic Timeout, etc.

Scriptwriter Hasanat endeavours to infuse the screenplay with subplots and dialogues that touch on family life, internal police biases, power dynamics, and the influence of "editor's choice" in journalism.

Though the narrative revolves around betting and its consequences, actual cricket scenes are minimal. Accordingly, despite its unique framing, the story ultimately culminates in a conventional murder mystery.

However the depiction of betting as a mass-market phenomenon is lacking, instead presenting it as an elite culture. This portrayal, amid the widespread promotion of betting sites, raises questions about the director's target audience. The subplot of Tahsan and Mithila's relationship and their professional reunion with the dialogue– "we are professionals" – serves as a brilliant metaphor.

The recurring tropes in our local series productions, like, infertility in Topu and Renu's marriage and police characters depicted as losers, need reevaluation. However, the script notably gives every character equal space.

The character of Mrs 45, played exceptionally by Nazia Haque Orsha, can single-handedly drive the show. She stands out with her portrayal of a mother, the wife of a disabled man, a family's cornerstone, and a simultaneous ruthless contract killer.

Marking his OTT debut with ***Baaji***, Tahsan Khan comfortably handles his role as Abir, whether creating tension through his performance or navigating the strains of his character. However, his portrayal on the field lacks finesse, as his grip on the bat, positioning, execution, and body movements are not convincing.

Although the story's predictable outcome somewhat diminishes Topu's struggles, Manoj Pramanik excels as a brother and performs credibly as an ordinary police officer. His fight scenes, nevertheless, lack conviction. His batting scenes are poorly executed with an unconvincing grips and positioning.

Rafiath Rashid Mithila plays a young journalist, Jinia who occasionally loses direction. She is provided hurried efforts to maintain continuity within the storyline. Mithila's performance is commendable, though her screen time is limited compared to others, despite being a major draw in the trailer and marketing strategy.

Cinematographer Suman Sarker, known for his previously notable Bangladeshi projects, adds his personal touch with beautifully framed indoor shots. However, the series struggles to capture the kinetic energy of cricket matches, using a style ill-suited to broadcast sports.

The editing, including basic tasks like on-screen scoreline updates, is botched. For instance, MH Munna's over is inaccurately marked, and the score remains unchanged in subsequent overs. In another scene, Officer Mokarram Hossain exits at 11:40, but the clock shows 11:30 in the next shot.

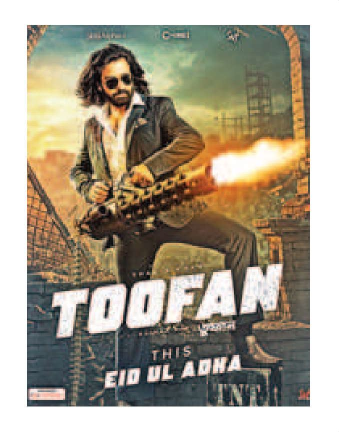
Colourist Chinmoy Roy's work is exquisite, particularly in scenes like Topu's mother wearing an abaya indoors. The impact of costumes on colour balance is evident, showcasing how they can greatly influence character portrayal in fiction.

Setting aside technical faults, ***Baaji*** narrates the story of a societal class crucial to our structure. Their proximity to power may limit audience relatability, yet depicting them in fiction helps viewers understand their real position, marking ***Baaji's*** indirect success.

Scriptwriter Hasanat endeavours to infuse the screenplay with subplots and dialogues that touch on family life, internal police biases, power dynamics, and the influence of "editor's choice" in journalism.

PHOTOS: **COURTESY**

'Toofan' to hit Indian theatres this Friday



Raihan Rafi's film ***Toofan***, starring Shakib Khan, will make its international debut on June 28 after premiering on Eid Day (June 17) in 129 theatres across Bangladesh. The film has been consistently drawing growing crowds.

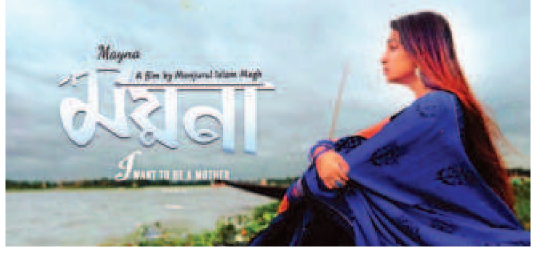
After its regional success and with local theaters extending shows due to its immense audience draw, ***Toofan*** is set to captivate audiences in West Bengal, India.

Last Friday, Raihan Rafi confirmed that ***Toofan*** will hit West Bengal theatres on June 28.

The decision to release the film in India comes amid overwhelming demand from audiences. Additionally, the film's co-producer and distributor, India's SVF, has played a significant role in this international release.

Italian Film Festival honours 'Mayna'

The Bangladeshi film ***Mayna*** ("I Want to Be a Mother"), produced by Alimullah Khokon and directed by Monjurul Islam Megh, has recently been awarded at the Gulf of Naples Independent Film Festival in Italy.



Mayna
A film by Monjurul Islam Megh
ময়না
I WANT TO BE A MOTHER

The 10th edition of the festival ran from June 11 to 14 on Naples' beaches. In the competition, ***Mayna***, produced by Jaaz Multimedia, was the sole Asian film selected.

Mayna was honoured with a "Special Mention Feature Film Award" by the judging panel from a global pool of submissions including films from countries like the USA, Mexico, Spain, and others.

NEWS

Khaleda in Evercare CCU

FROM PAGE 12

He asked for prayers from the public, saying, "I urge everyone to pray for madam's early recovery. May Allah grant her good health."

Khaleda's physician Professor AZM Zahid Hossain said Fakhrul visited the hospital and discussed with the medical board members the BNP chairperson's health condition and treatment.

"Madam is under intensive observation in the CCU. The treatment is ongoing," he said.

Khaleda Zia was rushed to Evercare Hospital in an ambulance around 3:30am as she suddenly fell ill at her residence, "Firoza" in Gulshan.

She was quickly admitted to the CCU, where medical treatment began under the supervision of the medical board.

The medical board members, led by specialist physician Professor Shahabuddin Talukdar, had several meetings to discuss the former prime minister's current condition and her treatment.

Khaleda went to Evercare Hospital on May 1 for a health check-up. During that visit, doctors treated her at the CCU for two days.

The former prime minister, aged 79, has long battled various ailments, including liver cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes, and issues related to the kidney, lung, heart, and eyes.

Since her conditional release from prison in 2020, the BNP chief has been receiving medical care repeatedly at the hospital under the supervision of a medical board headed by cardiologist Prof Shahabuddin Talukder.

Khaleda's doctors have been advising sending her abroad since she was diagnosed with liver cirrhosis in November 2021.

On October 26, last year, three US specialist doctors completed a hepatic procedure known as the transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt (TIPS procedure) to stop water accumulation in Khaleda's stomach and chest, and bleeding in her liver.

Spectrum of ties widens

FROM PAGE 1

in terms of trade and energy interdependency, which delivers a win-win scenario for both nations. Meanwhile, Dhaka's economy dictates it sees its future linked with Central and Southeast Asia's markets, in which the geography and bureaucracy of India will continue to play a role.

It was encouraging that the re-elected Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended his government's hands to build digital and green partnerships for a sustainable future; Bangladesh's prime minister held forth the necessity of cooperation to make shared waters sustainable.

Noteworthy, Modi reminded his friends of Bangladesh's contribution to India's connectivity needs, which have direct effects on the Indian economy by connecting its hinterland with the cardinal economic hubs. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, as generous as she has been, warmheartedly recognised India's contribution to the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 and, of course, the economic growth that both nations enjoy.

Regionalism was further highlighted during this visit. SAARC and BIMSTEC will continue to be priority institutions in Bangladesh's approach to the regional commonwealth.

SAARC originates in Dhaka, and BIMSTEC's headquarters is also in the Bangladeshi capital. At least, the bilateral talks aim to meaningfully revive BIMSTEC, with Modi's renewed attention to it being a great move.

Not surprisingly, the talks featured defence cooperation -- a crucial aspect in the context of South Asian geopolitics, in the form of defence production to modernise the armed forces.

Bangladesh seeks to diversify and modernise its military capabilities to withstand conventional threats emanating from Myanmar and unconventional threats sweeping in from unmanned sources.

The idea of the practical feasibility of defence cooperation will be put to the test in the coming years as the India-Myanmar-China triad will remain a key boiling point for Dhaka's defence interests.

Moreover, as always, counterterrorism, combating fundamentalism, and peaceful border management were raised during the talks.

But the people in Dhaka and beyond won't hesitate to ask for the specificity of these issues when the global community notes Dhaka's extraordinary capabilities in countering terrorism or extremism.

My best review of this summit-level visit lies in my Machiavellian understanding that foreign relations are not based on charity and that nations will always maximise their national interests.

Teesta basin, for example, is home to around 30 million people, two percent of whom are in Sikkim, 27 in West Bengal, and 71 in northwest Bangladesh. The northwest population is a crucial part of Bangladesh's LDC graduation in 2026.

The question that would loom large is how fast we can solve the issue through our bilateral ties. The Farakka and the other 50 rivers are still dwindling in the public memory.

Geostrategically speaking, for Bangladesh, India is the future of South Asian stability, depending on its success in managing its neighborhood-first policy and the northeast or religious plurality. Meanwhile, for India, Bangladesh is the future of its regional leadership as Bangladesh continues to significantly contribute to the Indian economy and security.

The visit, hence, deserves to be seen as a stocktaking of the past and future based on mutual capabilities and genuineness in commitments.

In terms of politics, Hasina stands firm in parliament with her absolute majority, making her the prime foreign policymaker in Dhaka, while Modi returned to power with the return of coalition politics.

Bangladesh's prime minister has expressed her interest in further involving the new leadership in India in Bangladesh's economy. She has also clearly indicated the need for further talks on a comprehensive economic partnership that should be based on mutual interests by not bypassing its Indo-Pacific partners.

This means the future of bilateral cooperation is astronomically high, but pragmatism and mutual capabilities should be the key determinants if I see Bangladesh's national interest, be it in terms of water management or the politics of external powers.

Therefore, both nations have promised deep cooperation that should be equal-handed in the coming days.

The writer is a professor in international relations and the executive director of Jahangirnagar University's Bangladesh Center for Indo-Pacific Affairs.

'Journos should be more cautious'

FROM PAGE 12

the headlines "Benazir's ghost also in police telecom" and "Factory in China, police officers visit Malaysia".

"On June 12, the newspaper published a rejoinder sent by the police telecom. The department said it procures necessary radio equipment from international and local suppliers through international or local tenders," said the letter.

It further reads, "Publication of negative news about the Bangladesh Police in various newspapers and electronic media outlets, has increased noticeably and those reports often do not mention any sources. Such unverified and false reports could harm the police force's reputation and undermine the morale of its members ... "

Given this situation, there is a need to verify the accuracy and authenticity of the published reports, the letter said.

The information ministry should verify the authenticity of those published reports and take appropriate measures to ascertain the sources of the information, it added.

Farmers count the losses

FROM PAGE 12

on the sanctuaries so that we can protect the various fish species that have been washed away from local farms and ponds during the flash floods."

Meanwhile, the divisional agricultural extension department reports that farmers in the region are looking at a significant loss of paddy and vegetables, as over 26,000 hectares of farmland have been submerged.

The flood-affected croplands comprise 17,460 hectares of Aush paddy, 1,123 hectares of Aush seedbed, 167 hectares of Aman seedbed, and 7,656 hectares of vegetables.

Mati Lal Halder, a sub-assistant agriculture officer at the divisional DAE, said, "We have not estimated the financial loss yet because a large amount of paddy and vegetables may survive once the water recedes. We will estimate the financial loss once the floodwaters have receded completely."

With only a trace of rainfall and occasional sunny skies, the water level of the Surma River was rapidly receding yesterday, improving the flood situation in vast areas.

The river at Sylhet City Point fell below the danger mark yesterday morning, while it flowed slightly above it at other points.

The flood situation in Moulvibazar and Habiganj is also starting to get better as the water levels in the Manu, Khowai, and Dhalai rivers fell below the danger marks.

However, the Kushiyara River continued to be above the danger level at Fenchuganj point as well as at all other points in Sylhet and Moulvibazar.

Just 2mm of rain fell on Sylhet city in the 24 hours till yesterday morning, while Moheshkhola in Sunamganj recorded the most at 121mm.

The flood situation in the Sylhet region is expected improve in the next 72 hours, according to yesterday morning's forecast by the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre and Water Development Board.

A total of 21.08 lakh people have been affected by the flash floods in Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Moulvibazar districts with 53,244 people residing in the shelter centres as of yesterday afternoon.

In the past three weeks, Sylhet city has been inundated five times due to heavy rains, affecting hundreds of areas and causing untold suffering to the dwellers.

Earlier, on May 29, heavy rains and hill torrents from upstream caused flooding in Sylhet. The flood situation began to normalise on June 8.

However, continuous rains starting in the early hours of June 17 led to another flood in the district.

Prior to this, in May, floods were caused by hill torrents and rains from upstream in India.

Tigers on brink of elimination

FROM PAGE 12

and hope that the Australia-India clash tomorrow in Saint Lucia does not get washed out.

Bangladesh openers Tanzid Tamim (13 off 10) and Liton Das (29 off 31) stitched a 35-run stand -- the best showing by the Tigers' openers so far in the tournament -- but the required rate of above nine always looked to be out of reach for the Tigers.

Skipper Shanto tried to up the tempo with a few maximums -- two in the same over of Pandya and the other off Ravindra Jadeja -- but that never put India under any sort of pressure as they managed to maintain a tight grip throughout the game.

Shanto was dismissed by Jasprit Bumrah in the 16th over, with the Tigers getting reduced to 109 for five. Always struggling to keep pace with the asking rate, Bangladesh headed towards the inevitable as Rishad's 10-ball 24-run cameo -- including three maximums and a four -- only reduced the margin of defeat.

Earlier, Pandya smashed a quickfire unbeaten 27-ball 50 while Virat Kohli (37 off 28), Rishabh Pant (36 off 28), and Shivam Dube (34 off 24) made 30-odd scores at a brisk pace to propel India, who are almost certain to book a semifinal spot.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

A waste of resources and knowledge

Why are medical, engineering graduates opting for BCS general cadre?

At a time when graduates' fixation with government jobs amid shrinking economic opportunities has emerged as a serious concern, it is perhaps not shocking that a large number of them are from medical and engineering backgrounds, who are forgoing careers in their specialised fields in favour of civil service positions. According to data from the Public Service Commission, approximately 30 percent of general-cadre recruits in the last three BCS exams came from medical and engineering backgrounds. The allure of these positions—coupled with perceived discrimination against non-admin cadres in terms of power, perks, and promotions—may make their choice a pragmatic one. But it's one that comes at a substantial cost to the nation.

The government invests heavily in the education of medical and engineering students, much more than it spends on students in general universities. Their migration, after graduation, to administrative roles thus represents a waste of both knowledge and resources. The migration of doctors is particularly troubling given the shortage of doctors in public healthcare. "When medical graduates prefer general-cadre positions to practicing medicine, or postings in city hospitals to services in rural health facilities, if recruited as doctors, it is the people that suffer as a result." This raises critical questions about our investment in—and allocation of—human resources in vital sectors.

But why are so many graduates opting out of specialised fields? According to our report, there are 13 categories in both general and specialised BCS. The former includes administration, police, and foreign services, while the latter includes education and health, among others. Those recruited in general cadres enjoy high ranks as well as substantial perks and benefits. They have the chance to be top bureaucrats. By contrast, those in specialised cadres face slower career progression, have fewer benefits, and mostly work under younger admin colleagues. This imbalance not only demoralises them but also undermines the sectors they serve.

Addressing this issue is almost as important as fixing the unhealthy fascination of graduates and would-be graduates with BCS exams in the absence of decent opportunities in the private sector. It is, therefore, imperative that the government reevaluates the incentives and career paths for specialised cadres. Equitable promotion opportunities, better benefits, and recognition of their critical contributions can help retain these professionals in their respective fields. Additionally, there needs to be a cultural shift within the civil service to value and integrate the expertise of doctors and engineers into policy-making and administrative roles that align with their training. We must ensure that our investments in education translate into tangible benefits for society.

JU needs a new master plan urgently

The uniqueness of its green campus must be preserved

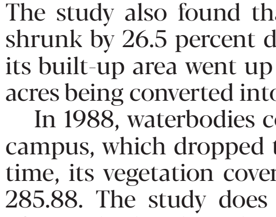
It is deeply concerning that the Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus has lost nearly 40 percent of its waterbodies over the last three and a half decades. This has been revealed by a new study on JU land use that analysed data from 1988 to 2023. The study also found that the university's vegetation cover shrunk by 26.5 percent during the same period. By contrast, its built-up area went up by 159.3 percent, with around 172.5 acres being converted into built-up land.

In 1988, waterbodies covered an area of 122.4 acres on the campus, which dropped to 73.58 acres last year. At the same time, its vegetation coverage of 388.80 acres shrunk to just 285.88. The study does not mention how such vast areas of waterbodies have been lost—this is something that the JU authorities need to find out. We do, however, know that many trees have been felled in the name of development, and that green spaces have been decreasing at a worrying rate as a result. What is further concerning is that the JU's original master plan, designed by renowned architect Mazharul Islam in 1968, has been repeatedly neglected during the subsequent structural development phases, which is one of the reasons why the campus is losing its originality including its green spaces.

The architecture of the buildings constructed in the last two decades does not harmonise with the surrounding environment either, and does not utilise maximum airflow and natural lighting. Moreover, many abandoned structures remain in place, unnecessarily occupying campus space. The haphazard manner in which the authorities have been developing the campus is also harming its biodiversity and leading to its pristine beauty being lost. Hence, students and teachers have been organising protests demanding a new master plan. Even though the authorities have been claiming that they are in the process of preparing a new master plan for the last two years, nothing substantive has so far materialised. Their apathy and negligence in this regard are unacceptable.

The JU is one of the most beautiful universities in Bangladesh. For its campus to be treated the way it has been over recent decades is a great travesty. It is high time the authorities started taking proper care of the campus—particularly its natural beauty—and prepared a new master plan. They must cease construction or planning of any new building or structure in contravention of its master plan.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Nasser became president of Egypt

On this day in 1956, 99.95 percent of Egyptians elected Gamal Abdel Nasser as the first president of the Republic of Egypt after he overthrew the Egyptian monarchy in a military coup four years prior.

Why this intimidating police statement aimed at the media?

Kamal Ahmed
is an independent journalist. His X handle is @ahmedka1

KAMAL AHMED

The Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA), representing elite officers (BCS cadre) of the law enforcement force, has issued a strong and ominous message to the media. The statement was disturbing, as its tone and tenor appeared to intimidate journalists from reporting on corruption involving any of its members. In an unusually lengthy release (12 paragraphs and over 50 lines), the association did not cite a single report or name to which they objected for being slanderous.

The association's statement seems to place collective blame on the media, claiming, "Partial, motivated, and indiscriminate reports about former and serving members of the Bangladesh police are being published serially in the news media (print and electronic) and on social media."

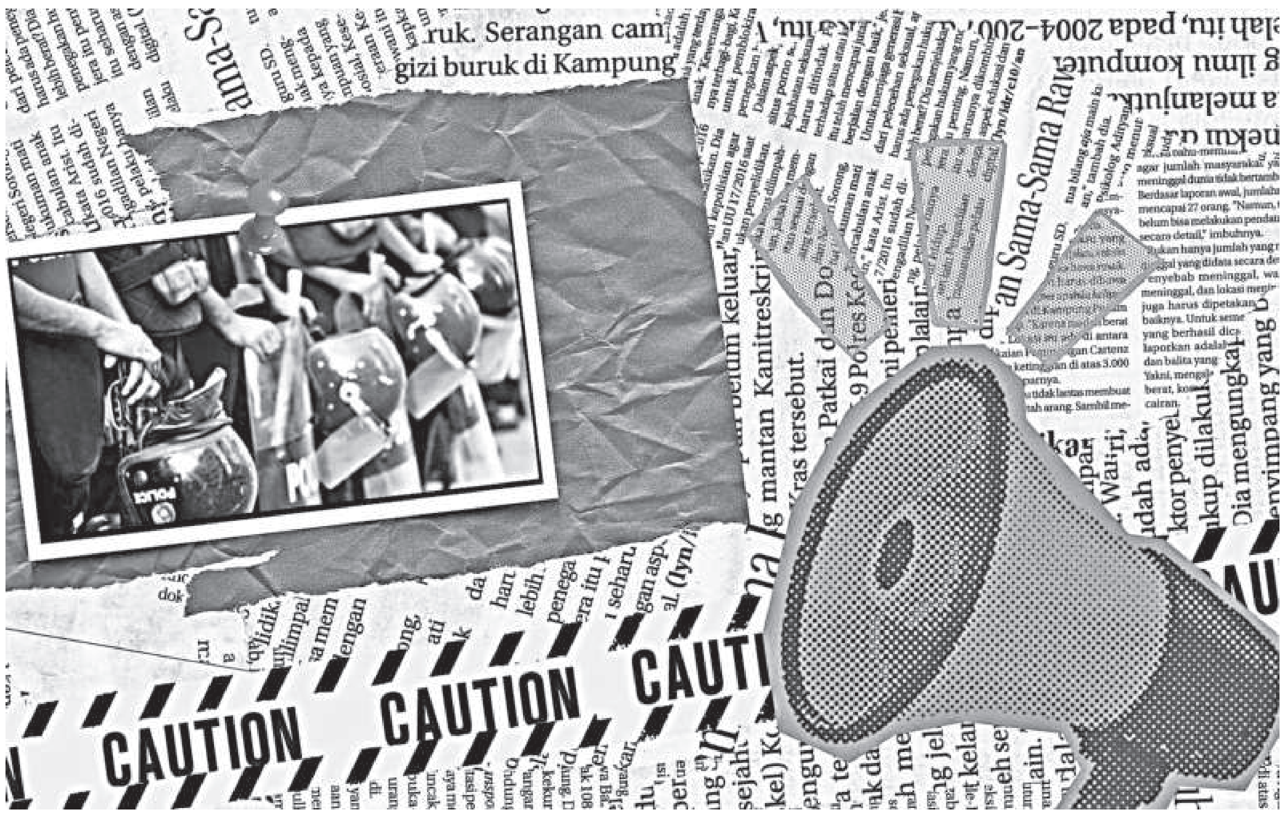
While the association has every right to protest what it calls a "smear campaign" against its members, it did not name any alleged victims of defamation, making it difficult to justify accusing any media outlet of "publishing offensive and negative news reports" out of "personal vengeance and self-interests, which goes against journalistic ethics." Furthermore, the association issued an advisory to journalists, asking them to exercise caution and maintain journalistic principles when reporting on the police.

In recent weeks, the stories that shocked the nation involved alleged grand corruption and abuse of office by two top officials: former Inspector General Benazir Ahmed and former Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Mohammad Asaduzzaman Miah. Apart from these two retired top cops, there have been no major graft allegations against any serving officers in recent days, though this does not imply the force is corruption-free. Many would argue that reporting corruption against any in service official carries too much risks for journalists as individuals and the survival of their organisation.

This raises the question of why the association felt compelled to defend its former members. Has the current leadership of the organisation transformed it into a welfare association for retired police officers? Or is this a preemptive attempt by the BPSA to prevent the media from investigating some of its members who may have assisted their top boss in their alleged criminal enterprises, including providing police protection for land grabbing, as alleged by some members of the minority community in Gopalganj?

The BPSA release claimed that the police have always maintained a policy of "zero tolerance" against corruption, stating that if allegations of corruption are proven against any member, both departmental and legal actions are taken. However, had the BPSA leadership reviewed some of the speeches by former IGP Benazir, they might have refrained from using the term "zero tolerance." On June 16, 2022, he warned his force that those seeking to become wealthy through illegal means had no place in the police force. However, based on the court's seizure order, we now know that by the time Benazir made that speech, his list of real estate properties was extensive.

It's frustrating to hear the tedious argument that the police's departmental disciplinary procedure deals with all kinds of misconduct, including corruption. Who would believe that the force chief can be investigated by his subordinates freely and fearlessly? Numerous human rights groups have made allegations against him for commanding grave violations of human rights, which led to sanctions against him. Has there ever been any investigation into those charges?



VISUAL: **STAR**

Consider the Dhaka Boat Club incident, where actress Porimoni alleged rape attempts by one of the club executives. Subsequent investigations revealed that its founder president was then IGP Benazir Ahmed, and the club was set up on encroached and illegally filled-in portions of the Turag river. This issue was raised in the Jatiya Sangsad on June 16, 2021, by an opposition MP and was not contested by the treasury bench. Neither the Police Headquarters nor the home ministry investigated these allegations.

The BPSA's warning to the media is particularly concerning given the overall media environment in the country, which is intimidating and lacks meaningful freedom to hold power to account. On June 1, Mahfuz Anam, president of the Editors Council and editor of this daily, stated at a meeting in Dhaka that, "Benazir's case is a startling example where we, in the media, knew all these things. But we didn't dare to publish them." He noted that as the head of a powerful law enforcement institution, Benazir could have punished a journalist for reporting his corruption, and the government likely wouldn't have protected the media.

It is also worrying that some senior ministers have already deployed deflection tactics, claiming that certain quarters are trying to discredit the government by labelling "all as corrupt". This appears to be a desperate attempt to distance the ruling party from such corruption. Otherwise, why would someone give a clean chit to the former DMP commissioner before any investigation into his alleged conduct in office? We don't know whether the ministers' statements and the BPSA statement are synchronised, but neither is helpful for uncovering the truth through a credible investigation.

What if we finally recognised women's unpaid care work?

Mohin Uddin Mizan
is publication and communication professional at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Ministry of Planning. He can be reached at mohinmizan07@gmail.com

MOHIN UDDIN MIZAN

In 1929, Virginia Woolf, in her essay *A Room of One's Own*, raised the issues of economic and social barriers faced by women, including their unpaid labour. However, she was not the first to bring this concern to light.

In her 1898 book *Women and Economics*, American sociologist and novelist Charlotte Perkins Gilman argued that women's dependence on men for economic support due to unpaid household labour was detrimental to their status and freedom. Another influential figure, British social reformer and economist Beatrice Webb, worked in the late 19th and early 20th centuries on issues of women's labour and the conditions of the working class. While her focus was not specifically on unpaid household labour, her broader social and economic reforms were relevant to understanding women's roles in the economy.

Canadian economist Margaret Reid conducted the first systematic economic analysis of unpaid household labour in her 1934 book *Economics of Household Production*. Her work laid the foundation for incorporating household labour into economic theory and measurement.

There has been a significant amount of literature on unpaid household and care work over the past three decades, both from local and global perspectives. Notably, a 2015 study conducted by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), titled "Women's Unaccounted Work and Contribution to the Economy", estimated the value of women's unpaid work in Bangladesh as 76.8 percent of the GDP in the fiscal year 2013-14 (on condition). It found that a female member in a household undertakes 12.1 non-SNA (System of National Accounts) activities in a day—activities not included in the national GDP—compared to only 2.7 activities for a male member.

In 2019, Oxfam and the International Labour Organization (ILO) released reports on the global perspective of unpaid work. Oxfam's study revealed that unpaid work done by women worldwide amounts to a staggering $10.8 trillion a year. ILO's report "Unpaid Care Work and the Labour Market" found that the value of unpaid care work is approximately $11 trillion, accounting for around 9 percent of global GDP. Without exception, women carry out 75 percent of unpaid care work, which is 88 percent in Bangladesh.

The issue gained further attention last year when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked the Planning Commission, through the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), to determine the actual contribution of women's unpaid household and care work to GDP. BIDS presented its findings (15 percent contribution to GDP) at its last Annual BIDS Conference on Development (ABCD) in December.

As a part of my regular editing job, reading an article in the Bangladesh Development Studies (BDS) journal titled "Economic Valuation of Women's Unpaid Household Service Work in Bangladesh," which detailed the study led by Dr Binayak Sen, sparked my interest in writing on this issue. Using the 2021 time-use survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and BIDS survey of 64 villages in 2023, the authors calculated that women's contribution to GDP through unpaid non-market household and care work is about 15 percent. If unpaid work for both women and men were reflected in national accounting, it would add approximately 17.6 percent to Bangladesh's GDP.

Unpaid household and care work are crucial for developing the next generation's skills and knowledge, essential for a productive workforce. It strengthens family and community bonds, fostering social stability and reducing social strife. It also allows other family members to participate in the formal paid workforce, boosting overall economic productivity and ensuring the population's physical and mental well-being.

If unpaid household and care work were replaced by market services, it would significantly increase GDP; preventive and routine care at home reduces the burden on public healthcare systems, and parental involvement in education can improve outcomes, reducing the need for remedial education. When societal structures support unpaid household work, it enables higher female participation in the labour force, boosting economic growth. The indirect benefits of unpaid work can lead to increased productivity and economic activity in other sectors.

So, unpaid household and care work being the buzzwords, if the UN does agree to include it in the SNA and the world follows accordingly, some questions may arise: will we still not be satisfied with this crucial work they are doing? Will we value the work they do in agriculture, like livestock or poultry rearing?

The BIDS article suggests as policy implication that male contribution to household unpaid care work should be societally encouraged. This will help ensure—the article reads—the spread of care work across genders, ensuring gender equality in unpaid work. I do agree, but did we keep it in mind that people engaged in the formal labour force may end up working a "double shift" of paid and unpaid work, which has serious consequences for their health and well-being?

Wrapping up (leaving the questions) with a quote from Reid and another line from the BIDS article:

"The more we have concentrated on money values, the more we have overlooked that part of our economic system which is not organised on a profit basis."

Unpaid care work is an essential element of social reproduction—a process that supports individuals, families, and society to continue thriving.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781
EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net
Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222
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89TH BIRTHDAY OF SERAJUL ISLAM CHOUDHURY

Celebrating our premier public intellectual

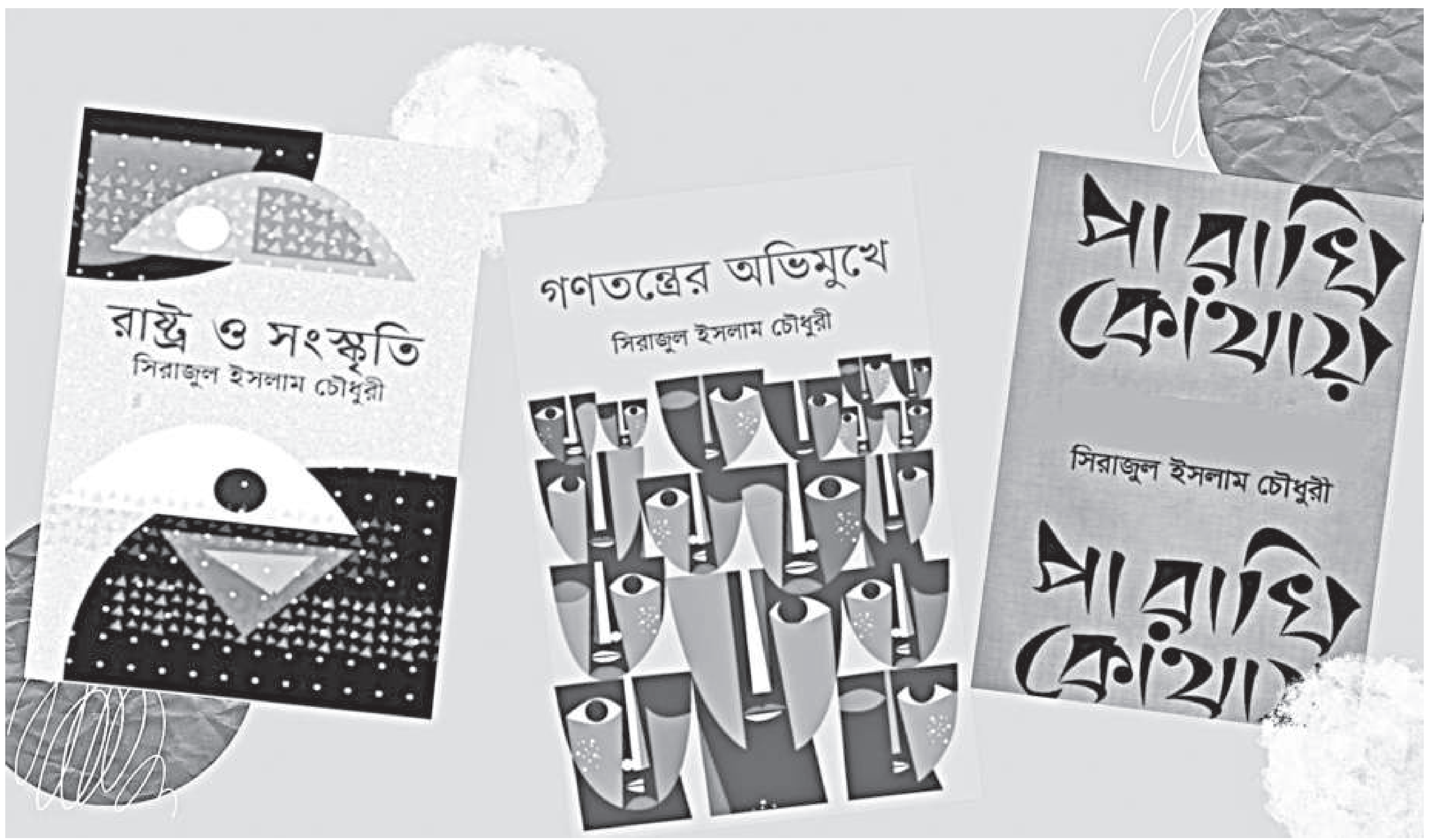
Dr Azfar Hussain
is currently summer distinguished professor of English & Humanities at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). He is director of the graduate programme in social innovation and a professor of interdisciplinary studies at Grand Valley State University in Michigan, US. He is also the vice-president of the US-based Global Center for Advanced Studies (GCAS).

AZFAR HUSSAIN

Today marks the 89th birthday of Serajul Islam Choudhury. At a conjuncture characterised by the constitutive contradictions and crises of such systems of exploitation and oppression as capitalism and imperialism, Serajul Islam's Choudhury's work continues to speak to the emancipatory struggles of the oppressed around the country, and even the world.

Literary and cultural critic, social and political analyst, media commentator, teacher, pedagogist, translator, editor, columnist, activist, and surely an outstanding teacher of English literature—Choudhury continues to be one of the most prolific writers in the Bangla language today. And it is no less significant that, even at 88, he recently led the Palestinian Solidarity rally in Dhaka, attesting to his characteristic activism that variously informs his written work.

Serajul Islam Choudhury is the author of more than a hundred books and numerous essays. He has also written several books in English, including some ground-breaking ones on the revolutionary Bangalee poet Kazi Nazrul Islam—Choudhury's all-time favourite. But, more than anything else, Serajul Islam Choudhury is a major and leading intellectual of our time, committed as he is to nothing short of the total emancipation of humanity in its entirety.



VISUAL: **ALIZA RAHMAN**

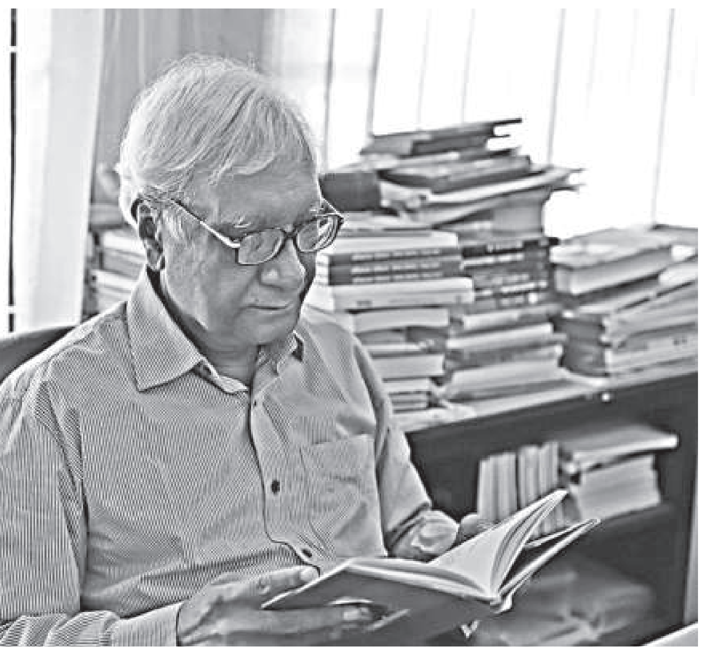


PHOTO: **SK ENAMUL HAQ**

I cannot do justice to the entire range of Choudhury's massive work in this short piece. But I intend to touch on the significance of *certain aspects* of his work. To begin with, Choudhury's work remains organically responsive to and thoroughly informed by our own national liberation movement, class struggles, and other forms of struggle in Bangladesh. One who always historicises his own people's conditions of being and becoming, Choudhury continues to make interventions in such broad areas as society, politics, political economy, culture, and history, while making the points that telling without doing is profoundly insufficient and that *gnosis* (knowledge) without *praxis* (practice informed by knowledge) is simply empty.

Indeed, for about six decades now, Choudhury has been making an inventory of the daily acts of people's resistance and modes of forbearance and survival as well as their aspirations and hopes, exemplified in a range of his works from, say, his earlier book *Nirasroy Greehi* (1978) and *Bangalee Kake Boli* (1988), to *Swadhinota Spriha Sammyer Bhoy* (1988) and *Gonotontrer Pokkho-Bipokkho* (1991), to *Rashtro o Sankskriti* (1993) and *Rashtrer Malikana* (1997), to *Bicchinnotay Osommoti* (2014) and *Pa Raakhi Kothay* (2018), to *Vidyasagar o Koyekti Prosongo* (2021), among many others. One would also do well to cite yet another example. Choudhury used to write an immensely popular—if not populist—column called "Somoy Bahiya Jay" with commendable verve and unflagging enthusiasm in a style that is distinctively *Choudhuryian*. He has exemplarily evolved a prose-style that makes his work pleasantly readable and accessible. For him, this very question of style is not only an aesthetic question but also a political one.

Choudhury, consistently critical of individualism and opportunist liberalism, centres the struggles of ordinary people in his work, supports their movements, and writes extensively about them, exemplifying the role of a public intellectual in Bangladesh. Contesting corporations and politicians who invoke "people" to abuse them, Choudhury addresses real material contradictions and issues of class, gender, race, and nationality. His critiques of liberal humanism are evident in his incisive analyses of figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and E M Forster, just to provide two quick examples.

And, in opposition to the tradition named above, Choudhury clearly identifies the people for whom he tirelessly writes and fights. The people for him, then, are clearly the majority in the country—the toiling masses—peasants and workers, including women as well as ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, ignored and oppressed as they are. And he writes about them from the perspectives of their collective emancipation. To put it bluntly: human emancipation itself constitutes the most fundamental, abiding theme in Choudhury's work. In fact, the question of people's emancipation remains organic and integral to the entire constellation of Choudhury's interrogations and interventions from his early works to one of his major works called *Jatiyotabad, Samprodayikota o Jonogoner Mukti* (2015), which can justly be regarded as his historiographical *tour de force*.

Let me now briefly describe one of the predominant approaches used in Choudhury's work. Indeed, what—among other things—enables his interventions to remain attentive to both connectedness and contradictions as well as to the "specific" in its historical determinateness is dialectics itself. Dialectics is Choudhury's weapon. For him, dialectics—as a science of the general laws of contradiction, motion, and transformation—is not merely a scholarly or academic exercise; it is a radical tool. He sharpens and deploys the weapon of dialectics in his writing. In fact, it enables him not only to zero in on the specific or the particular as such, prompting him to advance a concrete analysis of a concrete situation, but also to discern and demystify both contradictions and connections between the specific and the general, between the particular and the universal, between the abstract and the concrete, between critique and action, between *gnosis* and *praxis*. But only discerning or demystifying contradictions and connections is never enough for Serajul Islam Choudhury. He identifies them in the interest of social transformation and emancipation, broadly speaking.

Further, in the Marxist tradition, Choudhury's approach reckons the class struggle as both the horizon and motor of world history. This approach enables us to see how the development of the productive forces brings into existence different production relations and different forms of class society. And this approach is also nothing short of a revolutionary one that makes us see how the question of the entirety of human emancipation remains connected to the transvaluation of the questions of property relations, the social division of labour, and the process of social reproduction, and so on—i.e., connected to the total abolition of value (exchange value) itself—"an abolition that can be effected *only* by a revolution," as Marx and Engels put it in *The Communist Manifesto*.

As the German Marxist theorist Walter Benjamin points out in his classic work *On the Concept of History*: Class struggle, which for a historian schooled in Marx is always in evidence, is a fight for the crude and material things without which no refined and spiritual things could exist. Choudhury's approach demystifies how the class struggle in its concrete historical-becoming is a fight for "the crude and material things" as much as it is a struggle for the "refined and spiritual things," interconnected as they are. Thus, his approach considers both political economy and culture as the dialectically interconnected sites of life-and-death struggles of the oppressed.

Serajul Islam Choudhury explores the role of intellectuals in his essay *Buddhijibeeder Kajkormo o Daydayitto*. While intellectuals like Antonio Gramsci, Noam Chomsky, and Edward Said—their different styles and approaches notwithstanding—accentuate the oppositional role of intellectuals committed to radical change, Choudhury supports a similar stance. He believes an intellectual must question oppressive systems and speak truth to power for revolutionary social transformation. Choudhury also stresses the importance of reaching others with these critical ideas, as collective effort is essential for change.

Choudhury's views on the role of intellectuals apply to himself, as he clearly identifies systems of oppression such as capitalism, imperialism, communalism, and patriarchy. He is recognised as Bangladesh's leading anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, anti-communal, and anti-patriarchal public intellectual.

Serajul Islam Choudhury is the author of more than a hundred books and numerous essays. He has also written several books in English, including some ground-breaking ones on the revolutionary Bangalee poet Kazi Nazrul Islam—Choudhury's all-time favourite. But, more than anything else, Serajul Islam Choudhury is a major and leading intellectual of our time, committed as he is to nothing short of the total emancipation of humanity in its entirety.

Beyond opposing these systems, Choudhury advocates for socialism, arguing there are no contradictions between socialism and democracy; rather, to be socialist is to be democratic.

A public intellectual as he is, Choudhury in his work touches upon almost every aspect of the life of the masses in Bangladesh. To the extent that he does it, he is bound to cross—and range across—disciplinary borders and boundaries, as he surely does in his work. This is why Choudhury is equally comfortable with producing literary and cultural criticism, political commentary, editorial essay, autobiographical narrative, tract and treatise, newspaper column, and so on, in which the linguistic, the literary, the social, the political, the historical, and the cultural interpenetrate and intersect, exemplifying a radical interdisciplinarity.

For instance, Choudhury has written on Tolstoy and on such modernists as Conrad, Forster, Lawrence, Joyce, Yeats, Pound, and Eliot, among others. Of course, Choudhury has written on every major, canonical Bangalee writer—Madhusudan Dutta, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore, Mir Mosharrof Hossain, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay, Manik Bandyopadhyay, Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Jibanananda Das, and Syed Waliullah. The list here is by no means exhaustive. Choudhury has produced a remarkable body of work that traverses a wide range of concerns directly relevant to the contemporary life of the suffering masses in Bangladesh. And it is in this body of work that Choudhury most exemplarily forges organic links among the political, the social, the historical, and the cultural all at once. Moreover, it is in that body of work that Choudhury has consistently advanced and relayed his formulation—one that appears fundamentally Gramscian to me—that there is no alternative to forging links between the intellectuals and the masses, if "the point is to change the world," to quote Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach.

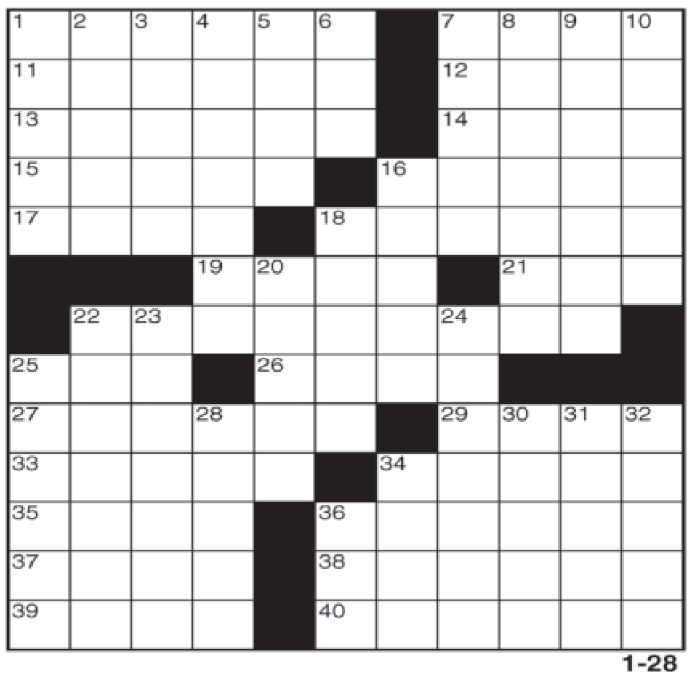
I have hitherto selectively drawn on Choudhury's range of works to underline a few of his historically significant and still relevant contributions. An outstanding critic and perceptive analyst, Choudhury teaches that producing knowledge is necessary but not sufficient. He emphasises that knowledge must be used for social change and the emancipation of the masses. Firmly committed to the Marxian principle of praxis, Choudhury values knowledge that transcends mere interpretation, aiming to transform people's consciousness.

As his former student and a member of the editorial board of his national weekly *Somoy*, I have learned immensely from Serajul Islam Choudhury. His work taught me that teachers, intellectuals, and educators must fulfil their social and political responsibilities and remain accountable for the knowledge they produce. On his 89th birthday, we owe Choudhury immense gratitude for his contributions to our country and even the world.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Holt of NBC News
7 Reached base, in a way
11 Statue setting
12 Big book
13 Tied fast
14 Memo letters
15 Kitchen wear
16 Muralist Rivera
17 Spotted
18 Past and present
19 Bible pronoun
21 Wrath
22 Missouri River port
25 Outlaw
26 Bearing
27 Warring woman
29 Spanish hors d'oeuvre
33 Ancient Mesopotamian region
34 Shade
35 Crocus cousin
36 Old string player
37 Play group
38 Lets up
39 Plops down
40 Tune

DOWN
1 Eastern monks
2 Skip the ceremony
3 Point count
4 Raptors' home
5 Tied up
6 Wine choice
7 Laundry problem
8 Wigs out
9 Mental visions
10 Oust from power
16 Wild card, at times
18 Poison
20 Comic's forte
22 Feudal warrior
23 Bix Beiderbecke standard
24All things considered
25 Rudiments
28 Lemon rind strips
30 Justice Samuel
31 Struck a stance
32 Pretentious
34 Hexahedron
36 Sudden flight



1-28

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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C	O	N	■	I	N	S	■	N	I	L
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H	O	H	O	■	R	A	T	H	E	R
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R	O	B	■	T	R	E	■	B	I	D
L	O	O	S	E	■	D	I	A	N	E
E	L	O	P	E	■	U	T	I	C	A
M	E	T	A	L	■	P	A	T	E	L

Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to **dsopinion@gmail.com**

Gavi to boost access to life-saving human rabies vaccines in over 50 countries

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, is providing support for human rabies vaccines for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) as part of routine immunisation. Under Gavi's cofinancing policy, eligible countries receive guidance on accessing these vaccines, with the first round of applications due by mid-July 2024. Ninety-five percent of human rabies deaths occur in Africa and Asia, predominantly in marginalised communities lacking access to care.

This initiative aligns with the Zero by 30 campaign, led by United Against Rabies partners including the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

RABIES
VACCINE

The campaign aims to eliminate dog-mediated human rabies by 2030.

In over 150 countries where dog rabies is a major public health issue, human rabies vaccine stocks are often limited, especially in marginalised communities. When PEP is available through private facilities, the cost can be financially catastrophic for families.

Rabies is a viral disease causing severe brain inflammation, transmitted in 99 percent of cases by rabid dogs. Once clinical symptoms appear, rabies is nearly 100% fatal. However, prompt PEP, including thorough wound washing and vaccine administration, can prevent infection.

The COVID-19 pandemic delayed the programme's initial inclusion in Gavi's 2021–25 vaccine strategy, but it resumed in mid-2023. All Gavi-eligible countries can apply for funding to procure vaccines and supplies. We will accept applications from July 15 to September 23, 2024, with subsequent windows opening three times a year.

Source: *World Health Organisation*

High rates of low back pain plague Dhaka's ride-sharing motorbike drivers

DR MOHAMMAD ALI

Low back pain is becoming a significant issue for Dhaka's ride-sharing motorbike drivers, a new study reveals. These drivers, who navigate the bustling streets of Bangladesh's capital on a daily basis, are increasingly suffering from this painful condition. This not only affects their health, but also threatens their livelihood and overall quality of life.

Rising concerns

A recent study published in the ELSEVIER conducted between May and August 2023 sheds light on this growing problem. Researchers surveyed 633 ride-sharing motorbike drivers in Dhaka and found that nearly 59% of them experienced low back pain in the past month. This alarmingly high rate is concerning for a profession that is essential to the city's transportation network.

Who is at risk?

Several factors contribute to the high rates of low back pain among these drivers, according to the study:

1. Health issues: Drivers who have high blood pressure are more likely to suffer from low back pain. This suggests that overall health plays a crucial role in the well-being of these drivers.

2. Motorcycle condition: Those using older motorbikes face a higher risk. Older bikes may lack the ergonomic features that newer models have, which can lead to increased physical strain.

3. Safety gear: Drivers who do not wear proper riding gear, such as protective jackets and supports, are more likely to experience pain. This highlights the importance of using appropriate equipment while on the road.

4. Demographics: Older drivers and those with higher body weights are at greater risk. Additionally, the longer the distance a driver covers each day, the more likely they are to suffer from low back pain.

5. Workload: Drivers who worked for multiple ride-sharing companies at the same time reported higher rates of pain. This could be due to longer working hours and the physical demands of juggling multiple jobs.

What can we do?

You can implement several practical solutions to address this issue:

- *Encourage exercise:* Regular physical activity can strengthen the muscles that support the back. Simple exercises and stretches can make a significant difference.
- *Promote weight management:* Maintaining a healthy weight can reduce the strain on the lower back. These drivers can benefit from educational campaigns and support for healthy living.
- *Update equipment:* Using newer motorbikes designed with ergonomic features can help reduce physical strain. Ride-sharing companies can help by providing incentives for drivers to upgrade their bikes.
- *Safety gear:* Ensuring that all drivers have access to and use proper riding gear can prevent back pain. Companies might consider subsidising the cost of high-quality gear.
- *Limit work hours:* To prevent overexertion, encourage drivers to limit their daily driving hours. Implementing policies that promote regular breaks can also be beneficial.

A call to action:

This study calls attention to the urgent need for targeted interventions to improve the health and safety of ride-sharing motorbike drivers in Dhaka. By taking proactive steps, stakeholders—including ride-sharing companies, health organisations, and the drivers themselves—can work together to reduce the burden of low back pain.

Improving the working conditions for these drivers is not just about addressing their health issues; it is also about ensuring the sustainability of a vital transportation service in Dhaka. With concerted efforts, it is possible to create a healthier and more supportive environment for these essential workers.

As Dhaka continues to grow and evolve, the well-being of its ride-sharing motorbike drivers must be prioritised. By acknowledging and addressing the challenges they face, we can contribute to a more resilient and healthier community for all.

The writer is a Back pain researcher at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia, and a Doctor of Physical Therapy student at the University of Montana, USA. Email: hprc2005@live.com

Severe health impacts of child marriage

STAR HEALTH DESK

Researchers in Liberia and Sierra Leone have found a close link between child marriage and negative reproductive and maternal health outcomes among young women. Researchers found that more than half of women aged 20–24 in these countries married before turning 18, and more than one in ten married before turning 15.

The study published in the PubMed, conducted with data from the 2019–2020 Liberia and 2019 Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Surveys, highlighted several troubling trends. Women who married before 18 were more likely to experience early and high fertility, meaning they had children at a younger age and often had more children. They also had less control over when and how many children they had.

SAY NO TO CHILD MARRIAGE

The situation was particularly severe for those married before 15. These young women faced greater challenges in accessing essential healthcare services. In Liberia's North Central region, those married at 15–17 were less likely to have skilled attendants during childbirth or to give birth in a medical facility. Similarly, in Sierra Leone's North Western region, women married before 15 were less likely to have institutional deliveries or receive adequate prenatal care.

These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to address child marriage and improve health outcomes for young women. By focusing on education and healthcare access, especially in the most affected regions, it is possible to make significant strides towards better futures for these young women.

This study highlights the urgent need for action to support young women ensuring they have the health care and opportunities they deserve.

Unlocking the health benefits of Vitamin D

STAR HEALTH DESK

In our daily rush, it is simple to overlook the vital role that vitamin D plays in our health. Often called the sunshine vitamin, it is crucial for building and maintaining strong bones. But what happens when you do not get enough of it?

Understanding vitamin D deficiency:

Simply put, vitamin D deficiency means your body lacks this essential vitamin. There are several reasons this can occur: not enough sunlight exposure, certain medical conditions affecting absorption, or a diet lacking in vitamin D-rich foods. It is more common than you might think, and it can lead to serious health issues if left untreated.

Why it matters:

Vitamin D is not just about bones; it is a key player in overall health. It helps your body absorb calcium, keeping bones strong and reducing the risk of osteoporosis. Beyond bones, vitamin D supports your immune system, muscles, and even your mood.

Symptoms and risks:

Recognising a deficiency is not always easy. In children, it might show as bone deformities or muscle weakness. Adults might feel fatigued, experience bone or joint pain, or notice changes in mood. Research has linked long-term deficiency to increased risks of conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and even certain cancers.

Causes of deficiency:

Many factors contribute to low vitamin D levels. Limited sun exposure (especially in colder climates or with excessive sunscreen use), darker skin tones (which absorb less sunlight), or medical conditions affecting nutrient absorption can all play a role. Additionally, diets lacking in vitamin D-rich foods or certain medications can hinder your body's ability to maintain adequate levels.

Testing and treatment:

Diagnosing a deficiency involves a simple blood test. Treatment typically includes supplements to boost vitamin D levels back to normal. The amount prescribed depends on the severity of the deficiency and individual risk factors.

Prevention tips:

Preventing deficiency is possible with a few simple steps:

- *Diet:* Incorporate vitamin D-rich foods like fatty fish (salmon, tuna), fortified dairy products, and eggs into your meals.
- *Sun exposure:* Spend 5–30 minutes in the sun each day without sunscreen, if possible, to allow your body to produce vitamin D naturally.
- *Supplements:* If diet and sun are not sufficient, talk to your doctor about supplements tailored to your needs.

Conclusion

Vitamin D deficiency is a serious health concern that affects many, yet it is often preventable and treatable. By understanding its importance and taking proactive steps to ensure adequate levels, you can safeguard your bone health and overall well-being. Remember, a little sunshine and a balanced diet go a long way towards keeping your body strong and healthy.

In a world where health is wealth, ensuring you have enough vitamin D is a smart investment in yourself.

Long COVID linked to lasting cognitive issues

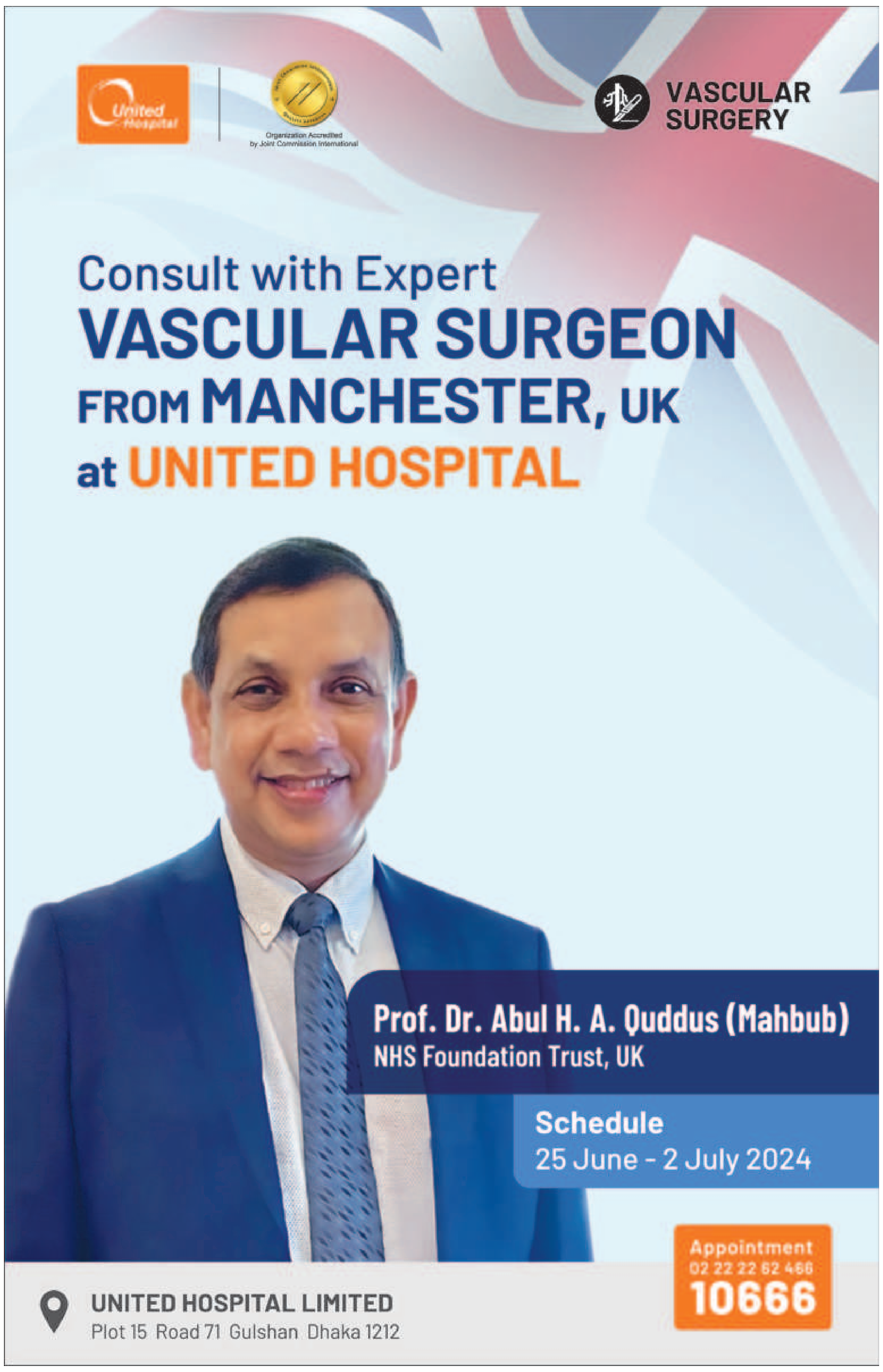
A recent study published in the Brain found that people who suffer from long-term COVID may experience significant cognitive issues lasting for over a year. The research, conducted during the first wave of the pandemic, compared COVID-19 patients with ongoing symptoms to those who fully recovered.

Out of the 105 patients studied, 83 reported long-term neurological symptoms such as memory loss and difficulty concentrating. Common complaints included severe fatigue (82%), headaches (72%), anxiety (58%), weakness in the limbs (57%), insomnia (57%), and depression (46%).

Key findings showed that nearly half of those with long COVID had noticeable memory problems, including difficulties with both verbal and visual memory. Around 27% of patients showed significant issues with attention, verbal working memory, processing speed, and verbal fluency compared to healthy individuals and recovered COVID-19 patients. Furthermore, 20% of those affected had severe cognitive impairment.

Brain scans revealed that patients with long-term COVID had noticeable changes in their brain structure, particularly in areas linked to memory and attention. These brain changes were more common in patients who had severe initial COVID-19 infections.

The study highlights the serious and lasting impact of long-term COVID on mental functions, underscoring the importance of recognising and addressing these long-term symptoms. This study emphasises the need for ongoing support and treatment for those affected.



City Edition

Star SPORT

DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 23, 2024, ASHAR 9, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

Nagorik TV
T20 World Cup
Australia vs Afghanistan
Live from 6:30 am
USA vs England
Live from 8:30 pm

T Sports and Sony Sports 5
Euro 2024
Germany vs Switzerland
Live from 1:00 am (Monday)
Scotland vs Hungary
Live from 1:00 am (Monday)

Another day to forget for Shakib and Tigers

ASHFAQ-UL-ALAM

Shakib Al Hasan and the Bangladesh team had another forgettable day at the office yesterday, as the all-rounder once again showed signs of losing his edge with the bat and the ball, and the Tigers meekly surrendered against a superior Indian side in their Super Eights match of the ICC T20 World Cup in Antigua.

Bangladesh were the inferior side on display throughout the match and unsurprisingly suffered a 50-run drubbing.

There were some flashes of positives for Bangladesh in the match, like Tanzim Sakib's fiery spell and a late 10-ball 24 assault from Rishad Hossain, but these efforts were overshadowed by the long list of subpar performances, headed by another rocky showing from Shakib.

For the last four weeks or so, Bangladesh's cricket fans have been watching and slowly coming to terms with the fact that perhaps Shakib Al Hasan, like all who played the game before him, is gradually conceding defeat to the perpetual pendulum of time.

One of the tell-tale signs that a player's career is nearing its end is that the skills that once were second nature to them, which they could execute without even thinking, become difficult.

In Shakib's case, it was his bowling that Bangladesh could depend on most days without a second thought. But in this edition of the ICC T20 World Cup, he has been used more like a part-time option and at times had to be shielded from the batters.

Yesterday, Shakib became the first and only bowler to claim 50 wickets in T20 World Cups when he took the wicket of Rohit Sharma. But before getting that wicket, the left-arm spinner was taken for 25 runs off his first nine deliveries, which allowed India to race to 53-1 in the Powerplay.

Shakib ended with 1-37 in three overs, not finishing his quota for the fifth time in this tournament. In Bangladesh's six matches, the left-arm spinner has bowled his full quota only against the Netherlands and was not brought into the attack in the rain-curtailed match against Australia.

It's not like Shakib has only been struggling on the wicket's column. Till now, he has bowled only 13.2 overs in the tournament and conceded at a rate of more than eight runs an over -- the most expensive of all Bangladeshi bowlers.

Shakib couldn't really make up for his shortcoming with the ball with bat in hand either, making just 11 off seven balls before getting caught at extra-cover.

The dip in Shakib's bowling, something the all-rounder has always said came to him naturally and he admitted to not have paid too much focus on it, projects a dire signal.

Considering Shakib's age, 37, his decline shouldn't be that much of a surprise. But as the all-rounder has expressed his desire to feature for Bangladesh in the next T20 World Cup as well, this dip is a worrying sign.

His batting has been subpar since the issue with his eyes has surfaced. If the all-rounder wishes to continue being an asset for Bangladesh cricket, not a liability, perhaps it is time for him to change his ways and seriously work on his bowling.

As for the Tigers, they still have one match left in the Super Eights against Afghanistan on Tuesday, where they will have a chance to end their campaign on a high.

SCORES IN BRIEF

India: 196-5 in 20 overs (Pandya 50 not out, Kohli 37; Sakib 2-32; Rishad 2-43)

Bangladesh: 146-8 in 20 overs (Shanto 40, Tanzid 29, Rishad 24; Kuldeep 3-19, Bumrah 2-13, Arshdeep 2-30)

Result: India won by 50 runs

Player of the Match: Hardik Pandya

We did not show as much intent as we needed with the bat. When we are chasing 190 (plus score), we needed to show more intent; especially in the first six overs.
Bangladesh captain
NAJMUL HOSSAIN SHANTO

In T20s, I don't believe we need to get fifties and hundreds, what matters is the pressure you put on the bowlers... and that's how we want to play.
India captain
ROHIT SHARMA

England's drive for semis, USA's final flourish

STAR SPORTS DESK

As the T20 World Cup heats up, holders England face co-hosts USA in a crucial Super Eights fixture at the Kensington Oval Stadium in Barbados on Sunday.

Both teams have different stakes in this match, with England likely to go all out, aiming for a comprehensive win to boost their net run rate and secure their place in the semi-finals, while USA will be looking to upset the odds and conclude their fairytale World Cup journey.

England enter the match with a mix of urgency and optimism. Their recent game against South Africa saw them fall short by seven runs, but a valiant 78-run partnership for the fifth wicket by Harry Brook and Liam Livingstone was instrumental in keeping England's semifinal hopes alive.

With the West Indies' dominant win over USA, England find themselves third in Group Two, tied with the Men in Maroon on points but way behind on net run rate – 0.412 compared to 1.814. For England to secure a semi-final spot, a win against the USA is crucial, especially if group leaders South Africa -- on four points with a net run rate of 0.625 -- lose to the West Indies.

One of the tournament's surprise packages, USA have showcased their potential on the world stage. Despite a recent nine-wicket loss to the West Indies, they have demonstrated exceptional performances, including victories over Pakistan and Canada.

USA's journey in the T20 World Cup has been a testament to their growth as an Associate nation. Captain Aaron Jones said, "Over the last couple of weeks, starting from winning the series against Bangladesh [prior to the T20 World Cup], it really opened the eyes of everybody."

As both teams take the field, fans can expect an exciting clash that encapsulates the spirit and unpredictability of T20 cricket.

Proteas-Caribbeans clash in high-stakes affair

AGENCIES

Hosts West Indies and undefeated South Africa will clash in a high-stakes Super Eight match on Monday in Antigua, the outcome of which will have huge implications in the semifinals race from Group 2 in the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup.

After an unbeaten run in the group stage, the men in maroon were rocked in their first Super Eight game when England defeated them by eight wickets. However, they bounced back with a comprehensive nine-wicket win over co-hosts USA on June 21.

Not only did they gain two crucial points, but also improved their net run rate substantially. They are now placed second in the Group 2 table and a strong win in their next game can help seal a semi-final spot.

South Africa sit at the top of the table with four points and a net run rate of +0.625. England and West Indies are at two points each, but the latter are ahead based on a superior net run rate of +1.814 as compared to England's +0.412. USA are fourth with zero points.

This means that irrespective of the result in the England-USA fixture, West Indies can secure a semi-final spot if they manage to win against South Africa and maintain a superior net run rate over Jos Buttler's men.

For the Proteas, a win will ensure a berth in the final four and a defeat could see them exit the tournament if England beat the USA handsomely and overtake South Africa in net run rate.

Up against the Proteas on Sunday evening, West Indies all-rounder Roston Chase said that despite South Africa's undefeated run, they are not going to budge away from a contest.

"We're going to be coming hard," Chase said. "So, we'll collide, and whoever's the strongest, I think, will win. So, it's just for us, as I say, to just go there and give it your all. As I say, it's a win-win situation."

For South Africa, opener Quinton de Kock has found form at precisely the right moment, scoring two superb knocks in succession to help South Africa to the top of Group 2.

Their bowlers have been on point throughout the tournament and David Miller has been efficient in the middle-order, bailing them out of tricky situations a number of times.

South Africa, who have managed to eke out victories under pressure on a few different occasions in this T20 World Cup, find themselves in a tough spot once again as a defeat against the Caribbeans could pull the plug out of what has thus far been a promising campaign. If the Proteas indeed succumb under pressure, their reputation as cricket's ultimate chokers, a moniker they have been trying to get rid of, will grow further.

'Calm' Endrick hopes to leave his mark

REUTERS

Brazil's teenage prodigy Endrick will be hoping to make his first appearance for the national team at a major tournament when his country take on Costa Rica in their Copa America opener on Monday.

The 17-year-old striker, who joined Real Madrid from Palmeiras, knows he has a long way to go to break into the Brazilian starting line-up in a squad that includes Raphinha, Vinicius Jr and Rodrygo in attack.

"Only God knows (when I will start). I am very grateful to have Abel (Ferreira) as a coach, he knew when to play me. Everything is up to God and Professor Dorival Jr. He is a spectacular coach. He is doing what is best for the Brazilian team," Endrick told a press conference on Friday.

Endrick, who in March became the youngest player to score in an international match at Wembley when he gave Brazil a 1-0 win over England, made his mark in the other warm-up fixtures ahead of Copa America with a goal in a 3-2 victory over Mexico, having also scored against Spain.

"I have always been very precocious in my life and since I became a professional I have played against opponents who have always teased me, insulted me, talked about my family, my girlfriend," he said.

"But I got used to it quickly because I was 16. I'm calm and I hope I can help, I think it's right, in football you have to destabilise the other player. It's been like that since I arrived, so I've adapted and I'm very confident that I can help the team."

'Rejuvenated Germany can win Euros'

REUTERS, *Berlin*

German fans welcomed the start of Euro 2024 on home soil more in hope than expectation, but their performances have surprised many and they are now serious contenders to win the title, German World Cup winner Olaf Thon told Reuters.

The 58-year-old, who scored a memorable goal against Denmark in his home town of Gelsenkirchen in the 1988 European Championship, has remained in the game through his punditry work for Sport1, where he provides expert analysis on the Bundesliga and the German national team.

"Last year, I would have predicted that Germany would not make it very far, but based on the group stage games and the performances of other good teams such as Spain and France, I'd say we can definitely keep up with them," Thon said in an interview.

"We have a home advantage, with the fans as 12th player ... and now, I believe that everything is possible for Germany. We can win the title," he added.

The modest pre-tournament expectations of Thon and many German fans were heavily influenced by a run of bad results in 2023, during which Germany drew two and lost six of their 11 friendlies.

They made a fast start at Euro 2024, however, with a 5-1 thrashing of Scotland and a comfortable 2-0 win over Hungary ensured the Germans were the first team through to the knockout stage, leaving coach Julian Nagelsmann with tough calls to make for their final group game against Switzerland.

"It is the dream of every head coach to send the same starting XI out on to the pitch. However, 'never change a winning team' has its perils," Thon said.

"I expect Nagelsmann to start the same players again, if no one gets injured. However, it is the group stage where you have to manage the workloads and act strategically.

For Thon, who coached for a brief period before pivoting to his media career with Sport1, the current German team is reminiscent of the one that was taken over by Franz Beckenbauer in 1984 and won the World Cup in 1990.

"In 1988 the Euros on home soil, Germany lost against the Netherlands in the semis, who then went on to win the tournament. In 1990, there was revenge - Germany beat the Netherlands and won the title confidently," Thon recalls.

"It is therefore possible that Julian Nagelsmann first starts with this attempt and doesn't win the title right away, but instead builds up something to win in 2026."

Portugal's Bernardo Silva celebrates scoring their first goal with Joao Cancelo during their 3-0 win against Turkey in a Group F fixture of Euro 2024 at the BVB Stadion in Dortmund yesterday. The result ensured the 2016 champions enter the last 16.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

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Tigers on brink of elimination

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh batters were not up to the task of chasing down a 197-run target set by India as the Tigers stumbled to a 50-run defeat in their crucial Super Eight fixture on Saturday, seeing themselves all but out of the ongoing T20 World Cup.

Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto scored a team-high 40 off 32 deliveries and Rishad Hossain dealt a few lusty blows at the death but those were not nearly enough as Bangladesh were restricted to 146 for eight after an unbeaten Hardik Pandya fifty and a number of quickfire knocks from India batters saw them amass 196 for five.

In order to progress to their maiden semifinal, Bangladesh will now have to hope for a series of unlikely events, starting with banking on Afghanistan to cause an upset against the mighty Aussies in Kingstown today. The Tigers would then have to beat Afghanistan in their final Super Eight game on June 25 by a big enough margin to boost their current net run-rate of -2.489

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

HRIDOY
77
SHUBH
77
ROHIT
45

India players celebrate after wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav dismissed Bangladesh batter Towhid Hridoy in their T20 World Cup Super 8 fixture in Antigua on Saturday. India cruised to a crushing 50-run victory, forcing Bangladesh to the brink of exit in the tournament.

PHOTO: AFP

FLOODS IN SYLHET

Farmers count the losses

DWOHA CHOWDHURY *and* **MINTU DESHWARA**

As soon as the second wave of flash floods hit Sylhet in the early hours of June 17, Moklisur Rahman, a fish farmer in Gowainghat upazila, knew he was going to lose all his fish, which he had worked very hard to raise in his three ponds.

"I immediately rushed to the ponds, but it was too late for anything to be done. Within hours, I lost fish worth at least Tk 7 lakh," lamented Moklisur, a resident of the upazila's Nayagram Uttar village.

Like him, thousands of fish farmers in Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Moulvibazar have lost their prized possessions as the flood washed away as many as 13,650 ponds, said the divisional fisheries department.

Abdal Miah of Chanpur village in Sylhet's Fenchuganj upazila said, "Even as my house was flooded to the waist, we stayed back to protect the cattle. But, sadly, we could do nothing about the fish in the pond worth at least Tk 50,000."

Md Arif of Rahimpur village in Moulvibazar's Kamolganj upazila said, "After the dyke of the Dhalai River broke and the flash flood inundated the village, I lost fish worth around Tk 1 lakh. I now have nothing."

Fish farmers in the region have incurred a substantial loss of Tk 133.61 crore, of which Tk 101.18 crore has been lost in the Sylhet district alone, according to the divisional fisheries department.

Md Anowar Hossain, deputy director of the Department of Fisheries in Sylhet, said, "We are now keeping an eye

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

REPORTING ON COPS

'Journos should be more cautious'

Says home ministry; BFUJ, DUJ express concern over threat to press freedom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government wants media outlets to exercise more caution while publishing reports that may potentially tarnish the image of the police force.

The home ministry sent a letter to the information and broadcasting ministry on June 13 regarding this matter, which came to light recently.

The letter, signed by home ministry Deputy Secretary Israt Zahan, requested the information and broadcasting ministry to take necessary measures so that print and electronic media outlets exercise greater caution during the publication of news that could harm the reputation of the police force.

Earlier on Friday, a statement expressing similar concern was sent to the media on behalf of the Bangladesh Police Service Association.

JOURNOS EXPRESS CONCERN

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) issued a counter-statement yesterday.

In the joint statement, journalist leaders said the language used by some leaders and organisations in their reactions to certain news reports poses a threat to the freedom of the press.

"These reports are not published with any particular agenda; rather, responsible journalists believe that they are publishing verified information after thoroughly checking the facts and documents available to them."

GOVT SEEKS NEWS SOURCES

The home ministry's letter to the information ministry also sought information about the sources of the two news reports run by Bangla daily Kaler Kantho on June 9 under

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Israel kills dozens in safe zone bombing

25 killed in shelling near Red Cross office; Lebanon border conflict escalates

AGENCIES

Israeli forces yesterday bombed several areas from air and the ground, killing dozens and forcing many families living in areas described as humanitarian-designated zones to leave northwards.

An Israeli attack on Friday near the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) base at the al-Mawasi camp, designated by Israel as a safe zone, that Palestinian officials say killed at least 25 people and wounded 50 others, involved two strikes, The Associated Press news agency reported.

An Israeli military spokesman did not acknowledge any role in the incident but said it was "under review".

"Firing so dangerously close to humanitarian structures puts the lives of civilians and humanitarians at risk," the ICRC said on X.

Meanwhile, one Israeli strike on houses in Al-Shati, one of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, killed 24 people, Ismail Al-Thawabta told Reuters. Another 18 Palestinians were killed in a strike on houses in the Al-Tuffah neighbourhood.

Footage obtained by Reuters showed dozens of Palestinians rushing out to search for victims amid the destroyed houses. The footage showed wrecked homes, blasted walls, and debris and dust filling the street in Shati refugee camp.

At least 42 people were killed in Israeli attacks on districts of Gaza City in the north of the Palestinian enclave yesterday, the director of the Hamas-run government media office said.

Civil defence agency spokesman Mahmud Basal said five municipal workers died when a garage in the city was bombed.

Fighting continued yesterday morning, with witnesses reporting gun battles between Palestinian and Israeli forces in Gaza City.

- 37,551 people killed in Gaza since Oct 7
- At least 120 killed in Gaza over the past 48 hours
- Israeli strike kills Ayman Ghotmeh, leader of Lebanese Islamist group
- Hezbollah claims attacks on Israeli troops near Lebanon border

And in the city's Zeitun neighbourhood, Israeli helicopters fired at Palestinian fighters, witnesses said.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 37,551 people have been killed in the territory during more than eight months of Israel's offensive in Gaza.

Elsewhere, Lebanon-based Hamas ally Hezbollah claimed a number of attacks on Israeli troops and positions near the border on Friday, including two using drones.

The Israeli army said it had carried out multiple retaliatory strikes on both days.

Israeli jets on Friday struck a "Hezbollah military structure in the area of Khiam, a Hezbollah military post in the area of Mais al-Jabal," and Hezbollah infrastructure "in the areas of Taybeh and Tallouseh in southern Lebanon", the army said in a statement.

A security source said a leader of the Lebanese Islamist group Jamaa Islamiya, an ally of Hamas, was killed yesterday in an Israeli strike on a vehicle in eastern Lebanon.

"A leader of the al-Fajr Forces of the Jamaa Islamiya, Ayman Ghotmeh, was killed in an Israeli strike in Khiara in the western Bekaa," 10 kilometres from the border with Syria, the source told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The Fajr Forces, Jamaa Islamiya's armed wing, was established in 1982 to fight the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Lebanon's state-run ANI news agency reported one person killed when a car was targeted in Khiara, and that the victim was from the nearby village of Lala, without giving further details.

Israel's military said an aircraft carried out a "precise strike in the Beqaa area in Lebanon in order to eliminate" Ayman Ghotmeh, who they said supplied weapons to Hamas and Jamaa Islamiya in Lebanon.

Khaleda in Evercare CCU

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said yesterday that the party Chairperson Khaleda Zia's health condition was very critical.

Speaking to reporters at Evercare Hospital, he called on the country's people to pray for her speedy recovery.

Fakhrul went to the hospital around 1:30pm and talked to the medical board members about Khaleda's condition.

The BNP chairperson has been receiving treatment at the Critical Care Unit (CCU) since she was admitted to the hospital early yesterday. Entry to the CCU has been restricted, except for medical board doctors and nurses, considering Khaleda's alarming condition.

"I visited Evercare Hospital around 1:30pm to see madam [Khaleda]. She is in the CCU. Her condition is extremely alarming, and doctors are restricting access to her room," Fakhrul said.

The BNP leader said he talked to doctors engaged in Khaleda's treatment to know her physical condition. "What I came to know from physicians is that her condition is very critical."

He said the medical board members will hold another meeting in the evening to determine the next course of her treatment.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Chimps help scientists find medicinal plants

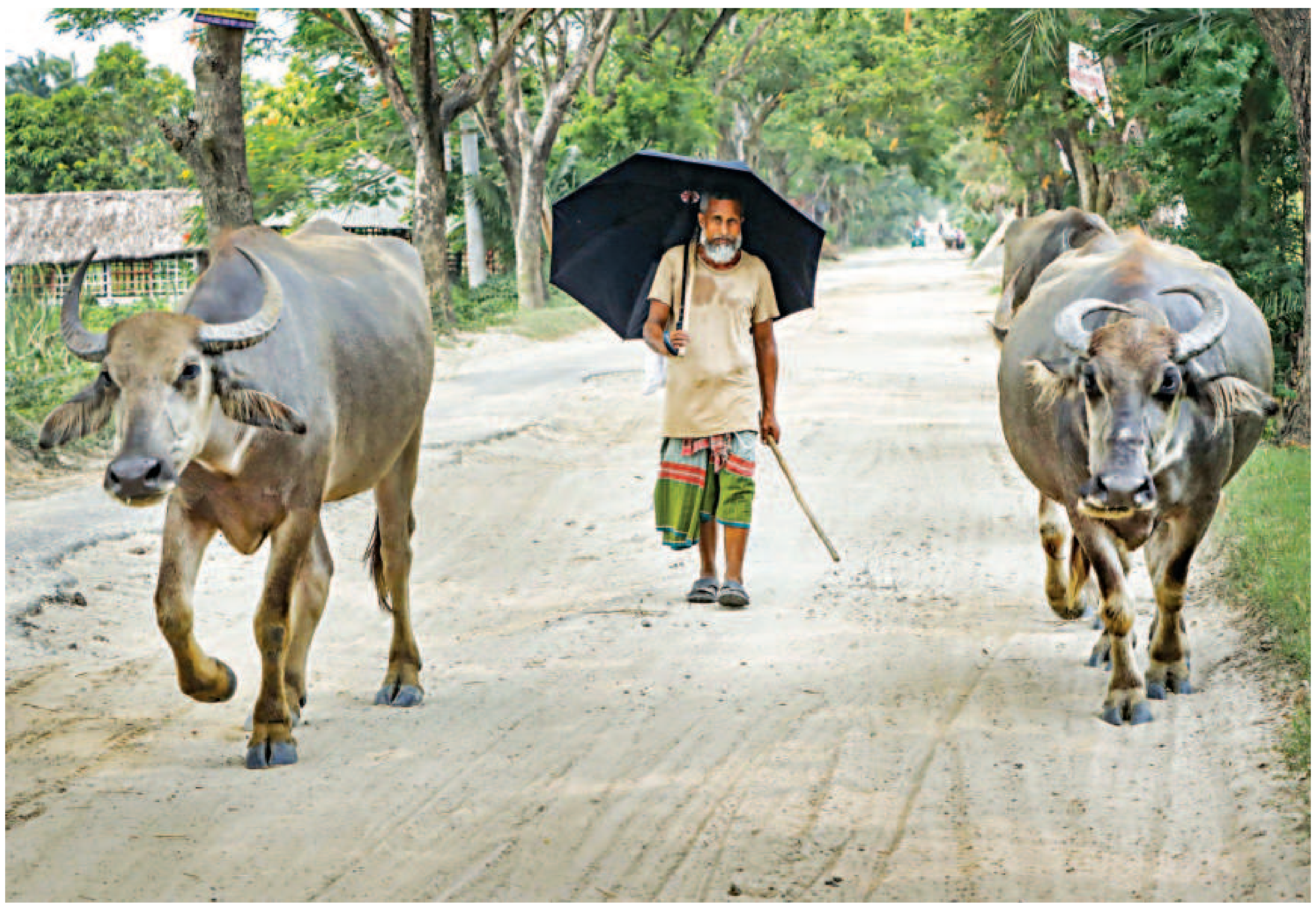
INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Oxford scientists have identified 13 plants that have potent wound-healing and infection-fighting properties in a "thrilling" discovery – with help from some wild chimpanzees.

Researchers observed the great apes in an African forest feeding on bark, dead wood and leaves from plants that were not part of their normal diet after becoming ill or injured.

Watching how chimpanzees – the closest living human relative – seek help from nature when unwell could fast-track the discovery of new drugs to treat chronic diseases and infections, the researchers said.

Dr Elodie Freymann, from the University of Oxford's School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, said: "Our study highlights the medicinal knowledge that can be gained from observing other species in the wild and underscores the urgent need to preserve these forest pharmacies for future generations."



Mokbul Sheikh takes his buffaloes to a pasture in Bilpabla area of Khulna's Dumuria upazila yesterday. He makes between Tk 1,200 and Tk 1,400 a day using the animals to plough fields in nearby villages.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

ACC to sue Benazir after probe ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission is making preparations to file a case against former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed, his wife Jisaan Mirza, and daughters Farheen Rishta and Tahsin Raisa.

An investigation into their wealth is almost complete, and the case will be filed after it is done, officials said.

The ACC asked him to appear at its office in the capital today.

Benazir and his family members reportedly left the country in early May and it is unlikely that he would appear at the ACC office today and meet the investigators.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan said if Benazir remains absent, legal steps will be taken.

Benazir and his family members missed ACC appointments on June 6 and 9. The ACC then rescheduled the dates to June 23 and June 24.

The ACC on April 18 launched an inquiry into allegations that Benazir amassed huge wealth when he was the police chief.

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DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 24, 2024

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KSRM
শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

WEALTH ACCUMULATION

Heap of stocks exposes Matiur's wrongdoing

AHSAN HABIB

NBR official Md Matiur Rahman, who has come under the scanner amid controversy over his wealth, has made a big fortune through investments in the stock market, raising questions about the means he applied in the process.

In a recent interview with private television ntv, Matiur, who was yesterday removed from NBR and attached to the finance ministry, admitted that he used his expertise and insights about the capital market to buy shares of ailing but potential companies to make financial gains.

In his own admission, the career tax official would sit with owners of listed companies and visit firms to identify their weakness and offer solutions for growth. In essence, he would buy company shares in their rainy days and trade them when the share value shot up.

"This gives you a good gain," he said, adding that he also offered consultancy for initial public offering (IPOs) to help companies float shares to raise money from the public.

Matiur's admissions offer vital clues as to how people with power and influence over public institutions can become a money-making machine. What happened in Matiur's case is simple yet intriguing: he entered the share market with insider information, an unlawful practice as per the capital market regulations, to mint money.

- Matiur and his family held over 3 crore shares in at least 10 companies
- He sometimes used insider information to buy shares of ailing but potential companies, which is illegal

The regulation against inside trading is meant to safeguard general investors against those with privileged information who can make gains or avert losses that the general investors cannot.

The controversy over Matiur and his family's wealth comes amid ongoing investigations and public discussions about massive wealth of a number of other top current and former government officials and their family members.

An initial tally by The Daily Star shows he and his company held more

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

ACC opens inquiry into graft claims

STAR REPORT

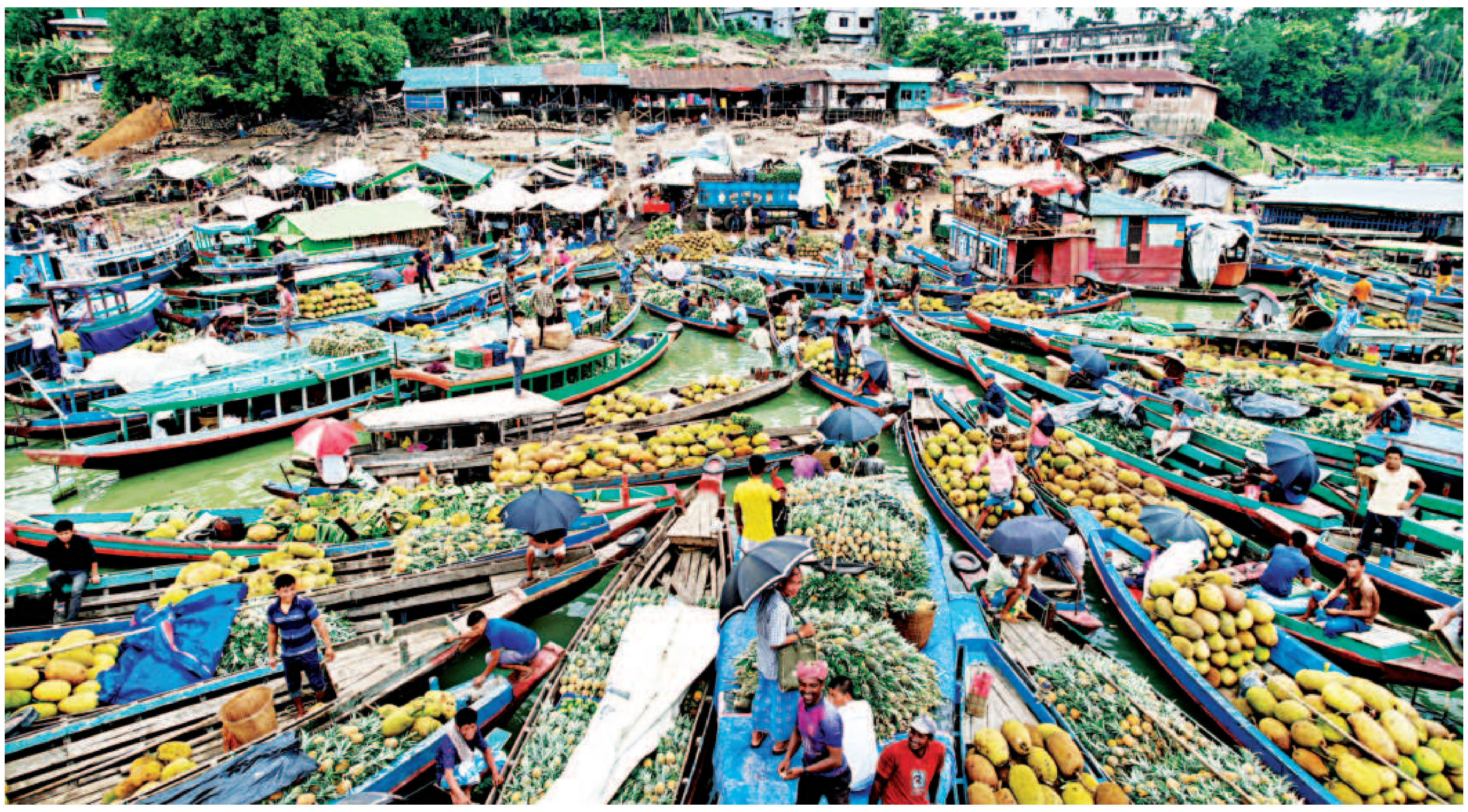
The Anti-Corruption Commission has launched an inquiry into the allegations of amassing illegal wealth and money laundering by Matiur Rahman, who has been removed from his post at the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

A three-member team has been formed to investigate the allegations against Matiur, ACC Secretary Khorsheda Yasmin told reporters during a press briefing at its headquarters yesterday.

The ACC's move came hours after Matiur, the president of the NBR's Customs, Excise, and VAT Appellate Tribunal, was transferred to the Internal Resources Division of the finance ministry.

Khorsheda said the commission decided on June 4 to initiate an investigation.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Boats carrying summer fruits, mostly jackfruits and pineapples, gathered at Rangamati's Banarupa Bazaar, one of the largest floating markets in the country. Fruits and other products from at least 10 upazilas are brought in on boats and trawlers to be sold at this market every Wednesday. The photo was taken from the district's Samata Ghat area.

PHOTO: LALTANLIAN PANGKHUA

BPSA statement a threat against media freedom

Say Editors' Council, DRU, BJC and TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors' Council yesterday protested and expressed concern over the Bangladesh Police Service Association's (BPSA) statement on recent news about the police force, saying it is a manifestation of an "indecent, illogical and irresponsible" attitude towards independent media and impartial journalism.

The statement, signed by Editors' Council President Mahfuz Anam and General Secretary Dewan Hanif Mahmud, said several media outlets have recently published reports on the unusual wealth of both current and former high- and low-ranking police officials.

In response to the reports, the BPSA sent letters to all media editors, expressing concern, which have been reported by various media outlets.

In the letters, sent on Friday, the BPSA urged journalists to be more cautious and follow the principles of journalism properly while publishing any report about the police force in the future.

The association described the recent media reports, mainly on graft allegations against some former and current officials, as a "smear campaign" by the media. It claimed the reports

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

AL 'indomitable as its strength lies in people'

Hasina urges unity to foil plots against the party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said several attempts failed to destroy her party as the people and activists are its source of power.

The prime minister said, "The Awami League could not be wiped out despite repeated attacks. It rose again and again like a phoenix, as the main strength of the Awami League is the people. Our strength is our grassroots activists. They never bow down.

"Awami League leaders and activists uphold the organisation with their hard work, defying sufferings and repeated blows."

She was addressing a grand rally at the historic Suhrawardy Udyan marking the 75th founding anniversary of the party.

Referring to many senior leaders who left the party over the years, she said they considered themselves bigger than the party. "They were "stars" when they were in the Awami League, but those stars never shined again after they quit the party. Many [such stars] are dim, some went out.

"Some returned to the party after realising their mistakes, and we accepted them. Many are still dreaming of the fall of the government," Hasina said.

She said an attempt was made to ruin the party in 2007 by forming a king's party, but it failed as the people, grassroots, and dedicated leaders were the main strength of the AL.

"I would like to appeal to every leader and activist to make the party well-organised and stronger. If the organisation is strong and the support of the masses can be gained, all sorts of conspiracy can be foiled," Hasina added.

Describing AL's contribution before and after the birth of Bangladesh, Hasina said the AL was significantly involved in every achievement of the country.

"Awami League leaders have always stood beside the people. After the AL won 233 seats in the 2008 election and assumed power, the country never had to look back," she said.

"Extreme poverty fell to 5.6 percent from 25.1 percent in 15 years. Literacy rate was 45 percent when we came to power. It has now improved to 75 percent," she added.

Hasina said her government successfully transformed Bangladesh into Digital Bangladesh as per the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Khaleda gets pacemaker implanted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

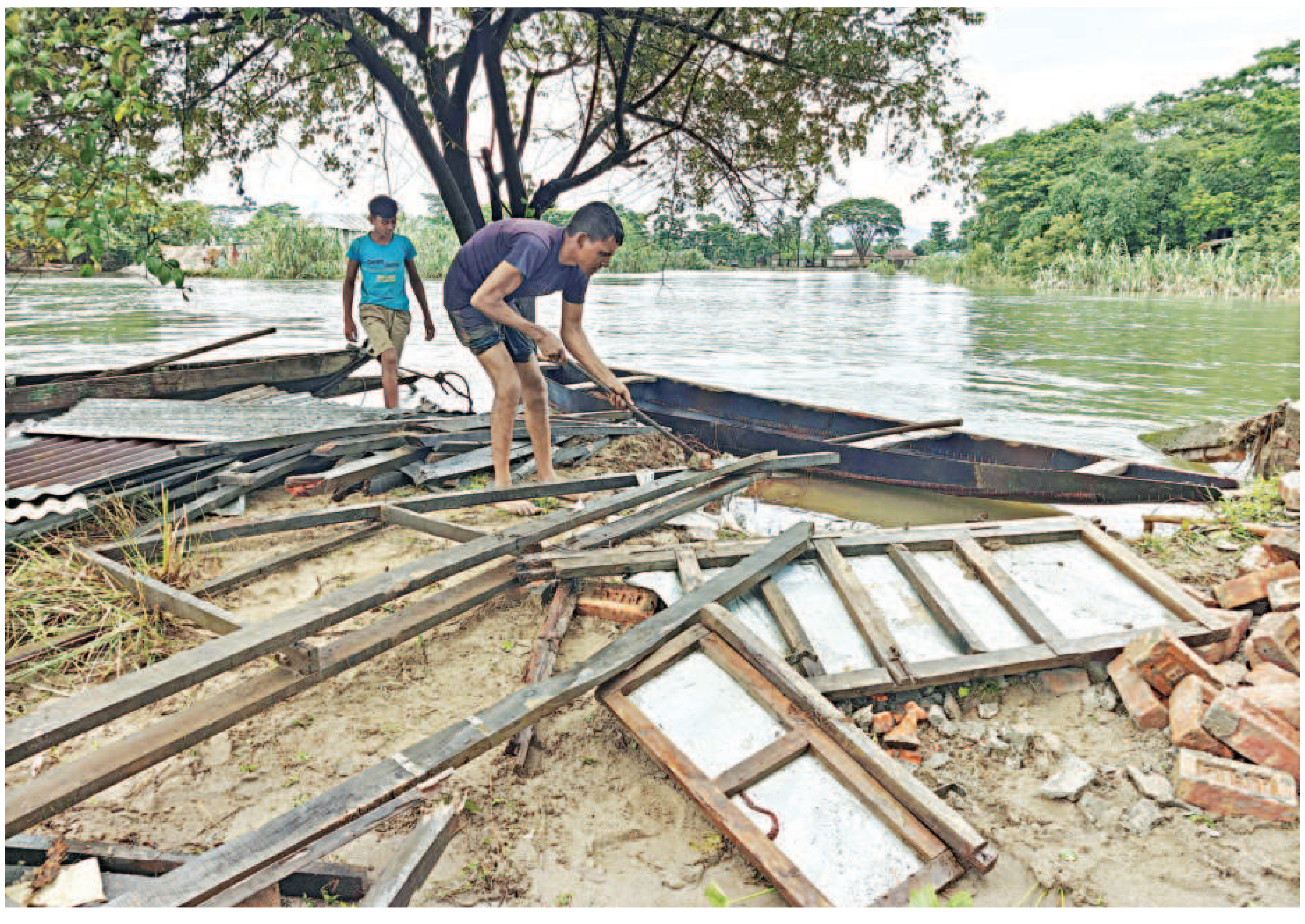
BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has undergone surgery to have a pacemaker implanted in her chest to help regulate her heart function.

The medical board, which has been treating Khaleda, carried out the procedure at the city's Evercare Hospital yesterday.

"She will be under the supervision of doctors in the Coronary Care Unit (CCU) for the next 72 hours," AZM Zahid Hossain, personal physician of Khaleda, told The Daily Star last night.

"Madam [Khaleda] had a blocked artery for which stenting was done earlier. The medical board then decided to implant

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Amir Ali and his brother were seen clearing out the ruins of their broken house in Bordeo village in Pashchim Islampur union of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila on Saturday. Many houses in the upazila were damaged or broken beyond repair due to the recent floods that hit the Sylhet division.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

BUSINESS

ADB to lend $20.8b in four years

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is expected to provide $20.8 billion in loans to Bangladesh in the next four years as the country looks to accelerate economic growth and attain the upper-middle-income status in less than a decade.

The amount is 42.3 percent higher than the $12 billion the country received in the previous four years, documents from the Manila-based lender showed.

Of the expected financing, $16.4 billion, or 78.85 percent, will be extended as ordinary capital resources (OCR) loan, since the country's capacity to pay back has gone up.

The interest rate for the OCR portion is near market-based. The rest of the loan will be concessional.

STORY ON B1

Jamuna Bank Remembers Its Sponsor Director on his 49th Birthday

Anindya Majumder (Bappu)
24 June 1975 | 16 January 2007

On his 49th Birth Anniversary, we honour and cherish the memory of **Anindya Majumder (Bappu)**, a loving son, a doting brother, a devoted friend and a dedicated professional.

He had been a founding director of **Jamuna Bank PLC.** and a director at **New Generation Construction Co. Ltd.**

We miss him dearly everyday,

Family, Friends And Colleagues

MY DHAKA

Life with an urban monkey

AYMAN ANIKA

Living in Dhaka, one rarely expects encounters with wildlife, especially monkeys. However, my home at Shahjadpur, beside an enormous mango tree, became the stage for a rather unusual drama involving a lone monkey!

It all began as what I could only describe as a bittersweet – and often hilarious – relationship with one of the city's cheekiest primates.

I first noticed the visitor on my windowsill one fine morning. Far from a swinging, lively creature inhabiting the lush forests, this monkey appeared sad and lonely. Curious, I learned from my homeowner that this was the same animal raiding our mango tree.

Despite the landlady's frustration, my heart went out to this solitary figure. To lighten its spirits, I offered some fruits and biscuits, only to be rewarded with a scratch that sent me to the hospital for a rabies vaccine. Lesson learned -- not all monkey friendships start with a handshake!

This experience, although painful, got me thinking about the deeper issues at play.

Monkeys, once reigning supreme in the tree-laden areas of Old Dhaka -- particularly Gandaria and Wari -- now find themselves navigating the concrete jungle. With much of their natural habitat replaced by urban sprawl, these animals have been forced to adapt in unexpected ways.

Without their ancestral homes' abundant trees and natural food sources, they have now turned to scavenging human food. Rooftops and less crowded areas have become their new social hubs, where they can interact and play – albeit far from the ideal conditions of a forest.

PHOTO: **AYMAN ANIKA**

Sometimes, their antics are as eccentric as children throwing tantrums. The monkey that visits my house has developed a peculiar habit of knocking on my window whenever it wants a snack. If ignored, it stages a mini-protest, banging its little fists like a pint-sized revolutionary.

The plight of these urban monkeys is a mirror reflecting our actions. The gradual erosion of green spaces in Dhaka has not only robbed these creatures of their homes but also of their independence.

Where once they thrived on the fruits of the forest, they now depend on the scraps from our tables. This dependence has led to conflicts and often misunderstandings on both sides. Monkeys stealing clothes and food has become a part of urban legends, and sometimes, they manage to outsmart us in ways that are as infuriating as they are funny.

Despite these challenges, there are moments of genuine connection and understanding. After my initial encounter, the same monkey has become a regular visitor. These visits have taught me about resilience and adaptability. Who knew that sharing a city with monkeys could be so entertaining?

As urban expansion continues, we must acknowledge and plan for the wildlife displaced by our actions. Instead of viewing them as intruders, perhaps we could see them as fellow city dwellers trying to navigate the complexities of urban life.

Simple steps like preserving existing green spaces, planting more trees, and creating urban sanctuaries can make a noticeable difference in the lives of these animals.

As we look towards the future, let's aim for a harmonious coexistence, where monkeys and humans share the cityscape with mutual respect. After all, in the grand symphony of life, every creature has its part to play, and sometimes, a good laugh is the best harmony of all.

Law doesn't allow sending Khaleda Zia abroad for treatment

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said there is no provision in law that would allow BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to go abroad for treatment.

"As far as I know, a process has been initiated to place a pacemaker in Khaleda Zia as part of her cardiovascular treatment. We received no request for sending her abroad," he said.

"Khaleda Zia's jail sentence has been suspended under an executive order, which was issued based on a [specific] law. Under the law, there is no scope for sending her abroad."

Anisul said this while answering questions from journalists after attending the inauguration of the training course for senior assistant judges at the Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) in Dhaka. He was the chief guest at the programme.

The minister said Khaleda was released from jail on March 25, 2020, after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina suspended her sentence with an executive order on humanitarian grounds. "Due to this, Khaleda is being able to have treatment as per her own will in the country."

Replying to another question, he said it was not necessary to formulate a new law to collect the wealth statements of government officials, adding that the existing provision requires the officials to submit their wealth statements at the entry stage of their services, which have to be updated from time to time.

The law minister, however, urged journalists to be alert and not malign honest officials.

In response to a separate question, Anisul said there is a provision for the Anti-Corruption Commission to inform the government regarding taking action against any government official for corruption.

It has been incorporated in the law so that the government can be aware of the ACC's action and also think about what action it will take from its end against the official concerned.

JATI's Director General Justice Hasan Foez Siddique presided over the programme, where Law and Justice Division Secretary Md Golam Sarwar also spoke.

ACC opens inquiry into graft claims

FROM PAGE 1

The team members -- ACC Deputy Director Anower Hossen, Assistant Director Mahmudul Hasan, and Deputy Assistant Director Sabikun Nahar -- have already begun working on it.

In 2004, 2008, 2013, and most recently in 2021, allegations of corruption were made against Matiur, but the ACC never decided to look into them.

Asked why no probes were launched before, Khorsheda said, "The commission will review as to why. Now that new information has surfaced, a probe has been launched."

Meanwhile, the government asked Matiur not to attend the board meetings of Sonali Bank.

"We informed our board members about the government decision," Sonali Bank Chairman Ziaul Hasan Siddiqui told reporters after a board meeting yesterday.

He said it was not the responsibility of the board to appoint or remove Matiur, as he is a representative of the government on the Sonali Bank board.

Matiur has plunged into controversy over his wealth after his son, Mushfiqur Rahman Ifat, posted a photo of a sacrificial goat on social media and claimed to have bought it for Tk 12 lakh. There have also been media reports on his family's lavish lifestyle.

These raised questions about the income of this official at this grade (grade-1) with a basic monthly salary of Tk 78,000.

Photos of Ifat with various expensive cars and the family's properties, including flats and resorts in places like Dhaka, Gazipur, and Narsingdi, began doing the rounds on social media.

On Wednesday, Matiur told The Daily Star that Ifat was not his son and that he was a victim of a conspiracy.

Matiur claimed he has two children: a daughter and a son. His daughter lives in Canada, while his son graduated from a university in the US.

Later, media reports, quoting lawmaker Nizam Uddin Hazari of Feni-2 and local leaders, said Ifat is the son of Shammi Akhter Shibu, who is Hazari's cousin and Matiur's second wife.

Heap of stocks exposes Matiur's wrongdoing

FROM PAGE 1

than 3 crore shares of at least 10 companies – but this figure may rise.

Matiur, who also worked at Chattogram Customs and Large Taxpayer Unit (LTU), VAT, told ntv on Wednesday that he started investing in the capital market in 2008.

He also acknowledged that he made "abnormally high" money from the shares of Fortune Shoes. He bought the company's shares at Tk 8 whose face value was Tk 10, and sold them at Tk 54 each.

"I had a deal with the owner of the shoemaker to offer consultancy to bring the company to the stock market. In return, the owner gave me shares at Tk 8."

He did not respond to our calls and text messages over the last two days.

According to the Companies Act, a company can sell shares at a discount price but with approval from the High Court, and it must be shown in the company's financial reports.

However, the company did not take any approval and did not show it in the financial report of 2015-16 when it got listed. Moreover, the IPO prospectus showed that all shareholders bought shares at face value of Tk 10 each.

Under service rules, government officials cannot work as consultants to facilitate companies to be listed in the capital market. The securities rules also have no option for any individual to offer consultancy related to IPO listing.

It is the job of merchant banks with issue management licences, and there are 66 such merchant banks in Bangladesh, according to BSEC data.

The merchant banks offer their service against a fee, and cannot accept any shares from the company, according to company listing regulations of 2015.

"The issue manager is in no way connected with the issuer and does not hold any of its securities," the regulations say.

Faruq Ahmad Siddiqi, a former chairman of BSEC, said a public service-holder should not offer such consultancy. The securities rules also have no option for that.

"Why did the company give him shares at Tk 8? This is a serious allegation of irregularities that the official himself revealed. It should be investigated thoroughly," he said.

A top merchant banker, who usually offers IPO consultancy service, said Matiur indicated in the interview with that he got shares before listing and no company in Bangladesh sells shares at discount.

"Most companies have to give shares to some influential people as bribes without getting any money or at a lower price."

Usually, companies provide placement shares to regulatory officials to curry favours, he added.

According to the IPO prospectus of Fortune Shoes, Matiur received 5 lakh shares of the company, which was 0.67 percent of the total shares of the company in its pre-IPO period.

His second wife Shammi Akter (Shibli) received 10 lakh shares; his daughter Farzana Rahman 16.50 lakh shares; and his son Ahmed Tawfiqur Rahman Arnab 9 lakh shares, according to the prospectus of Fortune Shoes.

He also received shares from ACME Pesticides, Associated Oxygen, C&A Textiles, Dominage Steel, Lub-rref (Bangladesh), Mamun Agro, ML Dyeing, Ring Shine and SK Trims, according to the company prospectus seen by The Daily Star.

He received 37 lakh shares from Acme Pesticides and 14.5 lakh shares from Associated Oxygen. His first wife Laila Kaniz Lucky had 4.5 lakh shares and his son Ahmed Tawfiqur Rahman Arnab 5 lakh shares from Associated Oxygen.

From a single company -- C&A Textiles -- he and his family members got 47.3 lakh shares.

Additionally, he received 88.83 lakh shares from SK Trims, 21 lakh shares from Kattali Textiles, 16 lakh shares from ML Dyeing, 10 lakh shares each from Mamun Agro Products and Ring Shine and 8 lakh shares each from Dominage Steel and Lub-rref (Bangladesh).

According to securities rules, any individual can get placement shares. Before getting listed with the stock exchanges, many companies sell placement shares to individuals, especially to friends and family.

Usually, they sell shares at face value or at a higher price considering that the share would be traded at a higher price after listing. In the meantime, investors can make money by holding the shares for one year or more.

But if the same people buy shares from many companies, it raises question as to whether they are getting preferential treatments to buy shares from all companies, said Siddiqi, the former chairman of BSEC.

The government should investigate whether the person offered any illegal benefits to the companies in return for those placement shares, he added.

A top official of the BSEC said there is no ban on government officials to buy and sell shares on the stock market. But ideally, those having policymaking roles in the stock market or have conflict of interest in the sector should never be allowed to invest in the speculative market like stock exchange.

"The rule should be applied to people who work in offices such as the Securities and Exchange Commission, the central bank or NBR."

BSEC Spokesperson Mohammad Rezaul Karim said if any company sells shares at discount prices, it must take approval from the High Court, but Fortune Shoes did not do that. It only took approval from BSEC to issue shares at face value.

"We have no information as to how he [Matiur] got the shares at Tk 8. Only the company and the person involved can say it."

Any company can offer placement shares to anyone. So BSEC has nothing to say or do if any company sells its shares at face value, he added.

Riaz Uddin Bhuiya, company secretary of Fortune Shoes, said the company sold shares to Matiur at Tk 10.

Matiur is now working to enhance the share price of another company.

"At present, I am working with Silva Pharmaceuticals. Its growth will triple within one year. Its price will also double," he told ntv.

According to a BSEC order, no one is allowed to publicly predict share prices. Also, the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules 1979 says no government official shall speculate in investments.

On the other hand, no company can sit privately with a minority shareholder. The company can talk with minority shareholders in AGMs only.

Buying and selling of shares based on such sittings and confidential information are seen as insider trading, which is illegal, market analysts say.

But Matiur sees it differently.

"I always invest in stock market this way," he told ntv, adding that he made Tk 14 crore by investing Tk 1 crore once.

Benazir again skips

FROM PAGE 12

ACC sources said Benazir's letter was addressed to the ACC chairman, two commissioners, director general (money laundering) and the head of the investigation team.

Benazir wrote that he was staying abroad with family for medical and other personal reasons.

He said he worked in different districts and it would take time for him to collect documents, records, and files relating to his assets and prepare a statement.

Khaleda gets pacemaker implanted

FROM PAGE 1

a pacemaker in her chest considering her physical condition," he said earlier.

Zahid sought prayers from the people of the country for her speedy recovery.

The BNP chairperson has been receiving treatment at the CCU since she was admitted to the hospital early Saturday.

Khaleda was rushed to Evercare Hospital in an ambulance around 3:30am as she suddenly fell ill at her residence, "Firoza" in Gulshan.

She was immediately admitted to the CCU, where medical treatment began under the supervision of the medical board.

Earlier, when Khaleda went to Evercare Hospital on May 1 for a regular health check-up, doctors treated her at the CCU for two days.

The former prime minister, 79, has long battled various ailments, including liver cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes, and issues related to the kidney, lung, heart, and eyes.

Since her conditional release from prison in 2020, the BNP chief has been receiving medical care on several occasions at the hospital under the supervision of a medical board headed by cardiologist Prof Shahabuddin Talukder.

Khaleda's doctors have been advising sending her abroad since she was diagnosed with liver cirrhosis in November 2021.

On October 26, last year, three US specialist doctors completed a hepatic procedure known as the transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt (TIPS procedure) to stop water accumulation in Khaleda's stomach and chest, and bleeding in her liver.

PHOTO: **COURTESY OF YASIN KABIR JOY**

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and the party's General Secretary Obaidul Quader release doves during a programme marking the 75th founding anniversary of the AL at the Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday.

AL indomitable

FROM PAGE 1

commitment made before the 2008 election. "Today's Bangladesh has gained dignity as we worked for the people."

"After being elected the president of the Awami League [in 1981], I returned to the country, depriving my children of mother's love and affection, mainly to implement the dream of my father to give the people beautiful and improved lives by changing their fate," she said.

The AL had a series of events over three days to mark its 75th founding anniversary. The last programme was yesterday's grand rally.

The rally was scheduled to start at 3:00pm but the leaders and activists of the party and its various affiliated organisations started gathering at the venue as the gates were opened around 11:00am.

Hasina arrived around 3:30pm.

After reaching the venue, Hasina hoisted the national flag as the national anthem was playing. AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader hoisted the party flag. They then released doves and balloons.

The opposition leader and Jatiya Party chairman, leaders of the AL-led 14-party alliance, and foreign diplomats, among others, were present.

A cultural programme was held on the stage, during which artistes of Shilpakala Academy sang the theme song of the founding anniversary and other patriotic songs, and danced.

Marking the day, Hasina paid homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing a wreath at his portrait at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum on Dhanmondi-32 in the morning.

Yet another investigator

FROM PAGE 12

Ferdous Doreen told reporters after meeting Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan that she heard a vested quarter was trying to get some of the arrestees out of jail.

On June 16, Saidul Karim Mintu, the general secretary of Jhenaidah Awami League, who allegedly told the assailants that they would get the blood money, was sent to jail before his eight-day remand was complete.

Mintu was placed on an eight-day remand, but the Detective Branch (DB) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, sent him to court within three days.

He did not make a confessional statement and maintained that he was not involved in the murder.

Asked why Mintu was taken to jail before the remand period was over, DB chief Harun said, "No law has been violated. It is the investigating officers' discretion. If officers believe there is nothing more to learn from a suspect, they can take the person to a court and the court can send them to jail.

"Had there been any pressure, we would not be able to accomplish so much. The home minister repeatedly said that there was no external pressure. He has instructed us to investigate impartially. No innocent person will be harassed."

Aktaruzzaman, who allegedly planned the murder, and several others have not been arrested yet, he said.

As the US and India have an extradition treaty, the authorities have requested Indian police to bring Aktaruzzaman back from the US.

Besides, the Interpol was contacted over the matter, and detectives have talked to the US Embassy in Dhaka.

"The investigation is winding up. We have arrested many. We have got some names. We are trying to arrest them."

Asked whether Doreen was going to Kolkata to give DNA samples, Harun said, "Indian police through the embassy requested Doreen to go to India. We spoke to her. She has been suffering from a fever for a few days."

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12. On May 22, India and Bangladesh police said the lawmaker was murdered.

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BNP worried over BPSA statement

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday expressed concern over the Bangladesh Police Service Association's statement regarding media reports on corruption allegations against its former and current officials, calling it a threat to the media uncovering the truth.

"You have seen the corruption stories of several police officers (exposed by the media). The stories regarding corruption allegations against some other police officers are also surfacing," he said.

"But I am surprised to notice that the police association sent a statement to journalists, threatening them not to publish the truth, fearing it might tarnish their image," Fakhrul said.

He was speaking at a doa and milad mahfil at BNP's Nayapaltan headquarters.

Earlier on June 21, the BPSA issued a statement condemning what it termed a "smear campaign" orchestrated by certain media outlets against current and former members of the police force.

It claimed that recent reports against police members were exaggerated, partial, and intentionally misleading.

Newly-appointed Chief of Army Staff Waker-Uz-Zaman being adorned with the rank badge of "general" in presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban yesterday. Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan and Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan adorned the army chief with the rank badge. Earlier in the day, he took the charge from his predecessor General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed.
PHOTO: BSS

Publish list of loan defaulters in JS

Demands AK Azad, slams the provision to whiten black money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Independent MP AK Azad from Faridpur-3 yesterday demanded that the government publish a list of loan defaulters in parliament.

He said these loan defaulters looted the bank's money and laundered it abroad.

Azad made this statement during the general discussion on the proposed budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year in parliament.

According to Bangladesh Bank, the official amount of defaulted loans is around Tk 1.82 lakh crores, but the actual amount is closer to Tk 5 lakh thousand crores, Azad claimed.

"Everyone knows who took this money. I have requested the finance minister to reveal their names in parliament for the sake of transparency and accountability. They are the ones who looted the bank's money and laundered it abroad," he said.

Azad also opposed the proposal to allow the whitening of black money with a 15 percent tax, arguing that it contradicts the Awami League's election manifesto, which declared zero tolerance for corruption.

"It is not understandable how the sovereign parliament can legalise the laundering of black money," he said, questioning why the source of black money cannot be scrutinised.

He praised the leadership of the prime minister, noting

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

Action if any Rab member involved in misdeeds

Says new DG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed director general of Rab Md Harun-Ar-Rashid yesterday issued a warning that if members of the force are found to be involved in misdeeds or illegal activities, they will face the legal action.

At a media briefing, he also emphasised that the trend of Rab members' involvement in criminal activities has decreased.

Harun announced five-point directives and work plans, prioritising controlling extremism and terrorism, recovering illegal firearms and drugs, and curbing teen gangs' activities.

AL 'lost its pro-people image'

Activists express concerns over party's deviation from core ideals

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Leaders and activists from various levels of the ruling Awami League have voiced concerns that the party has strayed from its founding principles, urging a focus on devoted activists rather than infiltrators.

"The ideology that inspired us to do Awami League's politics no longer exists. Here, the opportunists are getting more importance than the dedicated activists. Division within the party has become more acute due to personal interests," said Ajgar Hossain, former information and research affairs secretary of Pallabi thana unit AL, at a rally.

Hossain, a 70-year-old AL politician, expressed his frustration over the lack of disciplinary action against leaders who prioritise self-interest. He emphasised that activists who stood by the party during its darkest times are the true loyalists.

"If they are not given due importance and respect, who would protect the party and its ideology? The devotion that the activists of the 80s or 90s had is now missing," he added.

Amid such concerns, thousands of activists and leaders from AL and its affiliated organisations gathered at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital yesterday to celebrate the party's platinum jubilee.

Carrying party and national flags, they arrived in buses, cars, trucks, and on foot, wearing colourful T-shirts and caps, creating a festive atmosphere as the ruling party marked 75 years.

Rajibul Islam, an activist from Ashulia upazila AL, believes the party has become its own worst enemy.

"Awami League is gradually drifting from its ideology and principles. The core activists of the party have been cornered by the hybrid ones. Businessmen are dominating the party politics. The party lawmakers have created their own circle in their areas, intensifying feud at the grassroots," he said, calling for steps to resolve these conflicts.

An anonymous AL activist from Gazipur said, "There has been a trend that doing Awami League's politics means acquiring huge wealth. It is an ominous sign. If this trend continues, dedicated leaders will be hard to find."

Some activists acknowledged public dissatisfaction over corruption and price hikes, expecting the party to address these issues.

"People have discomfort and complaints with the party over the failure to control price hikes of commodities and corruption. I expect the party would handle these issues with firm hands and prove it as a true pro-people party," said Murad Hossain, president of ward 19 unit of Dhaka north.

Pannu Mia, an AL leader from Nababganj upazila, remarked that the party had lost its "pro-people" image due to some "wrong decisions". He expressed hope that the party would consider public sentiments and re-establish itself as a party of the masses once again.

Such media coverage of Matiur 'unexpected'

Says Hasan Mahmud

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

It is not right to accumulate wealth through corruption in the administration, said Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday.

"Our government has zero tolerance for corruption. Therefore, the issues of corruption are coming out during our government," he said.

He made the remarks when he was asked how corrupt officials remain in the administration, referring to the case of Matiur Rahman, who has come to spotlight for alleged corruption.

Matiur, president of the National Board of Revenue's Customs, Excise and VAT Appellate Tribunal, has been transferred to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Picking up the pieces

With flood situation in Sylhet improving, many started rebuilding damaged homes

DWOHA CHOWDHURY *and* **MINTU DESHWARA**

With water levels receding, hundreds of people in Sylhet are returning to their homes from shelter centres. Many have begun rebuilding their damaged houses.

Sitara Begum, 60, of Jamura village in Sunamganj's Chhatak, returned from the shelter centre yesterday, only to find her house badly damaged.

"The 2022 flood destroyed my old house completely. I then took a small loan to rebuild it and am still paying for that loan. Now that my home is damaged again, I don't know what to do," she said.

Khosru Uddin, who was in the Maizpara shelter centre on the banks of the Manu river, said their house has been damaged by floods twice. It is now too dangerous to stay in that house, he added.

Shayesta Mia, a resident of Shamshanghat area, said water levels in the river started falling since Friday (June 21).

On Friday night, the mayor of Moulvibazar municipality gave 10kg of rice per household. Government and private food assistance is much lower than the demand, said locals.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

BLOGGER OYASIQUR MURDER

Trial yet to see closure in 9 years

Complainant still 'unavailable'

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Nine years into the murder of blogger Oyasiqur Rahman Babu, the trial of the case is yet to see any closure as the complainant and other witnesses are not appearing before a Dhaka court for statements.

A gang of banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team (ATB) hacked Oyasiqur, known for his secularist views and write-ups against fundamentalists, in broad daylight at the Tejgaon industrial area on March 30, 2015.

Locals caught two of the attackers on the spot and handed them over to the police.

The prosecution said 24 witnesses out of 40 testified in the case, but the complainant, Monir Hossain Masud, did not appear before the court in the last eight years to testify.

Till May 16 this year, the court summoned Masud, a cousin and also the brother-in-law of Oyasiqur, 77 times and even ordered his arrest, only to get his testimony, but the prosecution and the police could not produce him before the court.

"One year ago, we received the case for disposal. No witnesses appeared in this court [since they received the case] till May 16 this year," Khondaker Mohibul Hasan Apple, assistant public prosecutor of the Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court-12 of Dhaka, told The Daily Star recently.

On the day of the attack, Masud filed a murder case against four named and some unknown persons with the Tejgaon Industrial Police Station.

In July 2022, The Daily Star caught up with the complainant, Masud, at the capital's Arambagh, where he used to run a grocery shop.

At that time, he showed his reluctance to testify before the court. "Actually, I have no interest in the case now," he had said without any elaboration.

Now, he is not available there and he cannot even be reached over the phone.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

AKOTA
SHYAMOLI

With the Eid vacation ending, many people have already returned to the capital, which can be seen in the gridlock formed on this road at Mohakhali yesterday.
PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Chinese Minister Liu Jianchao in Dhaka

UNB, *Dhaka*

Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee Liu Jianchao is visiting Bangladesh to discuss issues of mutual interest between Bangladesh and China.

He arrived in Dhaka on Saturday on a four-day official visit, a senior official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told UNB.

The chinese minister will meet President Mohammed Shahabuddin on Tuesday, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud today, said the official.

The trip is seen as part of regular exchanges of high-level visits, but the forthcoming visit of Hasina to China is likely to be discussed, said ministry sources.

Shahabuddin Ahmad passes away

CITY DESK

Shahabuddin Ahmad, publisher-editor of "The Travel World" magazine and former chief of the Planning Cell at the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, died at Holly Family Red Crescent Hospital, Dhaka following a cardiac arrest on June 21, aged 89.

He left behind his wife and three daughters, said a press release.

He was buried at Banani graveyard.

A doa mahfil will be held today at Masque Al-Magfirah, Road-18, Sector-3, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka after the Asr prayers for the salvation of the departed soul.

Shahe Alam Miah no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Shahe Alam Miah, father of Supreme Court lawyer Mohammad Siddique Ullah Miah, passed away on Saturday, at the age of 68.

He was undergoing treatment at Apollo Hospital in Mumbai, India, confirmed lawyer Mohammad Siddique Ullah Miah to this newspaper.

He left behind his wife, five sons, three daughters, and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death.

Md Shahe Alam Miah was a resident of Ahmadpur union under Charfashion upazila in Bhola.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 24

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-52	8-17
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Every monsoon, around 750 people of Banglabazar Char Baralai village in Kurigram are forced to use rafts made from banana trees to commute after an embankment collapsed in the area in 2017. PHOTO: STAR

KURIGRAM FLOOD

Rafts only means of transport for 150 families

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

At least 750 people from 150 families in Banglabazar Char Baralai village, Baravita union under Kurigram's Phulbari upazila, are facing commuting difficulties due to flooding.

In 2017, around 200 metres of the flood-control dyke in the area collapsed. Since then, the village has faced constant flooding every monsoon, forcing locals to rely solely on rafts made from banana trees to commute.

Children and the elderly use these rafts at great risk. Eighty students in the village, attending various schools and madrasas, have no choice but to use rafts to travel to and from their educational institutions.

Locals reported that the public representatives visited the area several times and promised to repair the collapsed dyke, but no action has been taken.

During the dry season, villagers can move around on foot, but in the monsoon, rafts become their only means of transport.

"It is very risky to travel this way as anyone can fall into the water anytime," said Golenur Bewa, 68.

Shah Alam, a member of the Baravita union parishad, said he had appealed to the local lawmaker to repair the collapsed dyke, adding that the MP has given assurances.

"The union parishad cannot carry out the repair work on its own due to a lack of funds. The lawmaker's representative visited the site," said Ataur Rahman Mintu, chairman of the union parishad.

Contacted, Hamidul Haque, lawmaker of Kurigram-2 constituency, said a project would be initiated during the next dry season to repair the dyke.

"Till then, boats will be arranged for the villagers' commute so they won't have to use rafts with risk," he added.

Three bodies recovered in Dinajpur, Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

The police yesterday recovered three bodies from separate locations in Rangpur and Dinajpur.

The deceased are Mohammad Ali, 16, an easy bike driver of Mithapukur upazila in Rangpur; Shahinur Islam, 35, of Ghoraghat upazila in Dinajpur; and Md Mominur Rahman, 60, of Phulbari upazila in Dinajpur.

Rangpur Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Bazlur Rashid said they recovered the body of Mohammad Ali from a crop field at Katabari village.

Ali had been missing since Friday. Police suspect that criminals killed him and snatched his easy bike.

Shahinur, who had been missing since Saturday afternoon, was found dead on the bank of the Karatoa river.

Meanwhile, Mominur died at a hospital yesterday, more than a month after he was attacked over family dispute.

42 more hospitalised with dengue

UNB, *Dhaka*

Forty-two people were hospitalised with dengue fever in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Of them, 12 patients were hospitalised in Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Currently, 150 patients are receiving treatment at hospitals across the country.

275-year-old

FROM PAGE 5

Haradhan Mallik, 70, the sixth generation descendant of Gopinath, still resides next to the temple at Mallikbari.

"Radha-Govinda idols were installed in the temple. The idol of Govinda was made of touchstone, and the idol of Radha was made of brass. Both idols were lost during the Liberation War in 1971. At present, a portrait of Radha-Madhav is installed in the temple," said Mallik.

"Locals still come here to worship. Researchers and university students sometimes come to visit the temple and take notes," he added.

According to Mizanur Rahman's book "Khulnar Purakirti", the temple was built with contributions from others and was later renovated by Satish Chandra Mitra, author of "Jasohar-Khulnar Itihas", about 100 years ago.

Humayun Kabir Boby, president of Sommilito Sangskritik Jot in Khulna, said, "The temple is of immense historical and archaeological importance. It is necessary to bring it under the archaeology department for preservation."

Lovely Yasmin, regional director of the Department of Archaeology, said the temple is in the process of being declared a protected antiquity under the Antiquities Act, 1968.

"A letter has been sent to the deputy commissioner and the local police administration last month to ensure the temple is protected," she added.

Picking up the pieces

FROM PAGE 3

Sajjad Hossain of Bhukshimoil area of Kulaura upazila said his area is still waterlogged.

The situation in Kulaura, Juri, and Barlekha upazilas has also not normalised yet.

Javed Iqbal, executive engineer of the Water Development Board in Moulvibazar, said the water of the Monu and Dhalai rivers in Moulvibazar has started decreasing and is under the danger level.

The second round of floods started early on the night of June 17. Over 2.2 million people in Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Moulvibazar districts were affected.

The flood forced around 58,000 people to move to shelter centres, while thousands took shelter in other people's houses, high roads, and rail tracks.

Though water has receded, the administration is yet to calculate the losses incurred in terms of houses and other infrastructures.

Water levels in the Surma and Kushiyara rivers are still flowing above the danger level at some points, prolonging flooding in many areas.

The Surma was flowing 22 cm above the danger level in Sylhet's Kanaighat, while the Kushiyara was flowing 99 cm above danger level in Sylhet's Fenchuganj and 40 cm in Zakiganj.

According to BWDB, the Juri river of Moulvibazar contributes to the water level of the Kushiyara.

Sarder Uday Raihan, executive engineer of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre, said the flood situation in the Sylhet region will improve in the next 72 hours which started from Sunday morning.

Given the improved flood situation, tourist spots in Sylhet and Sunamganj -- including Jaflong, Sadapathor, Ratargul, and Tanguar Haor -- have been reopened by the administration.

Trial yet to see closure

FROM PAGE 3

Over the killing of Oyasiqur, Shah Md Mashiur Rahman, an inspector of the Detective Branch, submitted a charge sheet to a Dhaka court on September 2, 2015, accusing five members of ABT.

The Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court-3 of Dhaka on July 20, 2016 framed charges against the five ABT members -- Zikrullah, Ariful Islam, Saiful Islam, Akram Hossain Hasib alias Boro Bhai and Junayed Ahmed alias Taher.

On December 1 of 2022, the case was transferred to the Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court-12 of Dhaka.

Of the accused, Zikrullah, Ariful and Saiful are behind bars, while the other two are on the run.

The court set October 27, 2020 for delivering judgement in the case, but withheld its decision following a petition from the prosecution for adding section 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Penal Code.

The court on November 4, 2020 reframed the charges against the accused.

After reframing charges, some of the key witnesses have been recalled, but Masud never appeared, said the prosecution.

Such media

FROM PAGE 3

the Internal Resources Division of the finance ministry following a recent controversy over his wealth.

Speaking to the reporters at the foreign ministry, Hasan Mahmud said the way the news about Matiur Rahman was published in the media was unexpected.

"Investigation will be done into the allegations against him. If the allegations are found true, action will be taken," he said.

The minister said he has already talked to the NBR chairman and Matiur has been removed from there.

He also talked to the Bangladesh Bank governor and initiatives have been taken to remove him from the Sonali Bank board. Yesterday, the government asked Matiur not to attend the board meetings of Sonali Bank PLC.

ভিকারুননিসা নূন স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ
১/এ নিউ বেইলী রোড, ঢাকা-১০০০

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

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(A Subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
58-59, Agrabad Commercial Area, Chattogram

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited in the e-GP Portal for the procurement of the following works, details are given below:

Sl No.	Tender ID	Procurement title	Tender last selling (date & time)	Closing & opening (date & time)	Procurement method
1.	996777 (Pur:171)	Construction of Canopy, RCC Pavement, Boundary Wall and other related works at MMSC-2 (Nipuna Service Center) Toyanbee Road, Motijheel, Dhaka	14th July, 2024 17:00 Hrs.	15th July, 2024 15:30 Hrs.	OSTETM

This is an online tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

GD-1026

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA: Applications in prescribed form, obtainable from the Office of the Registrar, are invited from the Bangladeshi nationals for filling up 3 (Three) permanent vacant posts of Lecturer in the Department of Finance.

Pay scale: Tk. 22,000-53,060/- for Lecturer (National Pay Scale -2015).

QUALIFICATIONS: Candidates must have a first class/a minimum CGPA 3.75 out of 4.00 both in Four years BBA & One year MBA degrees in Finance with a first division/a minimum GPA 4.25 out of 5.00 in both SSC & HSC examinations. Requirements for either the SSC or HSC examinations may be relaxed for the candidates who have obtained the first position/the highest CGPA in both Bachelor and Master degrees. Candidates having a Ph.D. in the relevant field and research publication(s) in a quality journal may get preference. (For details, see the Dhaka University Website).

Eight copies of application together with attested copies of certificates, testimonials, mark- sheets/Grade Sheets and proof of experience along with a Pay Order/Bank Draft of the value of Tk. 750/- (seven hundred fifty) only, payable to the Registrar, should reach him on or before 14.07.2024. Applicants already in service must apply through the proper channel.

GD-1022

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD,
Cumilla Road Division, Cumilla.
Phone: 081-64725
e-mail: eecom@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.1933.410.07.001.24-4288 Date: 23.06.2024

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal in Bangladesh (http:www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following work mentioned in the table below:-

SL No.	Tender ID & Package No.	Name of Works	Tender Document last selling Date and Time	Tender Closing Date and Time	Tender Opening Date and Time
01	999582, e-GP/CRD/ADP/EMRB/WP-02/2023-2024	Strengthening of Existing Pavement, Construction of new pavement, DBS Base course, DBS Wearing course, Rigid Pavement, Earth work in Road Embankment, Protective work by RCC Retaining Wall, Brick Toe wall, Cast-in-situ Palisiding, C.C block with Geo textile, Brick "U"-Drain & Saucer Drain, Installation of Overhead Sign, Sign, Signal, Kilometer Post, Guide Post, Construction of Bus Bay, Reflecting Road Studs, Deliniator-Reflector and Road Marking work from 13th KM to 24th KM at (Ch: 12+000 to Ch: 24+000) of Eliotganj-Muradnagar-Ramchandrapur-Bancharampur (Z-1042) Rdad, Development Project Programme, under Road Division Cumilla during the year 2023-2024.	22-Jul-2024 16:00	23-Jul-2024 12:00	23-Jul-2024 12:00

26/06/2024
(Suniti Chakma)
ID No. 602147
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Cumilla.
☎: 01730-782641

GD-1024

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
Barishal.

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No-46.02.0600.000.07.068.17.3577 Date : 20/06/2024

e-Tender Notice – 423/2023-2024

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of

e-Tender No	Package No	Name of Work	Last Receiving Date & Time	Procurement Method
423/2023-24	SSSWRDP/Bar/WD-327/2023-24	Construction of WMCA Office (12.00m x 6.00m) under Mahilara Sub-project (SP No. 15306) under Gournadi Upazila, District : Barishal. e-ID No – 997806	16-07-2024 Time 12:00 PM	OTM

National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocue.gov.bd) is required.
The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches up to 15.00 on previous day of receiving Tender.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (+90020f b n\;helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)..3

20.06.2024
Executive Engineer
LGED, Barishal.

GD-1020

275-year-old temple on verge of ruin

Locals call for urgent conservation

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

A 275-year-old Jor Bangla temple, located in Khulna city's Maheshwarpasha area, is on the verge of collapse.

Built in 1749 by Gopinath Goswami during the reign of Nawab Alivardi Khan, the temple is a fine example of southern Bengal's architectural heritage.

It features the typical Jor Bangla style, consisting of two traditional "do-chala" village huts with curved roofs and square bases, placed side-by-side.

WHAT IS JOR BANGLA STYLE

The term "Jor Bangla" translates to "twin huts" or "pair of Bengal huts".

"Do-chala" refers to a traditional Bengali hut. The roof is curved, resembling the thatched roofs of rural Bengal, and is divided into two parts. Each part slopes downwards from a central ridge. In the Jor Bangla style, two of these huts are placed side-by-side. One hut typically functions as a porch.

The other serves as the main shrine or sanctum.

The walls of the temple are adorned with terracotta motifs and carvings depicting scenes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

YEARS OF NEGLECT

A recent visit revealed that the temple, built on a three-foot-high platform, faces south and is visible from the road. Part of the front roof has collapsed, but the main structure, including its three arches and pillars, survives.

The temple was constructed with Jafri bricks and mortar made from lime and brick powder, and features a neo-classical triple-arch style.

Many terracotta plaques that once adorned the temple's walls are lost, though a few remain, depicting war scenes, animals, and floral motifs.

Many locals, like Shyamal Kumar Das, fear the temple may collapse any time.

The descendants of Gopinath Goswami, now lacking the financial means for restoration, hope for intervention from the Department of Archaeology under the Antiquities Act 1968 (amended 1976).

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Probe body formed over bridge collapse

Locals allege substandard materials used in construction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

A committee has been formed to investigate the incident in which a microbus carrying the bridal party plunged into a canal after an iron-made bridge collapsed, killing at least nine.

The accident occurred at Amtali in Barguna.

Amtali Fire Service Station Officer Noor Hossain said there were 13 passengers in the microbus.

Barguna Deputy Commissioner Md Rafiqul Islam formed the six-member probe body, which has been directed to submit a report within the next seven days.

Amtali Police Station Officer-in-Charge Shakhwat Hossain Tapu said an unnatural death case was filed on Saturday night and the bodies were handed over to the families.

Meanwhile, locals alleged that substandard materials were used in the bridge during the construction. They protested in Haldia Bazar area yesterday, demanding punishment for the contractor concerned.

The protestors said the bridge was constructed in 2008. After only five years, it became vulnerable.

Nearly 50,000 people of four villages have to use the bridge as there is no alternative to cross the canal.

According to LGED Amtali Upazila Engineer's office, the then Haldia UP chairman and union Awami League president Shahidul Islam Mridha was the contractor for the construction of this iron bridge with a project cost of Tk 2 crore.

Contacted, Mridha said, "I've constructed the bridge properly. I didn't commit any irregularity in the work."

DC Rafiqul Islam said legal action will be taken if any irregularity is found.

'WRONG TREATMENT'

Clinic manager, pathologist held in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

Seven people were sued over the death of a farmer due to "wrong treatment" at a private clinic in Sherpur's Sreebordi upazila on Saturday afternoon.

The deceased is Maidan Ali, 55, a resident of Mamdamari in the upazila.

Quoting the victim's family members, police said Maidan's family members took him to a Unique Diagnostic Center for operation after being persuaded by brokers.

Shahin Miah, a staffer at the Sreebordi Upazila Health Complex, also works in the private clinic as a part-time staffer.

"After Maidan was admitted to the clinic, Shahin pushed an injection into Maidan's body. After some time, Shahin's condition started deteriorating and he died," said Qayum Khan Siddiqui, officer-in-charge of Sreebordi Police Station, quoting the victim's wife Morsheda Begum.

The victim's son filed a case accusing seven people yesterday, said Jalal Uddin, sub-inspector of the police station. Police have arrested the clinic's manager Jewel Mia and pathologist Tamim Miah. Drives are underway to arrest others, said Jalal.

Contacted, Dr Md Rahat Chowdhury, Sreebordi upazila health and family planning officer, said Shahin is a fourth-class staffer at the government health complex, and he does not have the jurisdiction to push an injection.

Publish list of loan defaulters in JS

FROM PAGE 3

that Bangladesh is on the verge of transitioning from an underdeveloped country to a middle-income one by 2026.

However, he raised concerns about the budget allocation, noting that operational expenditure is estimated at Tk 5 lakh 6 thousand 971 crores, with 22.1 percent allocated to public administration.

He suggested forming an administrative committee to evaluate the necessity of so many ministries and departments.

Azad criticised the expenditure on vehicles for ACs and UNOs, questioning the necessity of such expenses when, in neighbouring India, ministers often use personal cars.

He also highlighted the challenges faced by entrepreneurs, including high interest rates on loans, insufficient electricity and fuel, and increased transport costs, contrasting this with the investment incentives offered by Indian states.

Jatiyo Party MP Masud Uddin Chowdhury also criticised the government's policy on whitening black money, arguing that it discourages honest taxpayers.

"Fifteen percent tax is being imposed to turn black money into white. It will discourage honest taxpayers and encourage black money holders who do not pay taxes," he said.

Independent MP from Kishoreganj-2, Suhrab Uddin, however, argued that a 15 percent tax would not incentivise people to disclose black money. He suggested reducing the tax to 5 percent to encourage the declaration of undisclosed income.

BANGLADESH SMALL AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES CORPORATION (BSCIC)
BSCIC Chemical Industrial Park, Munshiganj (2nd Revised)
E-mail: pdchemical@bscic.gov.bd, Web-site: www.bscic.gov.bd

Re-Tender notice No : 05/2023-24

E-tender is invited in the national **e-GP** system portal (**http:// www.eprocure.gov.bd**) for the procurement of works details in table.

Memo No.	Name of Work	Re-Tender ID	Tender Document last selling Date and Time
36.02.0000.008.037.103.2024	Construction of Drain, Gate, Guard Shade and others.	999842	09-July-2024 17:00

This an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the national **e-GP** portal and no off line/hard copies will be accepted. To submit **e-tender**, registration in the national **e-GP** system portal (**https://www.eprocure.gov.bd**) is required. The fees for downloading the e-tender documents from the national **e-GP** system portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to as per above table. Further information and guidelines are available in the national **e-GP** system portal and from **e-GP** helpdesk (**helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd**).

Muhammad Hafizur Rahman
Project Director
BSCIC Chemical Industrial Park, Munshiganj (2nd Revised)

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Department of Textiles
Establishment of Sunamganj Textile Institute (2^{nd} Revised) Project
BTMC Bhaban (11^{th} Floor), 7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215

Memo no: 24.02.0000.070.07.063.21(Part-1)-263

Date: 23 June 2024

Invitation for Tender (Goods)

Sealed Tender is hereby invited as per PPR 2008. Information with terms and conditions are follows:

<table>
<tr><td>1</td><td colspan="2">Ministry/Division</td><td colspan="3">Ministry of Textiles and Jute</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td colspan="2">Agency</td><td colspan="3">Department of Textiles</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td colspan="2">Procuring Entity Name</td><td colspan="3">Project Director, Establishment of Sunamganj Textile Institute (2nd Revised) Project, Department of Textiles</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td colspan="2">Procuring Entity District</td><td colspan="3">Dhaka</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td colspan="2">Invitation for Procurement of Goods</td><td colspan="3">Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of **Textiles Machineries** and Lab Equipment for Institute</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td colspan="2">Invitation Ref No</td><td colspan="3">T-4/ Textiles **Machineries** lab/2023-24</td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td colspan="2">Date</td><td colspan="3">June 2024</td></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td colspan="2">Procurement Method</td><td colspan="3">Open Tender Method (OTM) (National)</td></tr>
<tr><td>9</td><td colspan="2">Budget and Source of Funds</td><td colspan="3">GOB</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td colspan="2">Tender Package No.</td><td colspan="3">GD-1,2</td></tr>
<tr><td>11</td><td colspan="2">Tender Package Name</td><td colspan="3">Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of **Textiles Machineries** and Lab Equipment for Institute</td></tr>
<tr><td>12</td><td colspan="2">Tender Publication Date</td><td colspan="3">24 June 2024</td></tr>
<tr><td>13</td><td colspan="2">Tender Last Selling Date</td><td colspan="3">23 July Up to 4:00 PM</td></tr>
<tr><td>14</td><td colspan="2">Tender Submission Date and Time</td><td colspan="3">24 July 2024 Time- 12:30 PM</td></tr>
<tr><td>15</td><td colspan="2">Tender Opening Date and Time</td><td colspan="3">24 July Time- 2:00 PM</td></tr>
<tr><td>16</td><td colspan="2">Name & Address of the offices for Selling Tender Document</td><td colspan="3">(1) Project Director's Office, Establishment of Sunamganj Textile Institute (2nd Revised) Project, BTMC Bhaban (11th Floor), 7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.
(2) Office of the Deputy Director (Finance), Department of Textiles, BTMC Bhaban (9th Floor), 7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.</td></tr>
<tr><td>17</td><td colspan="2">Name & Address of the office for Receiving Tender Document</td><td colspan="3">Project Director's Office, Establishment of Sunamganj Textile Institute (2nd Revised) Project, BTMC Bhaban (11th Floor), 7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.</td></tr>
<tr><td>18</td><td colspan="2">Opening Tender Document</td><td colspan="3">Project Office, BTMC Bhaban (11th Floor), 7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.</td></tr>
<tr><td>19</td><td colspan="2">Eligibility of Tenderer</td><td colspan="3">Having – (a) Up to date Valid Trade License.
(b) e-TIN/TIN and VAT (e-BIN) registration certificate.
(c) Income Tax certificate (2023-24 Tax Year).
(d) General Experience 05(Five) years as a Supplier.
(e) Manufacturer Authorization Letter.
(f) The minimum specific experience as supplier in Supply of Similar goods at least 01(One) contract successfully completed within the last 5(Five) years with a value of at least Tk. 21,00,00,000.00 (Twenty One Crore).
(g) Minimum Liquid Asset 30,00,00,000.00 (Tirty Crore)
(h) Other qualifications & criteria as mentioned in TDS</td></tr>
<tr><td>20</td><td colspan="2">Brief Description of Goods</td><td colspan="3">Textile Machineries and other equipments for Cotton Spinning, Jute Spinning, Weaving, Knitting, Wet Processing, Apparel, Fashion & Design, Testing & Quality Control, Physics & Chemistry Lab Equipment, Computerized/Software Department as per specification on STD.</td></tr>
<tr><td>21</td><td colspan="2">Price of Tender Document (Tk)</td><td colspan="3">5,000.00 (Five Thousand) Only</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">22</td><td>Lot No</td><td>Identification of Lot</td><td>Location</td><td>Tender Security Amount (Tk)</td><td>Completion Time in Months</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of **Textiles Machineries** and Lab Equipment for Institute</td><td>Sunamganj Textile Institute, Sunamganj.</td><td>Tk. 60,00,000.00 (Sixty Lac).</td><td>06 (Six) Months</td></tr>
<tr><td>23</td><td colspan="2">Name of Official Inviting Tender</td><td colspan="3">Mohammad Shakhawat Hossain</td></tr>
<tr><td>24</td><td colspan="2">Designation of Official Inviting Tender</td><td colspan="3">Project Director</td></tr>
<tr><td>25</td><td colspan="2">Address of Official Inviting Tender</td><td colspan="3">Establishment of Sunamganj Textile Institute (2nd Revised) Project, Department of Textiles, BTMC Bhaban (11th Floor), 7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.</td></tr>
<tr><td>26</td><td colspan="2">Contact details of Official Inviting Tender</td><td colspan="2">Tel -55014054</td><td>E-mail: pdsunamgonj@gmail.com</td></tr>
<tr><td>27</td><td colspan="5">(i) In addition to the original of the Tender, 01 (one) copy shall be submitted.
(ii) The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the Tender proceedings according to PPA 2006, PPR 2008.</td></tr>
</table>

২৩/০৬/২০২৪
Mohammad Shakhawat Hossain
Project Director

GD-1025

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Upazila: Sadar, District: Narsingdi
www.lged.gov.bd

"শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি"

Memo No. 46.02.6860.902.14.036.24-593

Date: 23-06-2024

Invitation for Tender (Works)
e-Tender Notice No. 10/2023-2024

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of following works, details are given below:

Sl No.	Package No.	Name of work	Tender last selling (date & time)	Tender closing & opening (date & time)	Tender ID No.
1.	e-Tender/PEDP4/NAR/SAD/2023-2024/W2-06131	Construction of Additional Class Room of BOGARGOATH Government Primary School under PEDP4.	09-Jul-2024 16:00:00	10-Jul-2024 13:00:00	952735

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to **16:00:00 on 09-July-2024**.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

২৩/৬/২৪
Md. Arzurul Haq
Upazila Engineer
Sadar, Narsingdi
Phone: 0294-62549
E-mail: ue.narsingdi-s@lged.gov.bd

GD-1021

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Grateful for 60 YEARS of LOVE Runa Laila

SUPERUNA
BAPPI LAHIRI PRESENTS RUNA LAILA

Runa Laila is a globally acclaimed artiste who has made her mark with various achievements including being honoured with the coveted Independence Award. This esteemed singer, famed especially in the subcontinent, began her singing career 60 years ago, observing six decades in music today.

Addressing the love, the songbird has been receiving all these years, she expressed, "Completing 60 years in music is a significant milestone in my career."

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

She has captivated the hearts of billions with her songs, by performing in 18 different languages. Her contributions have elevated Bangladesh to a distinctive level of international recognition.

In honour of her 60th anniversary in the industry, the singer spared some time to The Daily Star to convey her thoughts.

"Frankly speaking, it is surprising for me to even think that I have been singing for 60 years as I continue to remain in this profession. I plan to keep singing in the future as well. For this, I am deeply grateful to Almighty Allah. Through my ability to sing, I have received love, respect, and admiration from people. I have won people's hearts over these years, and my love for the audience remains strong," she professed.

PHOTOS: COLLECTED

PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

Claiming to be a lucky person, she stated, "I have been singing for a very long time and consider myself fortunate to be able to still perform. Just a few days ago, I recorded two new songs. I have the unwavering support of my family, and I continue to receive love from people. For these reasons, I truly feel lucky."

Addressing the love, the songbird has been receiving all these years, she expressed, "Completing 60 years in music is a significant milestone in my career. Even after six decades, I continue to receive love from so many people. Their numerous heartfelt messages and words of devotion touch my heart profoundly, making me very emotional. It is difficult to express just how emotional I feel. I can't help but feel like repeatedly conveying my love and gratitude to everyone."

"Today, Channel i has organised an event to commemorate my 60 years in music. I extend my love and gratitude to them," she informed.

Finding it difficult to choose a particularly memorable encounter with fans because she has had so many wonderful experiences, she said, "Throughout my decades' worth of career in music, I have gained many fans and audiences, both at home and abroad, who have shown me, immense love. It is hard to single out any particular experience because all of them mean so much to me. In one sentence, I extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to everyone. Although I am not physically close to them, I hold them dear in my heart as I remain indebted to them."

Elaborating on her plans with music, she communicated, "I still sing and continue to learn, as there is no end to learning music. I want to learn more. At this age, I realise that Allah has given me so much more than I could ever ask for. I don't seek anything more; I just want to continue giving through my songs."

In staying true to music and the coming days, she admitted, "Positive thinking has always been effective for me. Throughout my life, I have approached everything with a positive outlook. Even now, I focus on what can be achieved. I strive to create new songs and melodies, collaborating with new talents to help them progress. I have a deep appreciation for newcomers and their contributions."

"In 60 years of my musical journey, I hold deep love for everyone and extend infinite gratitude to all," she concluded.

NEWS

BPSA statement a threat against media freedom

FROM PAGE 1

being run by print, electronic, and social media outlets are "partial, motivated, exaggerated, and misleading".

The Editors' Council, in its statement, said that by issuing a sweeping statement, the BPSA has brought forth the culture of "blame game".

It added that the authorities concerned could have gone to the Press Council following proper rules and regulations regarding any doubt over media's responsibility in publishing the news.

Instead of doing so, it resorted to the "blame game" by protesting the reports and issuing threats to the media in the name of "being extra cautious" while reporting on the Bangladesh police force in the future – this goes against independent media and impartial journalism.

The statement further said that the media also publish positive reports regarding the police force. However, the media, at the same time, also publish investigative reports with due professionalism on the accumulation of illegal wealth by the government officials in responsible positions.

The Council added that it expects continued support from the police force in the media's efforts to implement the government's anti-corruption policies.

DRU, BJC STATEMENTS

Two more journalist organisations -- Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) and Broadcast Journalist Center (BJC) -- yesterday criticised BPSA's statement, stating that such a response is detrimental to independent journalism.

In separate statements, they said the BPSA statement may encourage individual corruption and create an atmosphere of threat in society.

"In recent times, some reports were published on the unusual asset amassment by some former and current officials. We don't think they were published with any specific intent," said the DRU statement.

"Journalists publish responsible and information-based news, and all the news about some of the current and former police officers is a continuation of that. The language in which some quarters and organisations are reacting to the news is against independent journalism.

"If an official is involved in corruption, it's his personal matter; it's not a decent job of the Police Service Association to blame the media over this. Rather, it could encourage personal corruption."

Meanwhile, BJC in its statement said, "At a time when it's necessary to continuously improve the environment of independent journalism in the interest of the public, such a statement targeting the media from an association of professionals will create a culture of threat in the society.

"Police officials, on different occasions, have said the institution will never take responsibility for any individual's wrongdoing. By making such a statement, isn't the institution taking on the responsibility of the individuals?"

BJC further said that issuing such a statement without any investigation into whether the media reports are true or false calls the BPSA's professional responsibility into question.

In the statement, BJC said if the reports about the former and current police officials are untrue and not based on evidence, the individual concerned can go to the Press Council to seek legal action.

Instead, the BPSA's statement terming all the reports "motivated" is tantamount to interference in independent journalism, it added.

On Saturday, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists and Dhaka Union of Journalists also protested the BPSA statement, terming it a threat to independent journalism.

TIB'S RESPONSE

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday strongly condemned the BPSA statement, calling it a direct threat to press freedom and an attempt to suppress the media's voice.

In a statement, the TIB said the association's statement appears to be a deliberate attempt to hinder the exposure of corruption, particularly in the recent cases of former top police officials who have amassed significant wealth, and an attempt to shield them.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, "The statement by the police association dismissing the recent reports of corruption involving former officials raises a red flag. It's not unreasonable to say that such a statement by the police officers' association potentially indicates a systematic effort to shield those accused within the force.

"On one hand, this statement by the country's law enforcement officers' association is a direct threat to press freedom and an attempt to suppress the voice of the media. On the other hand, it's a clear violation of the citizens' constitutional right to information. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the BPSA is attempting to 'bury its head in the sand like an ostrich' by essentially denying reality."

He blasted the BPSA's claim that reporting corruption tarnishes the police image. He pointed out that media reports detailing extensive investigations into corruption by former top police officials are being met with the weak argument of "tarnishing the police image".

"This raises concerns about the police forces' capability and integrity to stop corruption. A more constructive approach would have been a prompt announcement of an internal investigation or support for an independent probe into these serious allegations. Such a move would demonstrate the force's commitment in tackling corruption."

About the BPSA statement regarding the police force's contribution, Iftekharuzzaman said, "We always recognise and appreciate the police's contributions in various struggles, disasters, and crises, starting from the war of independence in Bangladesh. However, we can't recognise their abuse of power and corruption, and let their contribution be used as a licence to commit crimes or as a tool to protect criminals. This raises serious ethical concerns about the law enforcement agency."

Referring to the home ministry's letter to the information ministry, the TIB said it is as an ominous signal not only for media freedom in the country but also for the entire accountable democratic system.

The TIB reiterates the need for the home ministry and the BPSA to perform their constitutional duties and carry out thorough inquiries into these claims with transparency.

Brazil start

FROM PAGE 12

title before accepting the Brazil job in January.

Dorival had a lot on his plate with the national team as, while Brazil waited for Ancelotti, they went through a spell in the wilderness during which they had historic negative results.

They suffered defeat in three consecutive World Cup qualifiers for the first time, their first loss to Uruguay for 22 years and saw the end of a 58-match unbeaten home streak in the qualifiers, which led to their worst campaign ever with seven points from a possible 18 after six rounds.

Add to that the loss of talisman Neymar, with a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament and meniscus in his left knee on international duty in October, and Brazil hit rock bottom.

With no Ancelotti and a team in turmoil, Dorival turned his attention to recovering the confidence and self esteem of a young and revamped squad in which Vinicius Jr claimed the responsibility of carrying the load as Brazil's key player.

With two months to prepare for matches against England and Spain, Dorival relied on his players' grit and pride, fixing up a team that was more feisty than colourful.

They got a 1-0 win over England at Wembley and fought back to draw 3-3 with Spain at the Bernabeu earlier this year.

In both games his hero was teenage sensation Endrick, who became the youngest to score at Wembley aged 17 and a few days later got the equaliser against Spain, leaving Real Madrid fans salivating as he is will soon join the European champions.

The Copa America will be the first time Dorival has had time to work extensively with his players, who face Costa Rica following a three-week training camp in Florida before taking on Paraguay and Colombia in Group D.

With most of the attention on world champions Argentina and Lionel Messi, now playing in the MLS, Brazil will start their Copa America campaign without great expectations - something Dorival will be familiar with from his experience at club level.

A strategic mishap

FROM PAGE 12

Eights. But ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan was of the opinion that the said freedom could never kick in as the batters' willow rarely did the talking.

"Obviously, we have a shortage of runs as a batting unit. So, the freedom we needed, the confidence we needed, I don't think it was there," Shakib said at the press conference after the game against India.

What has the coaching staff done to improve batting efforts?

Nic Pothas had previously handled the Tigers' batting unit before David Hemp took over the responsibility. It is, however, clear that batting has decayed in recent times and has not been helped by the surfaces at home. Even though those surfaces had been prepared as per the team management's wishes, Bangladesh batters have fared well neither on sporting tracks, like the one in Antigua, nor on the more difficult and slower tracks in this World Cup.

In fact, when push came to shove, they dropped one pacer, Taskin Ahmed, from the lineup to make room for an extra batter -- wicket-keeper batter Jaker Ali. Taskin has been able to set the aggression of the bowling unit on various surfaces recently but the advantage that the management felt could be availed by making this change, was not evident. The extra batter did not mean Bangladesh went for the game head-on, evident from yet another meek Powerplay effort while in chase of a 197-run target.

If attack and freedom to attack were what Bangladesh went for, strategically, they barred themselves from going on the attack with their strongest department which is their bowling. Instead, they stacked the lineup with the underperforming batters against India.

The Tigers' think tank also read the pitch wrong and it led to massive ineffectiveness in their bowling effort. Questions were raised as to why Bangladesh opened with spinners from both ends against two of the best players of spin like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

Understandably, Shakib did not take responsibility for the decision to bowl first and also use spinners so extensively in the Powerplay, mentioning that it is "the coach and captain's decision." However, Shakib did mention that the team management's decision could be based on their perception of playing on a slower surface.

After Afghanistan's historic win over Australia yesterday -- which kept the Tigers afloat in the mega event -- their skipper Rashid Khan outlined that their coaching staff are often reminding them of specific plans discussed in team meetings. Bangladesh, on the other hand, looked desolate, without a particular strategy they could exploit.

40 top, mid-ranking cops transferred

FROM PAGE 12

Majumder is to retire on July 19, and Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU) Additional Inspector General SM Ruhul Amin on July 30, according to the police database.

Sources said there are discussions regarding the extension of Mamun's tenure for another six months.

However, two new names -- Additional Inspector General (admin and operations) of PHQ Kamrul Ahsan, Additional Inspector General (crime and operations) of PHQ Md Atikul Islam -- prominently came up for the next possible IGP.

A highly-placed source at PHQ said Kamrul Ahsan is ahead in the race.

Another source said Krishna Pada Roy is expected to replace Banaj Kumar Majumder as the new PBI chief.

Md Saiful Islam, chief of the Metro Rail Police wing of the PHQ, will replace Krishna Pada Roy as the new CMP commissioner, reads the home ministry order.

Md Jamil Hasan, DIG of the Barishal range, against whom corruption allegations recently surfaced in media reports, has been transferred to the Highway Police unit. PBI DIG Eliash Sharif will replace Jamil as the new Barishal Range DIG.

Official from UK PM's party probed over election bets

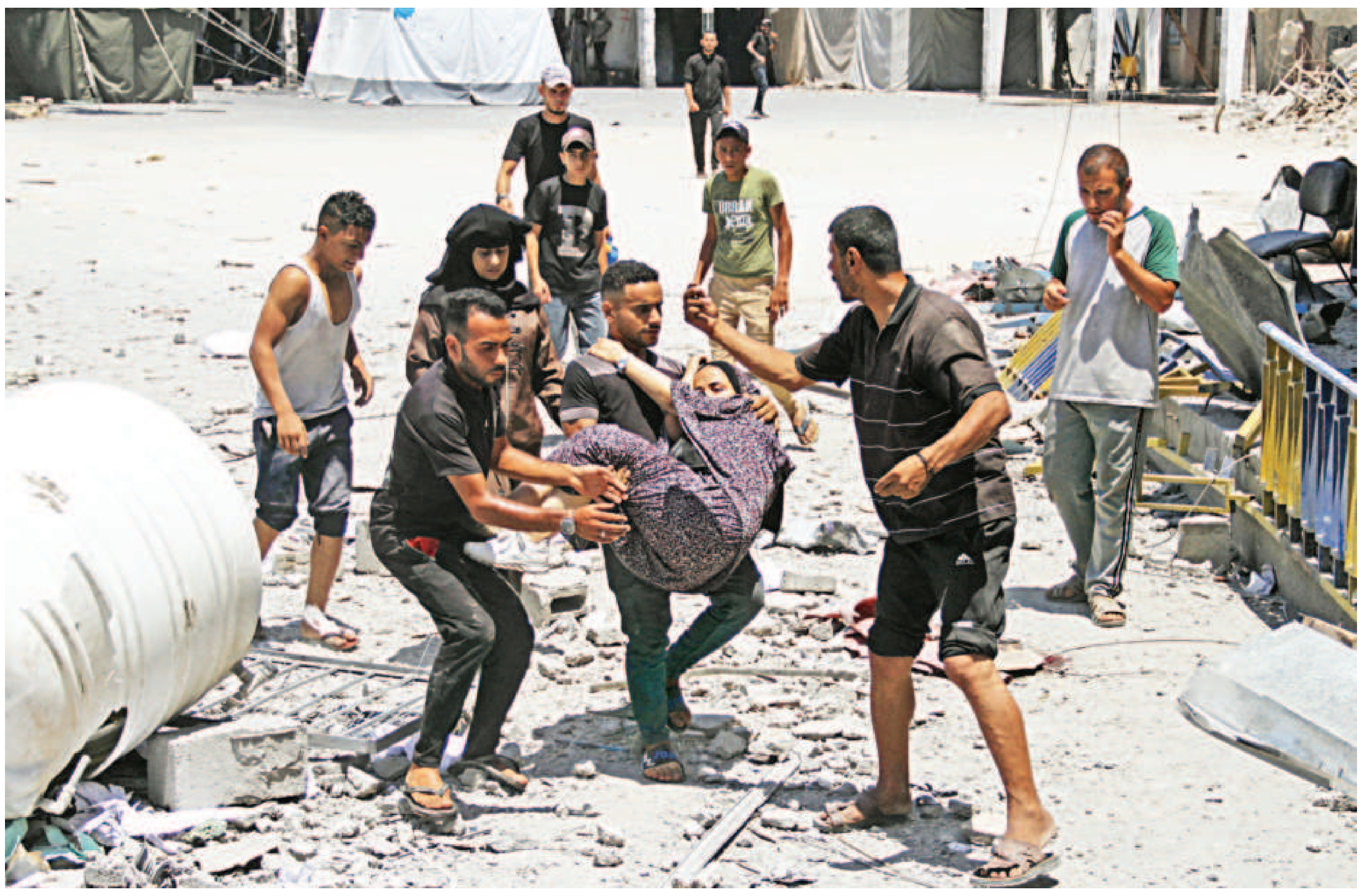
REUTERS, *London*

An official from Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party is being investigated by Britain's gambling regulator over allegations he placed bets on the date of the general election before it was announced, the Sunday Times reported.

Britain's Gambling Commission has already been reported to be investigating two Conservative election candidates and the party's director of campaigning over bets on date of July 4 polls.

The widening scandal has further damaged Sunak's attempts to catch the opposition Labour Party, which is far ahead in opinion polls in run-up to the polls.

The official was named as Nick Mason, chief data officer at the Conservative Party. Mason did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



Palestinians carry a casualty outside the headquarters of UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) following an Israeli strike in Gaza City yesterday. Israel's offensive since October 7 has left Gaza in ruins, killed almost 37,600 people, according to Palestinian health authorities, and left nearly the entire population homeless and destitute. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Bangladeshi-origin minorities voted for Congress

Claims Assam CM

HINDUSTAN TIMES ONLINE

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has claimed that the Bangladeshi-origin minority community members "overwhelmingly" voted for the Congress in the just concluded Lok Sabha elections, without considering the "developmental work done for them by the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in the state."

Sarma alleged that the Bangladeshi-origin minority community is the only one in Assam which indulges in communalism, PTI reported.

The Bharatiya Janata Party-AGP-UPPL coalition won 11 out of 14 Lok Sabha seats in Assam, while the Congress won the remaining three.

"If we analyse the 39 percent votes of the Congress, it is not spread across the state. Fifty percent of it is concentrated in 21 assembly segments which are minority dominated. In these minority-dominated segments, BJP got 3 percent votes," he claimed while speaking at the felicitation programme of the winning BJP candidates.

Continuing further, Sarma said, "This proves that Hindus do not indulge in communalism. If anyone indulges in communalism in Assam, it is only one community, one religion. No other religion does it."

The Assam chief minister said that the minority-dominated areas have voted for Congress and did again, despite not having roads and electricity.

Israeli forces tie injured Palestinian to jeep in raid

REUTERS, *Jerusalem*

Israeli army forces strapped a wounded Palestinian man to the hood of a military jeep during an arrest raid in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin on Saturday.

A video circulating on social media and verified by Reuters showed a Palestinian resident of Jenin, Mujahed Azmi, on the jeep that passes through two ambulances.

The Israeli military in a statement said Israeli forces were fired at and exchanged fire, wounding a suspect and apprehending him.

Soldiers then violated military protocol, the statement said. "The suspect was taken by the forces while tied on top of a vehicle," it said.

The military said the "conduct of the forces in the video of the incident does not conform to the values" of the Israeli military and that the incident will be investigated and dealt with.

The individual was transferred to medics for treatment, the military said. Reuters was able to match the location from corroborating and verified footage shared on social media that shows a vehicle transporting an individual tied on top of a vehicle in Jenin. The date was confirmed by an eyewitness interviewed by Reuters.

According to the family of Azmi, there was an arrest raid, and he was injured during the raid, and when the family asked for an ambulance, the army took Mujahed, strapped him on the hood and drove off.

Food piles up at Gaza crossing in south

Aid agencies say they are unable to work due to continued Israeli strikes, breakdown of public order

AFP, *Jerusalem*

Days after Israel announced a daily pause in fighting on a key route to allow more aid into Gaza, chaos in the besieged Palestinian territory has left vital supplies piled up and undistributed in the searing summer heat.

More than eight months of offensive have led to dire humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip and repeated UN warnings of famine.

Desperation among Gaza's 2.4 million population has increased as fighting rages, sparking warnings from agencies that they are unable to deliver aid.

Israel says it has let supplies in and called on agencies to step up deliveries.

"The breakdown of public order and safety is increasingly endangering humanitarian workers and operations in Gaza," the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA, said in a briefing later on Friday.

"Alongside the fighting, criminal activities and the risk of theft and robbery has effectively prevented humanitarian access to critical locations."

But Israel says it has allowed hundreds of trucks of aid into southern Gaza, trading blame with the United Nations over why the aid is stacking up.

It shared aerial footage of containers lined up on the Gazan side of the Kerem Shalom crossing and more trucks arriving to add to the stockpile.

With civil order breaking down in Gaza, the UN says it has been unable to pick up any supplies from Kerem Shalom since Tuesday, leaving crucial aid in limbo.

A deputy UN spokesman this week said the crossing "is operating with limited functionality, including because of fighting in the area".

William Schomburg, International Committee of the Red Cross chief in Rafah, said arranging lorries from the Egyptian side in particular was complicated.

Philippines won't be intimidated

Says Marcos amid China row

AFP, *Manila*

President Ferdinand Marcos said yesterday the Philippines "will not be intimidated" by anyone after a violent clash between the Filipino navy and the Chinese coast guard in the South China Sea.

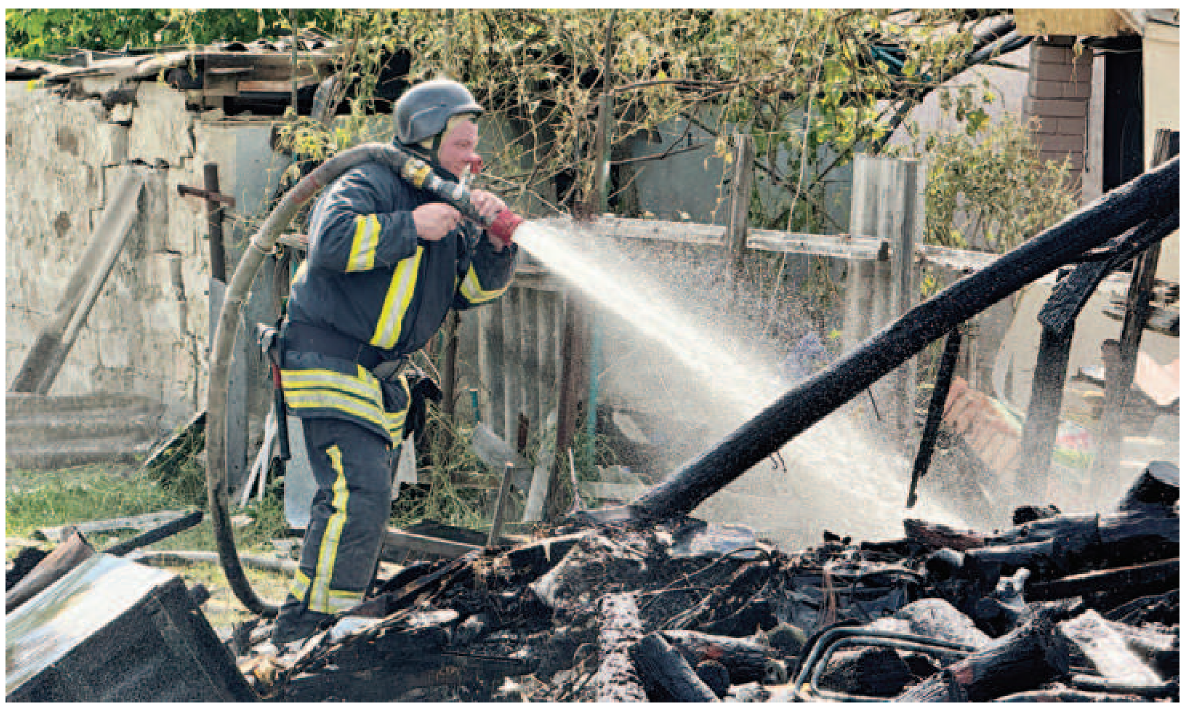
The confrontation took place last Monday off Second Thomas Shoal as the Chinese sailors foiled an attempt by Philippine forces to resupply marines stationed on a derelict warship that was deliberately grounded atop the disputed shoal in 1999 to assert Manila's territorial claims.

It was the latest and most serious incident in a series of escalating confrontations between Chinese and Philippine ships in recent months as Beijing steps up efforts to push its claims to nearly all of the strategically located waterway.

"We will never be intimidated or oppressed by anyone," Marcos said in a speech during a visit to the headquarters of the Philippines' South China Sea forces on Palawan island.

Marcos awarded medals to 80 sailors who took part in the resupply mission, urging them to "continue to fulfil your duty of defending the nation" even as he said the situation has become "dangerous".

Second Thomas Shoal lies about 200 kilometres from Palawan and over 1,000 kilometres from China's nearest major landmass, Hainan island.



A firefighter works at a site of a Russian air strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kharkiv, Ukraine yesterday. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Trump courts Black voters in Philadelphia

Asks Christians to back him one last time

REUTERS, *Philadelphia*

Donald Trump made two speeches on Saturday, urging Christian supporters to go to the polls for him one last time and courting Black voters in Philadelphia by promising to fix a city "ravaged by bloodshed" even as data shows a decline in violent crime.

If elected in November, the Republican presidential candidate told a rally of several thousand at Philadelphia's Temple University, he would give police "immunity" to do their jobs and "surge" federal resources to cities battling violence.

Trump dismissed as "fake" FBI statistics that showed a continued drop in levels of violent crime and murder across the country in the first three months of 2024, and accused Democratic President Joe Biden of lying about the data.

"Under crooked Joe Biden the City of Brotherly Love is being ravaged by bloodshed and crime," Trump said in an arena in a historically Black neighbourhood, addressing an audience more diverse than a typical rally, but still largely white.

"Under the Trump administration we are going to bring law and order and safety back to our streets."

The promise to fight crime was part of a larger pitch to Black and Hispanic people, who form more than half the city's population.

Deaths from Indian toxic alcohol rise to more than 50

AFP, *Chennai*

The death toll from a batch of toxic illegal alcohol in India has risen to 53, media reported yesterday, as more victims in hospital succumbed to the poisonous brew.

Tamil Nadu state Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has said the locally brewed arrack drink was laced with poisonous methanol, killing 37 within hours after they drank the illegal alcohol on Tuesday.

More than 100 people were rushed to hospital, but some were too sick for medics to save.

An AFP photographer, who had visited the hard-hit Kallakurichi district during the first wave of deaths, reported how the sky was darkened by plumes of smoke that rose from dotted funeral pyres, as wailing relatives gathered to mourn.

Hundreds of people die every year in India from cheap alcohol made in backstreet distilleries, but this poisoning is one of the worst in recent years.

To increase its potency, the liquor is often spiked with methanol which can cause blindness and death.

The Indian Express yesterday quoted a local councillor, Palraj, describing how poor labourers in Kallakurichi regularly bought the liquor in plastic bags costing 60 rupees, which they would drink before work.

বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
BANGLADESH DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC.
(A State Owned Commercial Bank)

Ref No : 06.3/ Date : 23/06/2024

Invitation For Tender

Tender is invited from the reputed Companies for Operation, Maintenance & Servicing of 06(Six) no's passenger lift (Brand: Nippon) in monthly payment basis for 03 (Three) years at BDBL Bhaban, 08 RAJUK Avenue , Dhaka-1000. Necessary information's are given below:

01.	Procuring Entity :	Real Estate Department, Bangladesh Development Bank PLC , Head Office, BDBL Bhaban (Level - 09), 8, Rajuk Avenue, Dhaka - 1000.
02.	Procurement Method :	Open Tendering Method (OTM) of Public Procurement Rules, 2008 and The Public Procurement Act, 2006.
03.	Invitation for Tender No :	BDBL / RED / OTM / 2024 / 03
04.	Source of Funds :	Bank's own Fund.
05.	Brief Description of the Goods and Services :	Operation, Maintenance & Servicing of 06(Six) no's passenger lift (Brand: Nippon) in monthly payment basis for 03 (Three) years at BDBL head office bhaban, 08 RAJUK Avenue , Dhaka-1000.
06.	Name & Address of Receiving Tender Document :	Real Estate Department, Bangladesh Development Bank Limited (BDBL), Head Office, BDBL Bhaban (Level - 09), 08, Rajuk Avenue, Dhaka.
07.	Last Date and Time for Selling Tender Schedule	08/07/2024 up to Office Hour.
08.	Last Date and Time for Submission :	09/07/2024 Time : 03:00 PM
09.	Date, Time and Place for Tender Opening :	All Tenders will be opened at Real Estate Department, Head Office, Dhaka -1000 on 09/07/2024 at 03:30 PM (Intending Tenderers or their authorized representatives are allowed to attend at the time of opening of Tender)
10.	Eligibility of Tenderer :	1. The Tenderer must have 05 (Five) years of general experience in public/Private sector as Prime Contractor. 2. The Tenderer must have at least 02(Two) contracts of similar nature, complexity and methods (ie. Operation, maintenance & servicing of Nippon Lift) completed over a period of last 05 (Five) years. 3. The Tenderer must have minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of Tk. 5.00 (Five) Lac. 4. The Tenderer must have ABC category Electrical & Supervisory license by name of own Company , Valid & up to date Trade License , TIN & Tax Return certificate, Tax Clearance Certificate, VAT registration certificate etc.
11.	Tender Security :	Tender Security of an amount of 2,70,000.00 (Two Lac Seventy Thousand Taka only) will be required in the form of Pay Order favoring Bangladesh Development Bank PLC ., which is refundable.
12.	Price of Tender Schedule :	Taka 1,000.00 (One Thousand Taka Only) in the form of Pay Order favoring Bangladesh Development Bank PLC Which is Non Refundable.

Bangladesh Development Bank PLC. reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender either in part or full without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Md. Asaduzzaman
Deputy General Manager
Real Estate Department
✆ : 02 -223350689

GD-1023

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Superrich politicians, superrich officials

Will there be no accountability for those exploiting public office?

Another day, another unsavoury disclosure about a public official. The latest in a series of recent scandals involving potential abuse of public office for personal gain has—as its protagonist—a female upazila parishad chairman, at Narsingdi's Raipura upazila. According to an investigative report by this daily, Laila Kaniz Lucky, also a retired government college teacher, has amassed substantial wealth that does not align with her known sources of income. Fittingly titled "How Lucky got so lucky!", the report delves into the discrepancies in her declared assets, which were either hidden or massively undervalued.

Her wealth statement, filed with the Election Commission before this year's Narsingdi upazila polls, claims she is worth Tk 10.31 crore. However, detailed investigations suggest her actual wealth could be dozens of times higher. Her properties include extensive land holdings and multiple flats in prime locations in Dhaka, but those have been valued suspiciously low. Certain assets were also omitted, such as her co-ownership of the Wonder Park and Eco Resort, a sprawling green expanse with a lake and lakeside cottages, or her lavish mansion with an approaching road named after her. This further deepens the suspicion of financial misrepresentation. For a public representative who only broke into politics in recent years and lives on a pension of Tk 4.65 lakh per year, having so much wealth indeed raises eyebrows.

This last part is where ongoing speculations surrounding her husband make better sense. Lucky is married to Matiur Rahman, a high-ranking official at the National Board of Revenue (NBR), who recently came under the spotlight after his son from his second marriage posted about an expensive sacrificial goat on social media. NBR sources and documents seen by *The Daily Star* suggest that he along with his close and distant family members have great wealth, including significant stakes in various companies. Matiur has been removed from his NBR post after recent controversies, and an investigation by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is under way. But given Lucky's questionable tax filings, one cannot shake off the suspicion that Matiur might have used her as a vessel or front to obscure their wealth and avoid scrutiny.

All this indeed deserves a thorough investigation. The Lucky revelations have again brought three sociopolitical trends to the fore: the growing number of superrich politicians and officials in Bangladesh, gross undervaluation of assets in affidavits submitted by political candidates to election authorities, and widespread corruption in public sector—all of which are going unchecked. Recent disclosures about the alleged involvement of retired top security officials in various irregularities have further underscored the lack of accountability for those holding public office and the corrupt influences of power. We must check these disturbing trends. We must ensure that those in public office are held up to the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and transparency.

Preserve the past, protect historic sites

Mymensingh's Alexandra Castle must be renovated urgently

Bangladesh has a rich history and culture, but when it comes to preserving our heritage sites, we do a poor job. The Alexandra Castle in Mymensingh city is a glaring example of our apathy towards preservation work. A report in this daily details how this beautiful 145-year-old structure, built mostly with wood and iron, has fallen into ruins as a result.

Built as a guest house in 1879, the two-storied, tin-shade building once lodged dignitaries including Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. Since the Partition, it has been used by Teachers' Training College for various purposes. The first floor was used as a teachers' dormitory, which had to be moved later because of the floor's precarious condition. The ground floor has a library, but it is seldom used. That this beautiful architecture, popularly known as "Lohar Kuthi", has been in dire need of renovation for years is evident everywhere, from the plinth on which the building stands to the iron balusters, the louvered shutters on the balcony, the decorative balusters on the roof, and even the two partially broken Greek sculptures on the building premises.

According to the Department of Archaeology (DoA), the *kuthi* was enlisted as an archaeological site in 2018. It is obvious that the department did not carry out any renovation on the building in the last six years. A top official told our district correspondent that necessary funds for renovation and restoration of all archaeological sites in Dhaka and Mymensingh have been approved, and that the work will start in the next fiscal year, meaning sometime between July 2024 and June 2025.

Such a statement should make us hopeful, but it is difficult to take DoA at its word. The department's past performance in terms of protecting, preserving and restoring heritage sites has been quite disappointing. It has 113 archaeological sites under its protection, but the conditions of many of those remain far from protected, with many facing threats of ruin and illegal occupation. We urge the DoA to push aside its lacklustre attitude and realise its mandate to restore and preserve these historical landmarks, keeping their architectural integrity intact.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Napoleon invades Russia

On this day in 1812, French Emperor Napoleon—who had massed his troops in Poland in the spring to intimidate Russian Tsar Alexander I—and 600,000 troops of his Grand Army launched an ill-fated invasion of Russia.

CIVIL WAR IN MYANMAR

Bangladesh must show firm stance regarding territorial integrity

***M Humayun Kabir**, president of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) and a former ambassador, talks to **Tamanna Khan** of **The Daily Star** about the implication of the ongoing conflict in Myanmar's Rakhine state between the country's military and the Arakan Army.*

Myanmar's internal conflict has been affecting our southeastern border, especially St Martin's Island. How do you analyse this situation?

It is a very complex and difficult situation because we have a problem with the Rohingya population that have taken shelter in Bangladesh. We have been bearing their responsibility for the last seven years. On top of that, a new problem has cropped up: the internal conflict in Myanmar that has now come to our border. In recent times, some bullets and shells from across the Myanmar border landed on Bangladesh. In the last two or three weeks, we have been having some difficulty also in the southeastern border areas, particularly around Cox's Bazar. We have seen St Martin's Island coming under fire from the Myanmar side as well.

We have taken a somewhat benign approach to this issue because we consider whatever is happening in Rakhine to be an internal matter of Myanmar. That's why we have refrained from taking any initiative other than the diplomatic one. We have lodged protests through the diplomatic channel against cross-border firing and also protested whenever there has been a report on border violations. We have also tried to maintain calm and arranged return of groups that entered Bangladesh. In the process, we sent a clear signal to the Myanmar side and to the international community that Bangladesh considers the ongoing conflict as an internal affair of Myanmar, and we have no intention and no interest to get involved in this process. Our key interest is to facilitate the quick return of the Rohingya population that have taken shelter in Bangladesh back to Myanmar as soon as possible. That remains our priority.

What implications does this conflict have for Bangladesh?

It looks like the military conflict is intensifying and there is a growing prospect of the Arakan Army dominating the Rakhine landscape and taking control of the region from the Myanmar military. If that happens, it will create a situation that we have never faced before. For example, we want to maintain our relationship with Myanmar as a neighbouring country. If the Rakhine state, which is the connecting point between Myanmar and Bangladesh, goes under the Arakan Army's control, the question then will be: what kind of relationship should we maintain with the Myanmar government? Under that hypothetical scenario, what will happen to the repatriation possibility of the Rohingya? The Bangladesh government does not recognise the Arakan Army as a political entity. If they physically control Rakhine, what kind of relationship will we have with them? So, this internal armed conflict in Myanmar is opening up a scenario which is a potential diplomatic challenge for Bangladesh. Additionally, it will further complicate the Rohingya repatriation issue.

As for the firing on Bangladeshi boats from the Myanmar side, it makes our population living near the Myanmar border vulnerable. This also hampers communication between the mainland and St Martin's Island. In the last two to three weeks, there has been no regular traffic between the mainland and the island. Of late, we have heard remarks from different quarters about St Martin's. If the island comes under any kind of threat from the Myanmar side, it will raise questions about our territorial integrity. For Bangladesh, it means we are facing a three-dimensional threat: diplomatic, military, and strategic. That's why it is extremely important now for Bangladesh to not only diplomatically engage with Myanmar and let them know that we are not involved in their internal affairs, but also take appropriate action to defend our territorial integrity, should the situation aggravate further along the border.

M Humayun Kabir

FILE PHOTO: **STAR**

Is there anything else that we should do?

I think that some kind of demonstration of our determination is also required. If needed, we can go back to our old playbook that could guide us to tackle any kind of challenge around St Martin's Island. I think since the issue is affecting our national security, we should be firm and then demonstrate that firmness to Myanmar. At the same time, we should convey that message to the Arakan Army too. At this point, I don't believe that they are intentionally violating our territorial integrity or shooting at St Martin's. Even in that kind of situation, it is important for us to convey a message to them that this is not acceptable. And if this continues, Bangladesh will have to protect its territorial integrity.

Previously, you talked about Bangladesh facilitating a ceasefire. Is that still an option?

At that time, that could have been a possible move. But the situation has taken a different turn now. So, I do not believe that we are at that stage to talk about a ceasefire. Now, it looks like the conflict may take two shapes. Under the first scenario, the conflict in Rakhine may intensify with the Myanmar military deploying their land and air assets to overpower the Arakan Army, which seems remote. The second scenario could be that the Arakan Army takes full military control of the Rakhine state and then possibly negotiates a ceasefire. Whichever situation arises, new options have to be explored.

Do you think more Rohingya refugees might try to enter Bangladesh as the conflict escalates?

Well, there have been reports in the international media and humanitarian organisations in recent weeks that the Rohingya are being used or abused by both sides. There are reports that the Myanmar government is using the Rohingya. Some reports mentioned that some of the Rohingya are working for the Arakan Army as well. As a result, the Rohingya population is facing great difficulty within Myanmar and particularly in Rakhine now. There are reports that in the Buthidaung town, the Arakan Army burned thousands of houses of the Rohingya, but they issued statements denying their role in the arson and accusing the other side. The Rohingya are caught in the crossfire. There are about 600,000 Rohingya still living in Rakhine. If they are in difficulty, there is a possibility of them trying to cross over to Bangladesh, despite Bangladesh clearly stating that no more Rohingya will be accepted. So, multiple challenges are brewing up on the Myanmar front: diplomatic, humanitarian, military, and strategic. As a way forward, it is extremely important that we discuss this issue with our friends in India, China, Japan and Thailand—those who can somehow influence Myanmar and other groups, including the Arakan Army. One could also think of raising this issue with the United Nations. On our part, we should also take appropriate steps to protect our territorial integrity and safety of our own people, continue our work to ensure earliest possible repatriation of the Rohingya population back to Myanmar, and reach out to all actors to achieve our objectives.

Why are gas prices so volatile?

RMG NOTES

Mostafiz Uddin
is the managing director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022 had significant implications for the global gas supply chain, and caused what many termed a gas crisis. The reduction in supply led to a dramatic rise in gas prices globally.

Indeed, gas prices in Europe reached unprecedented levels, impacting energy costs across the continent. The price hikes were not limited to Europe; they affected global markets as countries competed for alternative sources of natural gas. The increased demand for liquefied natural gas (LNG) further strained global supply chains and drove up prices.

Yet, at the start of 2024, gas prices plunged globally, before rising again in recent weeks.

This volatility of the global market has had an impact on Bangladesh and its industrial base, which mostly depends on gas to remain operational. Natural gas is the primary source of energy in the country, used extensively for electricity generation, industrial processes, and others.

If manufacturers crave anything, it is stability. Sharp movements in commodity prices create uncertainty and can have a huge impact on the balance sheet.

With energy being a huge variable cost for manufacturers, the question arises: what has been causing the gas price volatility around the world?

There are several factors at play. First, supply and demand are the primary factors influencing gas prices. When supply exceeds demand, prices tend to fall, whereas prices rise when demand outpaces supply. Factors affecting supply include natural gas production levels, import/export volumes, and storage inventories. Demand is driven by consumption in residential, commercial, and industrial sectors, as well as power generation. Seasonal variations, such as increased heating in winter and cooling in summer, also play a significant role. Technological advancement in extraction methods can boost supply, while economic growth can drive higher demand. Conversely, a slowdown in industrial activity or warmer-than-expected winter temperatures can reduce demand, leading to lower prices.

Second, extreme weather events, such as cyclones, can disrupt gas production and distribution infrastructure, causing supply shortages and price spikes. Seasonal weather forecasts and unexpected weather patterns can therefore create significant fluctuations in the gas market. Accurate weather forecasting is crucial for market participants to anticipate demand changes and manage price risks. Overall, weather remains one of the most unpredictable and influential factors in gas price determination.

Third, the overall economic environment heavily influences gas prices. Economic growth generally leads to increased industrial activity and higher energy consumption, including natural gas. Conversely, during economic downturns, industrial activity slows, reducing demand for gas and exerting downward pressure on prices. Inflation and currency fluctuations can also affect gas prices by influencing production costs and the purchasing power of importing countries. Additionally, economic policies, such as interest rate changes, can impact investment in gas infrastructure and production capabilities.

Fourth, global market dynamics, including geopolitical events, trade policies, and competition with other energy sources, significantly impact gas prices. Geopolitical tensions in key gas-producing regions can lead to supply disruptions and price volatility. For instance, conflicts in the Middle East or trade disputes involving major exporters like Russia can create uncertainties in supply chains. International trade policies, including tariffs and export regulations, also affect the flow of natural gas across borders. Moreover, the competition between natural gas and other energy sources, such as oil, coal, and renewables, influences pricing. When prices of alternative fuels change, it can shift the demand for natural gas. Global market influences emphasise the interconnected nature of energy markets, where events in one region can ripple across the world, affecting gas prices.

Fifth, government policies and regulations are also crucial in determining gas prices. Environmental regulations, such as carbon pricing and emissions standards, can affect production costs and operational practices in the natural gas industry. Subsidies or incentives for renewables can also shift demand away from gas, influencing its market price. Policies related to exploration and drilling, such as permits and land use regulations, impact the availability of natural gas supplies. Additionally, international agreements and policies on trade and energy cooperation can affect gas exports and imports. Strategic reserves and emergency response policies can mitigate price spikes during supply disruptions.

Overall, government actions at local, national, and international levels play a significant role in determining the regulatory landscape, market behaviour, and ultimately, the price of gas.

So, how can Bangladeshi manufacturers withstand the impact of fluctuating gas prices? The obvious ways are via diversification of energy use and energy efficiency improvement.

Manufacturers can also use financial instruments such as futures, options, and swaps to hedge against natural gas price volatility. These financial tools allow companies to lock in prices or set price caps, providing more predictable energy costs.

Finally, negotiating long-term supply contracts with natural gas providers can offer price stability. These contracts often include fixed or capped prices, which can shield manufacturers from short-term market fluctuations.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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Subscription:
01711623906

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Of professors and publications

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MD MAHMUDUL HASAN

I have been editing the Scopus-indexed journal *Asiatic* since 2020. It is arguably one of the prestigious publications on Asian (literary) themes and writers. In this role, I have interacted and made friends with a great number of academics who seem to be grateful for their experience with the journal's editorial process. I have high regard for their interest in knowledge production and for their academic competence. But I have also come to know some others whose approach to research, scholarly insight, and academic prowess have not been very impressive.

Once I had email exchanges with an academic from a far-off country. Before formally submitting their manuscript to *Asiatic*, they wanted to tell me about themselves and to know more about the journal.

They introduced themselves to me with a great emphasis on their designation, that is, "full professor." Soaring above prejudice or preconceived notions, I requested them to submit their work for evaluation and consideration for publication in the journal. They obliged.

However, the quality of their work didn't go very well with their professional identity on which they were laying so much emphasis in the email communication. Very basic norms of research that I teach undergraduate students were absent in the work they submitted. It was desk-rejected. I asked a member of the editorial board to send the "full professor" a polite rejection letter.

Last year, I was conversing on the phone with an academic friend who is affiliated with a university in Bangladesh. I tried to encourage them to do research and publish. I even mentioned that they might consider submitting their work to *Asiatic* for publication. But I was not prepared for what they told me in response to my suggestion.

They told me that research and publication were not prerequisites for promotion to professor. With age and teaching experience, they would be a "full professor" automatically. Initially, I shuddered at this process of promotion to professor, but eventually came to terms with the reality in Bangladesh. What they said is true.

The preponderance of professors on the lists of academics in various departments of Bangladeshi universities is simply staggering. Undoubtedly, those lists contain names of many gifted professors with impressive academic credentials and achievements. But there are also others who became "full professors" through the process that my friend mentioned to me.

I strongly believe that promotion of undeserving academics to the rank of professor is an insult to those who have moved their way up the academic ladder the harder way: through genuine scholarship and valuable academic contributions. Promoting undeserving colleagues to the rank of professor definitely causes disquiet among worthy professors. And the anguish of the latter often remains suppressed. Let me repeat: promoting incompetent academics to professorship amounts to a total disregard to the academic commitment and devotion of sound and true professors.

In June 2010, I joined the Department of English Language and Literature at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) as an assistant professor, leaving my academic position at the University of Dhaka. I am the only one in my department at IIUM to have been promoted to professor since then. In nearly 14 years, most of my esteemed colleagues who have retired from the department have done so as assistant or associate professors.

Most of my colleagues who are currently assistant or associate professors, or those who have retired with these ranks, have terminal degrees from universities in (English-speaking) countries. I will be remiss if I don't mention that many of my assistant and associate professor colleagues are no less competent than those who carry the title of "full professor" in certain countries.

University teachers generally remain busy with their work with little time to bother about the writing of fellow academics. But my role as the editor-in-chief of *Asiatic* has offered me a window of opportunity to read and evaluate the work of academics from various countries. While I remain awed and inspired by the writing skills and abilities of many academics, there are others whose work cannot be regarded as a mark of academic competence.

In my experience of reading manuscripts produced by university academics, unfortunately, in many cases I have not noticed much difference in the quality of work produced by professors and non-professors. Often, I have felt embarrassed to have had to decline to publish manuscripts produced or submitted by professors. In some cases, I have read manuscripts with multiple authors including professors, but their quality does not reflect the experience and expertise expected of those senior academics. A disconcerting question I often ask myself is: has the professor really contributed to such a manuscript whose author list includes their name? If the answer to this question is in the affirmative, one would form a very poor impression about their academic abilities. Conversely, if the answer is in the negative, we are face to face with an ethical crisis here. Is it morally acceptable to insert one's name in the author list of a manuscript to which one has not contributed sufficiently enough to deserve authorship?

What I dare suggest in this column is that there are fundamental issues in the way academics in some countries are promoted to professor. Therefore, the difference in the quality and academic commitment of professors and non-professors is increasingly becoming blurred. I do not doubt the inherent potential of professors who may not be worthy of the designation that they carry. It may well be the case that years of non-involvement in meaningful research have blunted their academic abilities. Their writing skills may have rusted from all those years of not writing and not publishing. What's more, the opportunity for them to become co-authors of manuscripts to which they make little or no contribution has rendered them averse to putting efforts that are needed to produce quality materials.

The non-involvement of professors in significant research and scholarship has far-reaching consequences. It negatively affects the quality of instruction they provide to students. If they themselves are not good (academic) writers, one may ask: how can they train their students to be competent future writers and scholars?

I am not proposing to the authorities and stakeholders of universities to strip (incompetent) professors of their titles. Instead, through anecdotes and personal observations, I want to make a moral appeal to senior academics to be more active in research and publication and to have unwavering commitment to quality work. Their meaningful engagement in research and publication will have a positive impact on the way they teach and on the course content that they transmit to their students. Needless to say, that will help protect their country from intellectual slavery to hegemonic foreign powers. Therefore, this is the best way for academics to serve their country and its people. If they choose otherwise and remain busy establishing links with, and seeking favours from, the corridors of powers, they may gain instant perks and popularity, but that will amount to intellectual betrayal to the nation.

VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

Preparing for progress

The case for an AI law in Bangladesh

Warda Ruheen Bristi *and* **Shafin Haque Omlan**
are research associates at Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Management (BIGM).

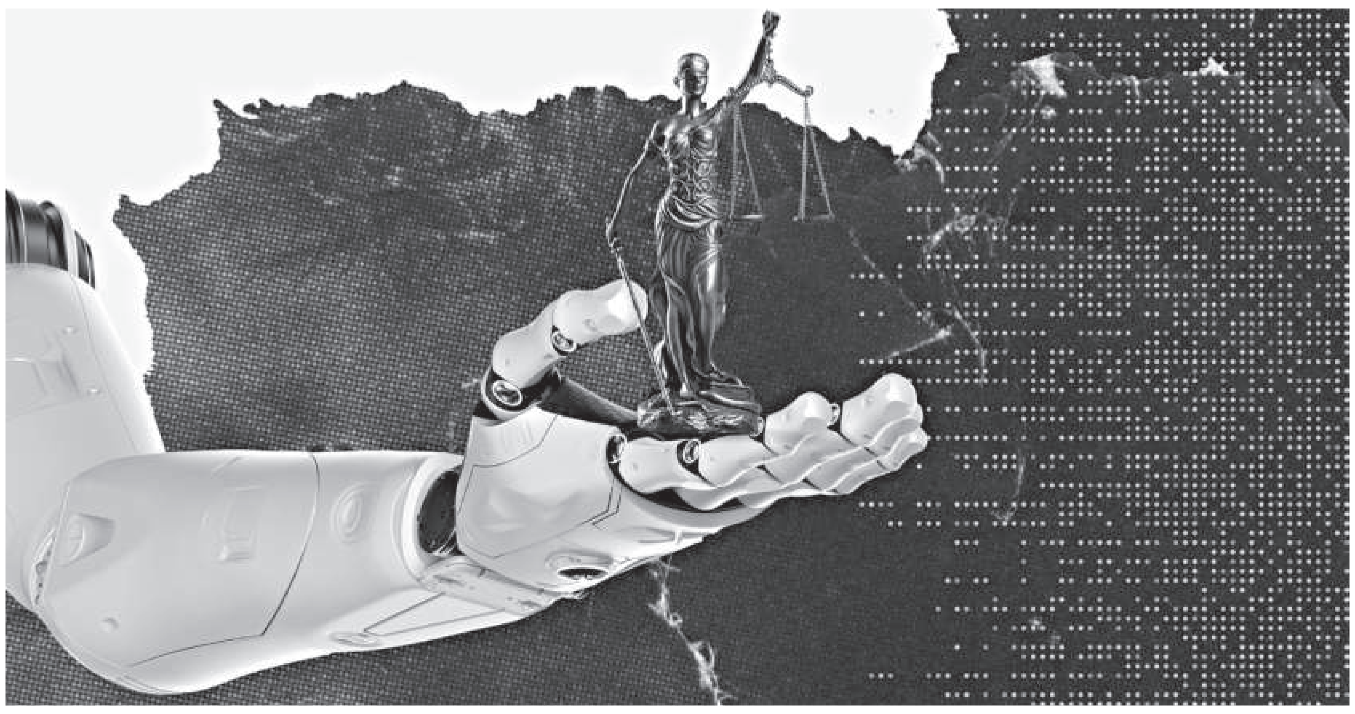
WARDA RUHEEN BRISTI *and* **SHAFIN HAQUE OMLAN**

On March 13, 2024, the European Union (EU) passed the world's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act. In an era defined by rapid technological advancement, the rise of AI presents both unprecedented opportunities and complex challenges for nations worldwide, and the EU has become the first entity to formally address those. In Bangladesh, a country in the midst of a rapid technological evolution, the emergence of AI stands as a pivotal moment with far-reaching implications. As the nation seeks to harness the potential of AI for societal advancement and economic growth, the importance of establishing a robust legal framework to govern AI-related issues cannot be overstated.

First, let's talk about the potential of AI. In short, it is vast and varied, touching virtually every aspect of human life. AI has the capability to automate repetitive tasks across various industries, freeing up human workers to focus on more creative and strategic endeavours. In healthcare, AI can assist in diagnosing diseases, analysing medical images, and personalising treatment plans, leading to more accurate and efficient healthcare delivery. Similarly, AI has the potential to revolutionise education through personalised learning experiences, adaptive tutoring systems, and virtual classroom assistants. In transportation, AI-powered autonomous vehicles can enhance road safety, reduce traffic congestion, and improve transportation efficiency. The financial sector can benefit from AI algorithms used for fraud detection, risk assessment, portfolio management, and customer service. Additionally, AI can contribute to environmental conservation efforts by analysing large datasets to monitor and predict environmental changes, optimise resource management, and develop sustainable solutions. In the realm of entertainment, AI-generated content such as music, art and literature can inspire creativity and offer new forms of entertainment.

Already, multiple countries have approved or are on their way to approving regulations regarding AI. The EU's AI Act is helping them focus on establishing a common cybersecurity framework across the bloc, enhancing security certifications for ICT products, and strengthening the role of the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity. The EU has also drafted a Cybersecurity Act. India has passed the Digital India Act, 2023, which aims to update and modernise India's digital governance framework. It addresses cybersecurity, data privacy, and ethical AI use. Vietnam also has approved a national digital transformation plan, which aims at promoting a digital transition in governance, the economy, and society more broadly, as well as establishing Vietnamese technology firms as global players. Under this plan, several goals are laid out to be achieved by 2025. They have also developed a national strategy for research, development and application of AI by 2030. This strategy outlines a number of key goals and directives for developing AI technology in Vietnam. It's clear that Vietnam is committed to a digital transition and cannot ignore the role that artificial intelligence will play to that end.

Similarly, our aspirations for a Digital Bangladesh hinges on our ability to navigate the complexities of AI responsibly. When talking about establishing a regulatory framework for Bangladesh, the heart of the discussion lies within the imperative to strike a balance between fostering innovation and safeguarding fundamental rights. A balanced regulatory framework is essential not only for spurring innovation and attracting investment, but also for safeguarding against potential risks associated with AI.



VISUAL: **STAR**

Aside from the potential of AI, there are concerning reasons too for which an AI law is necessary. AI poses several risks to personal and organisational safety, hence it must be carefully managed to ensure responsible and ethical use of the technology. For individuals, AI can compromise privacy if systems improperly collect, store, or use personal data without consent or appropriate safeguards. This can lead to identity theft, unauthorised surveillance, and exploitation of personal information. We are already seeing lots of examples of deepfake videos where the faces of famous personalities are used in spreading rumours or damaging their reputation. If AI is not regulated quickly, these incidents may soon get out of hand, and for a country like Bangladesh, where people are somewhat susceptible to rumours, they might spread like wildfire. AI systems may also perpetuate bias or discrimination if not properly designed and vetted, impacting individuals unfairly in areas such as hiring, lending or legal judgments.

Moreover, in order to shed light on Bangladesh's aspiration to become a digital powerhouse and a hub for innovation, the enactment of an AI law is instrumental in enhancing the country's competitiveness and global standing. By aligning with international best practices and standards, the country can foster international collaboration, attract foreign investment, and strengthen its position in the global AI landscape. The timely development of an AI act will present an opportunity for Bangladesh to showcase its commitment to ethical AI governance and responsible innovation to the rest of the world. By engaging with stakeholders across the government, industry, academia, and civil society, policymakers can leverage diverse perspectives to develop inclusive and forward-thinking AI policies that reflect the country's values and priorities.

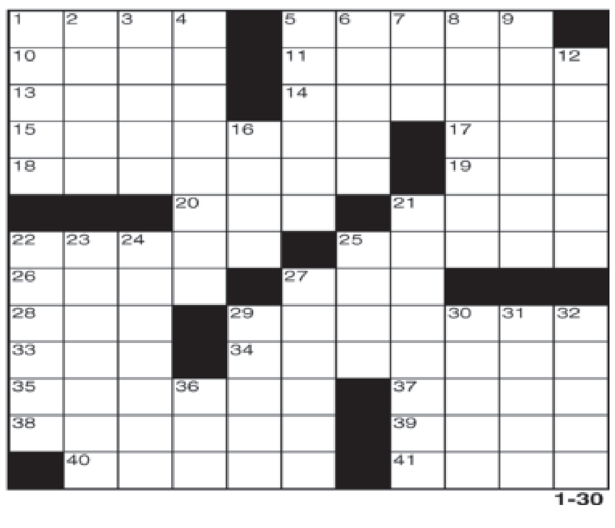
Seizing the momentum of the current trend and developing a legal framework for AI-related issues is crucial for Bangladesh's continued progress in the digital age. Aligning with international best practices and standards is essential to enhance the country's competitiveness and credibility in the global AI landscape. By demonstrating a commitment to ethical AI governance, Bangladesh can attract foreign investment, foster international collaboration, and strengthen its position as a leader in responsible AI development.

This article is Part I of a two-part series.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Drove too fast
5 Party givers
10 Make roads
11 Fly high
13 Falco of TV
14 Remote, informally
15 Candy bar cover
17 Memorable time
18 Kind of overload
19 Treat rudely, in slang
20 Print units
21 Portion (out)
22 Satchel part
25 Printer need
26 Metal sources
27 Cut, as hay
28 Buddy
29 Broadcast ender
33 Yale rooter
34 Kit Carson, for one
35 Drake or Dre
37 Mother of Castor and Pollux
38 Shirt part
39 In — (stuck)
40 Colorado resort
41 Puppy sounds

DOWN
1 Gushes forth
2 San Diego player
3 French spa city
4 Homes for bioluminescent fish
5 Tormentors of new recruits
6 Pistil part
7 Small drink
8 Attached, in a way
9 Like surgical tools
12 Pencil part
16 Pageantry
21 De-emphasize
22 Suzanne of "Three's Company"
23 Refrain bit
24 Chef's secrets
25 Forum attire
27 Helen of "The Queen"
29 Carell of movies
30 Met music
31 Disgusted
32 College houses
36 Vitality



1-30

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

L	E	S	T	E	R	■	S	L	I	D
A	L	C	O	V	E	■	T	O	M	E
M	O	O	R	E	D	■	A	S	A	P
A	P	R	O	N	■	D	I	E	G	O
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■	■	■	T	H	O	U	■	I	R	E
■	S	I	O	U	X	C	I	T	Y	■
B	A	N	■	M	I	E	N	■	■	■
A	M	A	Z	O	N	■	T	A	P	A
S	U	M	E	R	■	C	O	L	O	R
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C	A	S	T	■	A	B	A	T	E	S
S	I	T	S	■	M	E	L	O	D	Y

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RAMMOHUN ROY'S Grammar(s) of Bangla

Rammohun wrote a grammar of what was the written norm of the day, the standard written dialect of Bangla, otherwise called the Sadhu Bhasha, without ignoring the spoken colloquial standard form. He also was the first Bengali to write an original grammar of the language.

PABITRA SARKAR

Although Rammohun Roy was notably many things, he was not an unlikely person to write a grammar—or, in fact, two grammars: one in English and one in Bangla, the latter being a free translation of the former. He was a polyglot, and once you know more than one language, you are naturally curious about the structures of them—how different or how alike they are. And next a deeper question begins to haunt you: Why are they alike or different? If, however, the languages in question are genetically related, their structures and vocabulary may have something in common. But if they come from different and unrelated families, the areas of surface divergences may be wide. Rammohun (1772-1833) knew languages that were quite different from one another, Bengali, English, Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, etc.

It is, however, quite a happy fact that he did not write a comparative grammar of the languages he had known, but, avoiding the temptation, he decided to write a grammar of his own language, Bangla. Of course, one knows that there are hundreds of kinds of Bangla—its dialects, class varieties, or sociolects, Bangla of different times, etc. But Rammohun wrote a grammar of what was the written norm of the day, the standard written dialect of Bangla, otherwise called the Sadhu Bhasha, without ignoring the spoken colloquial standard form. He also was the first Bengali to write an original grammar of the language.

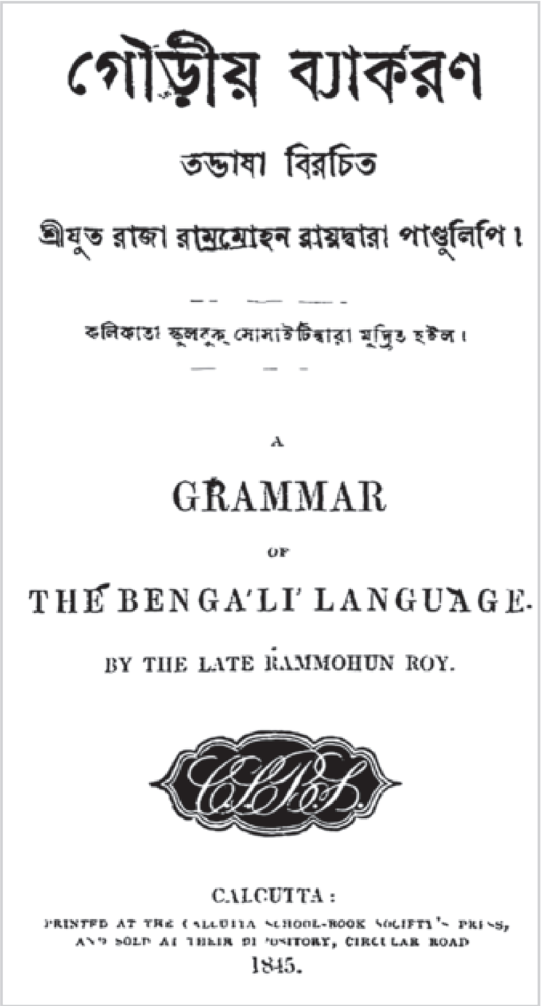
The earlier grammar of Mitrityunjay Vidhyalankar was not an original work, but arguably a translation of William Carey's grammar.

2

As we have hinted before, Bengalis were not the first to write grammars of Bangla. It was a Portuguese churchman, Fr. Manoel da Assumpcam, who first prepared a sketch of Bangla grammar in his Vocabulario em idioma Bengalla e Portugueze divide em duas partes (1742?), that is, 'Vocabulary and Idioms of Bangla and Portuguese divided in two parts.' The second Bangla grammar, this time a fuller treatment, was also written by a foreigner, the Englishman Nathaniel Brassey Halhed (1751-1830), whose Grammar of the Bengal Language, written at the behest of Governor General Warren Hastings (1732-1818), was published in 1778. This was a much fuller treatment of the language, and demonstrates Halhed's full grasp on what should be the components of an academic grammar. And it also carried the first experiments with movable Bangla types, whose shapes were curved by Charles Wilkins (1749-1836) and his Bengali assistant Panchanan Karmakar. Bengali printing would see its formal inauguration in this book and would begin being independently used in about two decades.

The third notable grammar of Bengali would come from the hands of yet another Englishman, William Carey (1761-1834). He came to India as a Protestant missionary, but, noting his inclinations, he was later entrusted with some academic responsibilities by the East India Company or the Governor General (1798-1805), Lord Wellesley, who founded Fort William College in 1800. Carey served the college as the head of the department of its Indian languages teaching program, and in the course of his work, wrote a Bengali grammar, a book of Bangla conversation, and a dictionary of the language. Moreover, he prompted others to write Bangla textbooks, to be published by the college.

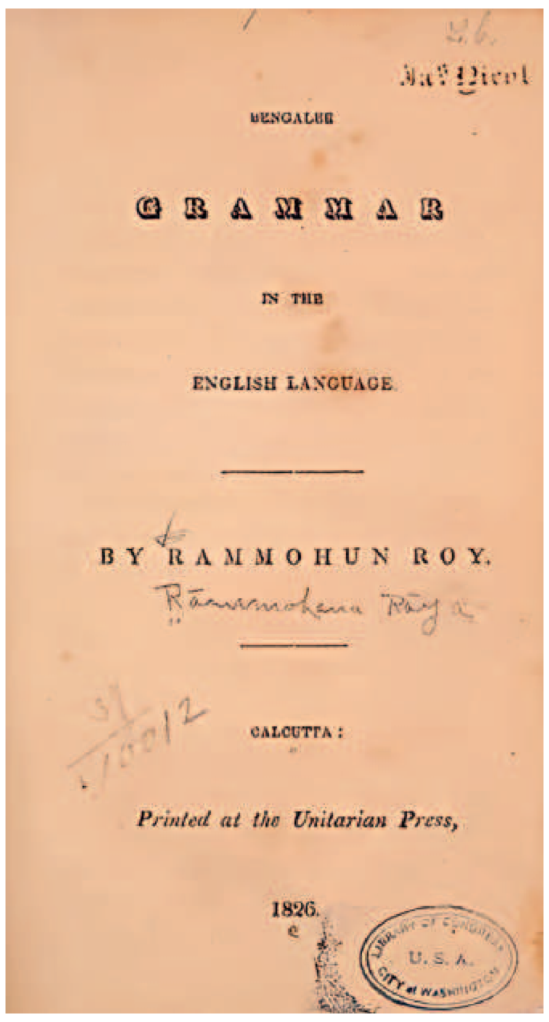
Carey was also a polyglot and, in addition to that, had grown a special love for Bangla because of its relative 'closeness' to Sanskrit. The first Bangla textbooks, as well as those in other Indian languages, were written under his direction and published by the college, but they were mainly for the young Englishmen who had come to serve India as civilians. Carey, as we have said, has at least three important works that are closely connected with the teaching of the language. They are, chronologically, A Grammar of the Bengalee Language (first published in 1801, but later enlarged and revised to be republished in 1805), a book of Bangla dialogues, Kathopakathan (1801), and a table-size dictionary of English and Bengali (combined volume 1825). His grammar was also later translated into Bangla, in which Mrityunjay Vidyalankar (1762-1819) had a hand. Carey, of course, also wrote grammars of Marathi and Sanskrit.


গৌড়ীয় ব্যাকরণ
তদ্ভাষা বিরচিত
শ্রীযুত রাজা রামমোহন রায়দ্বারা পাণ্ডুলিপি।
কলিকাতা স্কুলবুক্ সোসাইটিদ্বারা মুদ্রিত হইল।

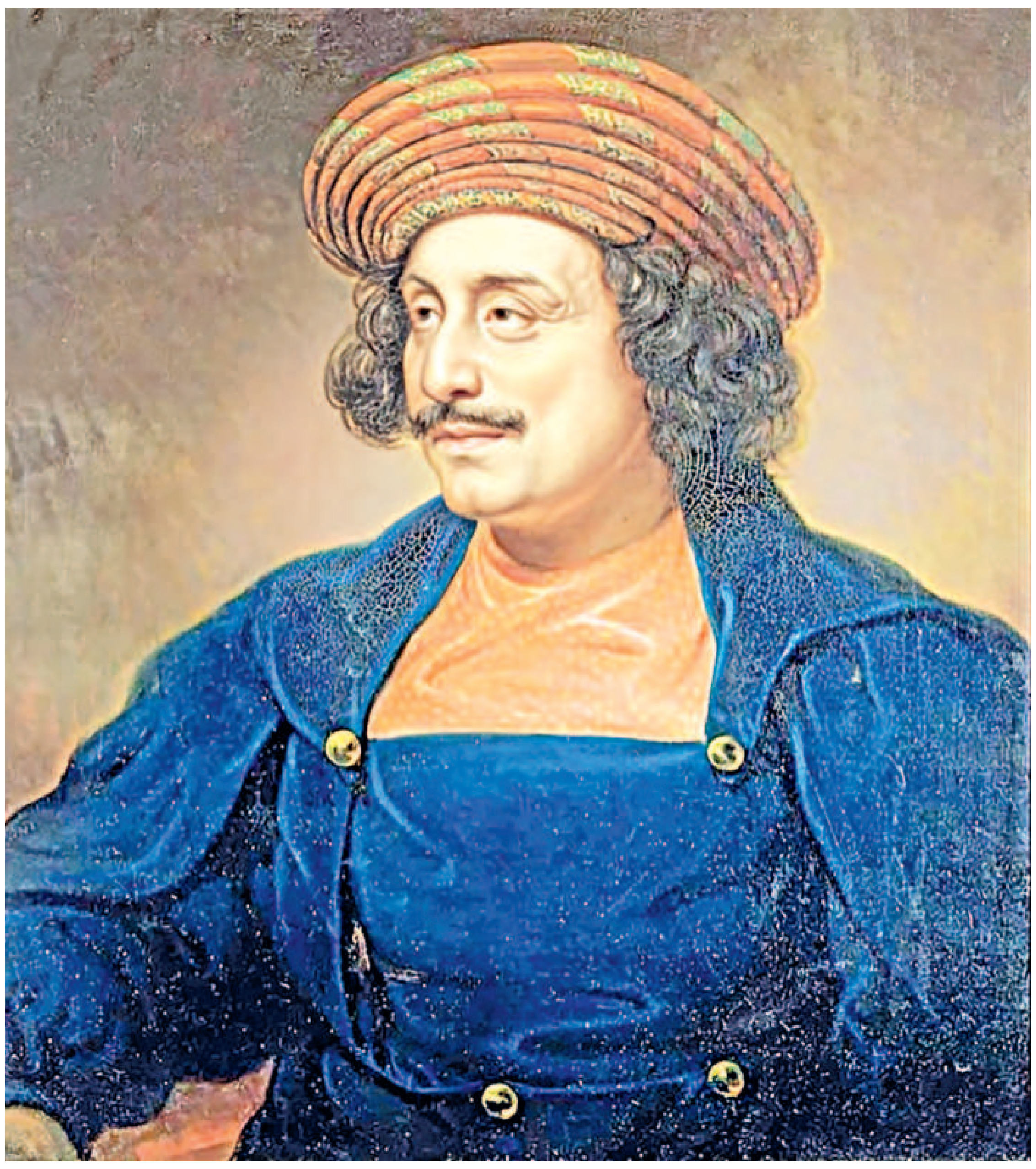
A
GRAMMAR
OF
THE BENGA'LI' LANGUAGE.
BY THE LATE RAMMOHUN ROY.

CALCUTTA:
PRINTED AT THE CALCUTTA SCHOOL-BOOK SOCIETY'S PRESS,
AND SOLD AT THEIR DEPOSITORY, CIRCULAR ROAD
1845.

Title Page of Gaudiya Byakaran (1845)


BENGALEE
GRAMMAR
IN THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE.
BY RAMMOHUN ROY.
Rāmmohana Rāya
CALCUTTA:
Printed at the Unitarian Press,
1826.

Title Page of Bengalee Grammar in the English Language (1826)


A portrait of Rammohun Roy by Rembrandt Peale(1833)

In 1801, the Russian adventurer, Gerasim Stepanovich Lebedev (1749-1817), also published a fragmented Bangla grammar in his A Grammar of the Pure and Mixed East Indian Dialects. Later in the same century, as well as in the next, quite a few Englishmen (and others) would write grammars of Bangla, but Rammohun Roy intervened to become the first Indian and Bengali to write such a grammar, first in English (1826, called Bengalee Grammar in English Language), and then in Bangla (1833, called Gaudiya Byakaran, tadbhasha-birachita).

3

When a grammar of Bangla is written in English, the Bengali reader's access to it is limited, and the authors know it. They write it mostly for users of English, Englishmen in general. These readers do not come to the language with any basic command of it and have to learn everything from the bottom up—the pronunciation, word formation, sentence formation and sentence patterns, correct usage, speech manners in appropriate social contexts, and the intricate rules of writing—from the alphabet to the orthography. A grammar written in Bangla for the Bengali audience may, on the other hand, have a different focus. I want to add that this may not always be true, as ancient models (Sanskrit or Latin, for example) often dominate and control the author's outlook, and a straitjacket frame is often adopted.

It is true that Rammohun's grammar was shaped on a Sanskrit model, but had an originality of outlook and a fresh approach. Das (1407 BE, pp. 135-6) gives an outline of the personal and social background which prodded Rammohun to write the grammar. The English version begins with a short discussion on the origin of human language, prompted probably by his exposure to the early deliberations of the Indo-Europeanists like William Jones. But his definition of a grammar sounds strikingly modern—"Grammar explains the principles on which conventional sounds or marks are composed and arranged to express thoughts." We will, however, focus on the Bengali version more, in order to underscore the originality of his approach. The Bangla grammar was, of course, written for a Bengali audience, for which the author could assume some native command of the language on the part of the user. But, as we know, in the grammars of the time, the Standard Written Bangla or the Sadhu Bhasha was emphasized, which was not a spoken form, so preference was almost always on how to write that 'chaste' variety. The author thought that that would benefit all Bengalis, including those who spoke a local dialect at home.

4

Let us say at the outset that we have consulted the 1845 text available on Google, which consists of 116 pages in total. Other editions are also available. For a grammar of a language, it looks quite small, unless it was intended as only a primary sketch. The publisher is the School Book Society, which the East India Company founded in 1817, with David Hare (1775-1842) at its head. Rammohun could barely submit his manuscript before he left for England in 1830, and due to his death there, he could not attend to its printing and publication. It was probably David Hare who took great care to have it published, as the preface mentions.

The grammar contains 38 prakaranas, or 'topics', organized sequentially, which are subsumed under 10 adhyayas, or chapters. One who has a basic notion about the structure of a grammar knows that a traditional one consists of sections like phonology (discussion of sounds in the language), morphology (how the sounds are combined to build meaningful forms like words, etc.), and syntax, in which the rules of making sentences are dealt with. In modern 'linguistic' grammars, other sections are added, but it was, naturally, far from being the practice then. And we must remember, instructions on writing were an important component. Rammohun follows the general pattern of the Sanskrit grammars and hence adds a further section on prosody.

A detailed discussion of the prakaranas will be too much for the uninitiated reader. We will therefore mainly focus on what distinguishes this grammar from others. The author was always keenly aware of the distinctive pronunciation of Bengali. He takes pains to tell us that all letters of our alphabet are not pronounced in Bengali speech, nor are they needed to be written outside of 'Sanskrit' words. He points out how two ja-s, na-s, and three sha-s are pronounced almost alike. After locating contexts where sha is pronounced as s, he also lets us know about the practice of Muslim Bengali writers to write Musalman with a chha, in place of a sa. It is quite noticeable that he dispenses with the Sanskrit sandhi rules, which, we think, should never have been a part of a Bangla grammar.

He, however, follows the traditional Sanskrit grammar in emphasizing morphology (twenty-one topics in all) or word formation and their roles in sentences. For the notion of 'person,' he uses prathama, dvitiya, and tritiya purush, by translating the English system, which looks much more reasonable than uttama, madhyama, etc., which were added later to the confusion of learners. He discards the so-called Sampradana Karaka, in which he was, again, quite ahead of his time. Syntax (anvaya) is dismissed in one topic, and so is prosody. Neither shows much light on the processes that had by then grown historically as quite complex systems.

He makes some innovations in terminology, which strike us as very original. For example, he regards a verb as an adjective. Only in twentieth-century grammatical thought was a close derivational relationship between verbs and adjectives critically discussed, so we are somewhat taken aback by his prescience. Still, we think that the two cannot be merged into a single category, as, syntactically, the verb plays a totally different role from that of an adjective. However, his postulation of four karakas for Bangla, to the exclusion of those of Sampradana and Apadana, is once again quite acceptable from a modern standpoint.

To sum up, one can say that this grammar, although it followed the Sanskrit framework, was written with a keen sense of the distinctive features of Bengali and shows a deep appreciation of the structure and function of the language as it had evolved till then. It is an unfortunate fact that this emphasis on the Bengali-ness of Bengali was ignored in most of the later school grammars, which almost put Rammohun's grammar out of use.

The best compliments for the grammar come probably from none other than Sukumar Sen, who says, "As this grammar was on hand, that is probably why Vidyasagar did not attempt to write any grammar of Bengali."

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Pabitra Sarkar *is an author and former Vice Chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata.*

Star
SPORT
DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 24, 2024, ASHAR 10, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

Nagorik TV	Euro 2024	T Sports
T20 World Cup	Spain vs Albania	**Copa America**
West Indies vs South Africa	Live from 1:00 am	Uruguay vs Panama
Live from 6:30 am	(Tuesday)	Live from 7:00 am
India vs Australia	Italy vs Croatia	Colombia vs Paraguay
Live from 8:30 pm	Live from 1:00 am	Live from 4:00 am
T Sports & Sony Sports 2	(Tuesday)	(Tuesday)

Tigers in search of intent against buoyant Afghans

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will take on Afghanistan in their last Super Eight fixture of the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup on Tuesday at the Arnos Vale Ground in St. Vincent, hoping to salvage pride following dismal outings against Australia and India respectively which has left their semifinal hopes hanging by a thread.

Afghanistan have beaten Australia handsomely at Arnos Vale Ground, a win that would surely see them enter the contest against the Tigers as favourites in terms of form.

The Tigers, meanwhile, would be hoping that their unbeaten run in ICC events against Afghanistan, which currently stands at four, would help them thwart the Afghans once again under the bright lights.

In St. Vincent, Afghanistan's openers set the plot for the win as they kept Australia on a tight leash throughout the game and sealed a convincing win. Now, if the Australia-India game goes in India's favour, Afghanistan can make the semis by beating Bangladesh.

Bangladesh, on the other hand, go in to the game, still in search of impetus to take the game by the scruff of the neck in key match situations.

First and foremost, the Powerplay effort with the bat has been grim. Against India on Saturday, Bangladesh managed just 42 for 1 in chase of 197, which forced them to play catch up for the rest of the way.

» Afghanistan edge Bangladesh in head-to-head records in T20Is with six wins against the Tigers' five in 11 meetings. However, in their only meeting in the T20 World Cup, Bangladesh beat Afghanistan by nine wickets in the 2014 edition.

» The average first innings total at the Arnos Vale Stadium in St.Vincent, the venue for the match, is 132 after four T20 World Cup matches. Bangladesh won both their group-stage fixtures against Netherlands and Nepal while Afghanistan pulled off their historic upset over Australia at the venue.

With batters out of form and no one settled in well enough to score runs on a good batting surface, Bangladesh could not make a game of it.

Barring the skill gap, the lack of intent has been Bangladesh's problem in games against big sides, which was glaringly evident against India On Saturday.

Such was the brunt of the defeat, that Shakib Al Hasan, one of the team's most experienced players, gave up any hopes of making it to semifinals, even though after Afghanistan's win over Australia yesterday, the Tigers have a route to the semis, no matter how unlikely it seems at the moment.

"To be honest, I don't think we have a chance to play the semifinal anymore after today's [Saturday] loss," Shakib said after the defeat against India.

"But having said that, the next game will be an opportunity for us to get a win under our belt before we finish up this tournament. We'd love to finish this tournament on a high.

"We have to face Afghanistan which is a very good side. So, we have to be at our best to be able to win against them," he added.

With Afghanistan flying high, finding themselves at ease in conditions in St. Vincent, Bangladesh will have to bring their A game to even be competitive.

The wicket is unlikely to be very batting friendly and Bangladesh found that out for themselves during their game against Nepal in the venue, where they were unable to even play the full 20 overs.

While Bangladesh have been unable to show signs of improvement against big sides, Afghanistan excelled in that challenge and conjured up a win against Australia which will be remembered for a long time.

"It's not just like a bilateral game. It's a World Cup game, and definitely in a World Cup, you're beating a best side. It's a great achievement," an overjoyed Rashid Khan said after leading his side to win over Australia.

Even though Bangladesh will have a mathematical chance of making it to the semis if India beat Australia today, the only realistic target for the Tigers would be a better showing against Afghanistan and try to end with a win. Anything past that will be the very definition of bonus gains.

SHORT CORNER

Mbappe recovery continues but return for France remains unclear

France forward Kylian Mbappe is continuing to recover from his broken nose even though it is not yet sure whether he will play on Tuesday in his side's last group game at the European Championship, coach Didier Deschamps said on Sunday. France's captain fractured his nose last Monday in their opener against Austria.

Cummins creates history with second consecutive T20 WC hattrick

Australia quick Pat Cummins created history in St Vincent on Saturday when he became the first player to register a hattrick in consecutive ICC Men's T20 World Cup matches. Cummins registered a hat-trick over two overs against Bangladesh on Thursday and the right-armer completed the feat once again against Afghanistan.

De Bruyne leads from front to get Belgium firing again

Belgium's fearsome forward line needed only 73 seconds to finally come alive at Euro 2024 on Saturday but almost 80 minutes later they were still trying to deliver the knockout blow on Romania. Then the masterful Kevin De Bruyne took matters into his own hands with his 28th goal for his country to totally change the feel of the night.

***Read full stories on The Daily Star's website.*

Qualification race heats up as India face Australia

AGENCIES

Afghanistan exercised the demons of their defeat against Australia in the previous ODI World Cup with their victory over the Aussies in yesterday's Super Eight fixture and in the process have thrown open the Group 1 with all four teams in with a chance to make it to the semifinals with one match in hand.

The first of the remaining two Group 1 fixtures – India-Australia – will take place today in St. Lucia, where India have a chance to exact revenge for the scarring defeat in the final of last year's ODI World Cup final in home turf by putting Australia at the precipice of getting knocked out.

If India win, they would move onto the semis with six points and Australia would remain on two points and their qualification hopes will be depend on the outcome of the Bangladesh-Afghanistan match the next day.

If the Afghans defeat the Tigers, they would move onto the semis for the first time as group runners-up with four points, sending Australia and Bangladesh packing.

However, if the Afghans lose, Australia, Bangladesh and Afghanistan will finish the Super Eight stage with two points and the qualification race will be decided on the basis of net run rate, which would put Mitchell Marsh's team in poll position to qualify.

Even if Afghanistan lose by just one run, Australia will need to lose by 31 for their run rate to slip below that of Afghanistan. Bangladesh will need to win by 31 runs for their net run rate to sneak ahead of Afghanistan's, but they will also need Australia to lose by 55 runs, to finish second in the group.

However, if Australia come out on top against India, it would end Bangladesh's hopes of playing the semis and the other three teams will finish on four points.

If Australia win by a run, Afghanistan will need a 36-run win over the Tigers to overtake Australia on net run rate. If Australia win a run-chase off the last ball, Afghanistan will have to win their game in 15.4 overs or sooner, assuming first-innings scores of 160.

For India to get knocked out, Australia will need to beat India by 41 runs to go past them on run rate, while Afghanistan will have to beat Bangladesh by at least 83 runs.

Despite the precarious position of his team, Marsh remained confident to win against India and making it to the semifinals.

"We have a lot of belief in our group. Yes, tonight [yesterday] we had an off night, but I guess there's also a positive in the fact that in 36 hours we go again," Marsh said after the 21-run defeat against Afghanistan. "I think if you look back at the short history of this team, I know for a fact that it brings out the best in our guys."

JUNIOR AHF CUP

Girls pull a big surprise as boys retain title

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's team became unbeaten champions in Men's Junior AHF Cup with a 4-2 win over China in the final while women's team emerged runners-up in Women's Junior AHF Cup with a 7-1 win over Singapore in their last pool match in Singapore yesterday.

The achievements also ensured qualification for the Junior Asia Cups for both men and women.

The title for men, under coach Ashiquzzaman, was quite expected as they had won this twice in five previous editions, those two coming in 2014 and in 2023. However, the women's achievement was far more difficult, given that their only previous experience was in the same tournament five years ago where they finished fifth out of six teams and a five-a-side tournament last year.

The women in red and green, however, did a tremendous job as they won five out of six matches this time and gave stiff challenge to eventual champions Chinese Taipei before going down 3-0.

"To be honest, we also did not expect such results from the girls because they did not get the opportunity to play any practice matches before the tournament. No one knew the hidden power of this group of girls, who have been training together since 2000 at BKSP," head coach Zahid Hossain Raju told The Daily Star yesterday.

Out of the 18 players, 15 are from BKSP.

"We have been training the girls two sessions each day in a scientific way which has built a good bonding, understanding among the players," Raju said. "So, they were confident to perform collectively on the pitch."

Croatia face Italy in survival clash

AFP, *Leipzig*

Group B was dubbed Euro 2024's 'Group of Death' but while Spain soared through with a game to spare, heavyweights Italy and Croatia meet on Monday fighting to stay in the competition.

Both sides were outclassed by Spain, and while reigning champions Italy edged Albania 2-1, Croatia could only draw 2-2 with the minnows.

It gives Italy the upper hand ahead of their clash in Leipzig, with Croatia's golden generation at risk of a disappointingly early exit if they fail to win.

Croatia, who reached the 2018 and 2022 World Cup final and semifinal respectively, may make several changes as they scrap for Euros survival.

Midfielder Marcelo Brozovic, playing in Saudi Arabia, has come in for criticism after sub-par outings in the first two matches, while Real Madrid's Luka Modric, 38, has also struggled.

Full-back Ivan Perisic has looked a shadow of himself, still to find his footing after a long injury lay-off.

Youngster Luka Sucic could replace Brozovic, as he did at half-time against Albania.

Striker Bruno Petkovic, who missed a penalty in the 3-0 beating by Spain, called on Croatia to deliver for their vast support in Germany.

"The responsibility is on us, we owe it to our fans to show more," he said.

"I expect us to beat Italy, and I hope it's going to happen."

» This will be Croatia and Italy's third meeting at a major tournament, all taking place in the group stages.

» Since gaining independence in the early 1990s, Croatia are unbeaten in their eight meetings against Italy (W3 D5). Their last three encounters have all ended 1-1.

Italy need a draw against Croatia to claim second place but after being thoroughly outplayed in their 1-0 loss to Spain, expectations are not high for the Azzurri.

Italy coach Luciano Spalletti could also ring the changes with striker Mateo Retegui in contention, along with defender Matteo Darmian, who could replace Giovanni Di Lorenzo after a torturous night against Spain's Nico Williams.

Even Italy's opening victory over Albania was not without its challenges -- Sassuolo's Nedim Bajrami put Albania ahead with the fastest goal in Euros history on 23 seconds. Hence, as things stand, with defending champions Italy fighting to regain their old glory days and Croatia desperate to bounce back, fans can expect a fiery clash.

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40 top, mid-ranking cops transferred

14 districts get new SPs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a major reshuffle, 40 top and mid-ranked police officials were transferred to new postings yesterday, weeks before three of its top officials, including the IGP, are scheduled to retire.

The home ministry made the transfers through three circulars signed by Sirajum Munira, deputy secretary of its Public Security Division.

Among those transferred, Additional Inspector General (supernumerary) Krishna Pada Roy, commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP), was reassigned to the Police Headquarters (PHQ) in Dhaka.

The other transferees include nine deputy inspectors general (DIGs), 15 recently promoted additional DIGs, and 15 superintendents of police (SPs).

Talking to this newspaper, a high official at the PHQ said that the transfers were long overdue and were on hold for the national election.

With the order, at least 14 districts -- Rangpur, Kushtia, Cumilla, Sylhet, Patuakhali, Barguna, Bogura, Feni, Pabna, Tangail, Nilphamari, Jashore, Madaripur, and Sunamganj -- have gotten new SPs.

Meanwhile, the current Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun is scheduled to retire on July 11, after the end of his one-and-half-year contractual appointment. Meanwhile, Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) Additional Inspector General Banaj Kumar

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

England's Jos Buttler and Phil Salt celebrate their 10-wicket victory against USA in a Super 8 fixture of the Twenty20 World Cup at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados yesterday. Chris Jordan's hattrick helped dismiss USA for 115 before Buttler's unbeaten 83 and Salt's unbeaten 25 helped them chase down the target in 9.4 overs to book a place in the semifinals. PHOTO: AFP

A strategic mishap by Tigers

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh team management made a few strategic mistakes in their 50-run defeat to India in a crucial Super Eight clash of the T20 World Cup in Antigua on Saturday. It leaves question marks over the Tigers' planning around the biggest matches on the biggest stages.

It is not regular for Bangladesh to make the Super Eight of a T20 World Cup.

If the bowlers had carried them to the Super Eight stage, the batters failed to live up to international standards throughout the tournament -- especially in the two Super Eight matches against Australia and India.

The head coach had talked about playing with freedom, given that they had already achieved their target of making the Super

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Benazir again skips ACC quizzing

DIPAN NANDY

Former police chief Benazir Ahmed has again skipped the Anti-Corruption Commission's questioning over allegations that he amassed huge wealth through corruption.

He sent a letter to the commission on Friday, claiming the allegations were false, and not mentioning anything about why he was not responding to ACC's summons, said ACC Secretary Khorsheda Yasmin yesterday.

She did not go into further details about the letter and said the team investigating him and his family members will decide what to do next.

On May 28, the ACC issued a notice, asking Benazir to appear at its office on June 6, and his wife and two daughters on June 9.

In separate letters, they requested the ACC to defer the appointment for 15 days.

The ACC then asked Benazir to appear on June 23 and his family members on June 24.

If Benazir's wife and daughters also skip the quizzing session today, the investigators will take action as per the law, according to Khorsheda.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

47 more Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes

Residents say tanks at edge of Mawasi refuge zone

AGENCIES

Israeli forces bombed across the Gaza Strip yesterday, and tanks advanced to the edge of the Mawasi displaced persons' camp in the northwest of the southern Gaza city of Rafah in fierce fighting with Hamas-led fighters, residents said.

Images of two Israeli tanks stationed on a hilltop overlooking the coastal area went viral on social media.

"The fighting with the resistance has been intense. The occupation forces are overlooking the Mawasi area now, which forced families there to head for Khan Younis," said one resident, who asked not to be named, on a chat app.

More than eight months into Israel's offensive in the Palestinian enclave, its advance is focused on the two areas its forces have yet to seize: Rafah on Gaza's southern tip and the area surrounding Deir al-Balah in the centre.

Residents said Israeli tanks had pushed deeper into western and northern Rafah in recent days, blowing up dozens of houses, reports Reuters.

The Israeli military said it was continuing "intelligence-based, targeted operations" in the Rafah area and had located weapons stores and tunnel shafts, and killed Palestinian gunmen.

The armed wings of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad movement said their fighters had attacked Israeli forces in Rafah with anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs and pre-planted explosive devices.

Elsewhere, an Israeli airstrike killed eight Palestinians in Sabra, a suburb of Gaza City in the north, and another strike killed two people in Nuseirat in central Gaza.

The military said it had struck dozens of targets throughout the Strip.

In Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip, health officials at Kamal Adwan Hospital said a baby had died of malnutrition, taking the number of children dead of malnutrition or dehydration since October 7 to at least 30, a number that health officials say reflects under-recording.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 37,598 people have been killed during more than eight months of offensive. The toll includes at least 47 deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

- » Hamas fighters attack Israeli forces with anti-tank rockets
- » Hezbollah targets Israeli barracks after commander's death
- » Gaza death toll rises to 37,598

MP AZIM MURDER

Yet another investigator transferred

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **MUNTAKIM SAAD**

Two officers supervising the ongoing investigation into the murder of lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar have been transferred.

Deputy Commissioner of DB, Abdul Ahad, a supervising officer, was yesterday transferred to Pabna as the superintendent of police there. He was in the DB team that had gone to India for the probe.

On June 2, Shahidur Rahman Ripon, additional deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, was transferred to Barishal. He was in Nepal for the investigation at the time.

Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner of DMP, told The Daily Star that there was no pressure on police after they arrested two Jhenaidah AL leaders in connection with Azim murder.

On June 12, Azim's daughter Mumtarin

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

8 killed in attack on synagogues, churches in Russia

AFP, *Moscow*

Gunmen yesterday attacked synagogues and churches in Russia's North Caucasus region of Dagestan, killing a priest, six police officers, and a member of the national guard, security officials said.

The attacks took place in Dagestan's largest city of Makhachkala and in the coastal city of Derbent, where gunfights were ongoing.

Russia's Investigative Committee said it had opened criminal probes over "acts of terror", while the hunt for the gunmen was ongoing.

Witnesses could hear shooting near a church in Makhachkala while shootouts were continuing in Derbent, the TASS state news agency reported. Dagestan's interior ministry said it had killed two of the gunmen in Makhachkala.

Sunday is a religious holiday in the Russian Orthodox Church called Pentecost Sunday. Dagestan is a largely Muslim region of Russia, neighbouring Chechnya.

"This evening in the cities of Derbent and Makhachkala armed attacks were carried out on two Orthodox churches, a synagogue and a police check-point," said the National Antiterrorism Committee in a statement to RIA Novosti news agency.

"As a result of the terrorist attacks, according to preliminary information, a priest from the Russian Orthodox Church and police officers were killed."

In all, six police officers had been killed and another 12 wounded in the attacks, the spokeswoman for Dagestan's interior ministry, Gayana Gariyeva, told RIA Novosti.

Russia's National Guard said one of its officers had been killed in Derbent and several others wounded.

A 66-year-old priest was killed in Derbent, the press secretary of Dagestan's interior ministry, Gariyeva told the agency.

Brazil start Copa America mission

REUTERS

Brazil open their 2024 Copa America campaign against Costa Rica on Monday in Los Angeles with a whole new look almost from top to bottom, with Real Madrid's rising star Vinicius Jr leading a group that were waiting for an opportunity for a fresh start.

The match will start on Tuesday at 7:00 am Bangladesh time.

After a heartbreaking shootout defeat by Croatia in the World Cup quarter-finals at Qatar 2022, Brazil went through two caretaker managers as they waited for almost an year trying to lure manager Carlo Ancelotti from Real Madrid.

But after the Italian extended his contract with the Spanish giants, Brazil settled on journeyman Dorival Jr.

Dorival built a reputation as a versatile coach specialising in working his magic as fixer by taking over struggling teams halfway through a season with a remarkable success.

He won the Copa Libertadores and the Copa do Brazil with Flamengo a few months after taking over and when his six-month contract was not renewed he joined Sao Paulo and led them to a Brazilian Cup

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

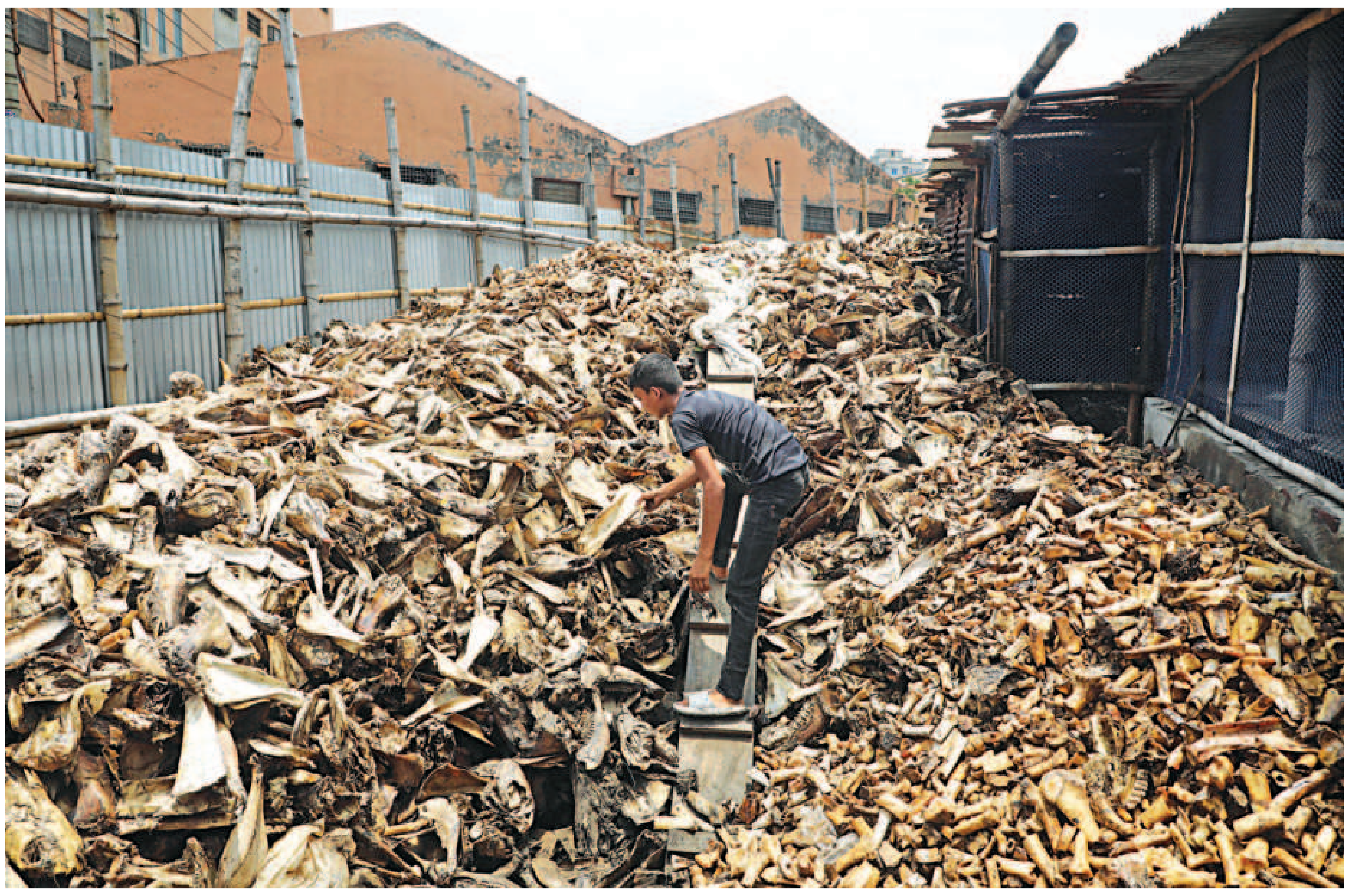

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Bones and horns of sacrificial animals are brought in by street children, butchers, cleaners and hawkers from different parts of the country to a factory in Dhaka's Hazaribagh. After being cleaned and processed, these would later be sold by different shops in the area. Bones and horns of cattle are used as raw material to make different products, such as medicine capsule covers and ceramics. The photo was taken yesterday.

Ukraine missile attack on Crimea kills 5

Russia blames US for setting the missile's flight coordinate

REUTERS, *Moscow*

Russia said yesterday that the United States was responsible for a Ukrainian attack on the Russian-annexed Crimean peninsula with five US-supplied missiles that killed at least five people including three children and injured 124 more.

The Russian Defence Ministry said four of the US-delivered Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) missiles, equipped with cluster warheads, were shot down by air defence systems and the ammunition of a fifth had detonated in mid-air.

The ministry said US specialists had set the missiles' flight coordinates on the basis of information from US spy satellites, meaning Washington was directly responsible.

"Responsibility for the deliberate missile attack on the civilians of Sevastopol is borne above all by Washington, which supplied these weapons to Ukraine, and by the Kyiv regime, from whose territory this strike was carried out," the ministry said.

The United States began supplying Ukraine with longer range ATACMS missiles, which have a 300-km range, earlier this year.

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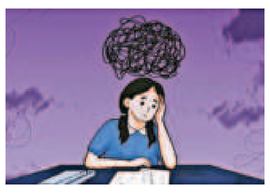
Cyclone Remal damaged 400km roads in Bagerhat
P5

Modi appeals to opposition for 'consensus'
P7


Mental health challenges of our school children
P8

Lacklustre England must make their presence felt
P11

Agriculture labourers sun drying Boro rice, after collecting them from local farmers at a price of Tk 1,100-1,200 per maund. After purchase, they boil, dry and thresh the rice before selling them to wholesalers at Tk 40-50 per kg. The photo was taken in Ghona village of Khulna's Dumuria upazila recently. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

IMF approves 3rd tranche of $1.15b loans

The funds will be added to the reserves in two days

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The International Monetary Fund yesterday approved the third tranche of $1.15 billion loans in a boost to Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserves.

Mezbaul Haque, spokesperson for Bangladesh Bank, told The Daily Star, "The IMF board has approved the third instalment of our credit. We are expecting $1.15 billion to be released by the next two days."

The money would be added to the foreign currency reserves, he added.

The multilateral lender reviewed Bangladesh's progress in reaching the goals set in December last year and granted the instalment of its $4.7 billion loan programme for the country.

> **"Periodic reviews of the crawling peg would be important to ensure its effectiveness."**
>
> **ANTOINETTE M SAYEH,** IMF Deputy Managing Director

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

'Not feasible to share Teesta water'

Mamata writes to Modi, also asks not to hold talks on Teesta, Farakka without involving West Bengal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *New Delhi*

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday said no discussion on sharing the Teesta and Ganges waters should be held with Bangladesh without the involvement of the West Bengal government.

Sharing Teesta water with Bangladesh is not feasible, she wrote in a letter to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The interest of people in West Bengal is paramount which should not be compromised at any cost," she wrote.

If Teesta water is shared with Bangladesh, "lakhs of people in North Bengal will get severely impacted due to inadequate availability of irrigation water".

Teesta water is also needed for meeting drinking water requirements of the residents of North Bengal, she said.

She wrote the letter a couple of days after prime ministers Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi held talks in New Delhi where the Indian PM announced a technical team would be sent to Bangladesh soon for conservation and management of water in the Teesta and discussions would soon start on the renewal of the 1996 Ganges water-sharing treaty which expires in 2026.

Mamata also stated that West Bengal shares "a very close relationship with Bangladesh geographically, culturally and economically. I love and respect people of Bangladesh and always wish for their well-being".

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Benazir's wife, daughters skip ACC quizzing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The wife of former police chief Benazir Ahmed and their two daughters yesterday skipped the Anti-Corruption Commission's questioning over the allegations of amassing wealth illegally.

Jissan Mirza and her two daughters Farheen Rishta Binte Benazir and Tahseen Raisa Binte Benazir were scheduled to appear before the ACC at its headquarters yesterday.

Speaking to reporters, ACC Secretary Khorsheda Yasmin said the three did not submit any time petitions. However, they sent written statements to the commission on Thursday explaining their positions on the corruption allegations.

"The ACC inquiry team is taking necessary actions in line with the law. We hope to submit the inquiry report within the stipulated time," Khorsheda said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

TAKEAWAYS: HASINA-MODI TALKS

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting in New Delhi on June 22, in which they discussed both bilateral and regional cooperation. Former foreign secretary Md Touhid Hossain and former ambassador M Humayun Kabir shared their views with The Daily Star's Porimol Palma.

Our concerns were largely unaddressed

Md Touhid Hossain

The statements from the two leaders of Bangladesh and India appear to be quite ambitious. However, they don't address the challenges that the people of Bangladesh face.

The issue of sharing Teesta water did not come up. India has spoken about sending a technical team to look into how the Teesta water in Bangladesh can be conserved and managed, but how long it will actually take to ensure that the people in Bangladesh get enough water in the northwestern region remains a serious question. We know that China was interested to fund the Teesta

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Visit long on visions, short on details

M Humayun Kabir

The statements from the meeting suggest we have moved from resolving smaller bilateral issues, which traditionally dominate the relations, to bigger visions and broader strategic aspects. There are definitely some positive outcomes from the visit, on which both Bangladesh and India can build up the future cooperation. At the same time, some of the lofty ideas are too complex to have their possible implications deciphered.

Energy cooperation with Nepal and Bhutan through India could open up a strategic window for all four countries. We have never tried to look into regional

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Court slaps travel ban on Matiur, family

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday imposed a travel ban on Matiur Rahman, former member of the National Board of Revenue, his wife and son in connection with allegations of corruption against them.

The travel ban was requested by Anowar Hossain, deputy director of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

As per the order issued by Judge Mohammed Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain, Matiur, his first wife Laila Kaniz Lucky, and their son Ahmed Taufiqur Rahman Arnob cannot leave the country unless the restriction is lifted.

The commission's lawyer Mir Ahmed Ali Salam wrote in the application that the family was making arrangements to leave the country and syphon money out of Bangladesh.

Matiur is a former president of the NBR's Customs, Excise and VAT Appellate Tribunal and his wife is the upazila parishad chairman of Narsingdi's Raipura.

A three-member team of the ACC is investigating allegations of corruption made against them.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Mid-day meal in primary schools returns in Aug

The project to cost Tk 4,700cr

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government is likely to reintroduce mid-day meals at primary schools in 150 upazilas after a gap of two years with the view to ramping up school attendance and bringing down the dropout rate.

The school feeding programme is expected to resume in August, The Daily Star has learnt from primary and mass education ministry officials informed of the proceedings.

The three-year project, which will cover about 37 lakh students at 19,000 government primary schools in mostly poverty-prone areas, will cost about Tk 4,700 crore, according to the ministry's development project proposal.

Of the estimated cost, Tk 4,181 crore will go towards food procurement and the rest will be spent on paying contractors, transport, service charges, food distribution and packaging.

The World Bank will provide assistance for the project, said Farid Ahmed, secretary of the primary and mass education ministry.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

MEAL MENU

- Fortified biscuits
- Eggs
- Bananas
- Bread
- Seasonal fruits

The water of the Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara lake wears a slimy, green look due to extensive pollution from household waste. The stench from the lake has become so unbearable that people have to cover their noses from far away to avoid it. The photo was taken from the capital's Kemal Ataturk Avenue yesterday. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Khaleda now stable, shifted to cabin

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, who just had a pacemaker implanted in her chest, was shifted from the Coronary Care Unit (CCU) to a cabin at Evercare Hospital in the capital yesterday afternoon.

Her physician, AZM Zahid Hossain, said, "Madam Khaleda Zia has been moved to a cabin with CCU facilities on the advice of the medical board at 4:45pm."

The medical board made the decision after evaluating her condition, he said, adding that Khaleda would continue to receive treatment in the cabin under the close observation of doctors.

He also said that Khaleda underwent further medical tests as advised by the board.

"They [medical board] reviewed the BNP chairperson's test reports and subsequently visited Begum Zia in the CCU. Following this, they decided to shift her to the cabin."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

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We want to encourage joyful learning

Says PM

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government wants to develop an education system in the country that enables students to pursue their studies with interest and joy.

The premier said this while inaugurating the distribution of stipends, tuition fees and awards among insolvent and meritorious students at a programme in the city's Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

In the event, the PM also conferred the awards to the most talented students of Bangabandhu Srijanshil Medha Onneshan-2024 (Bangabandhu Creative Talent Search-2024) and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Scholar Award-2023.

Hasina said her government modified textbooks and syllabuses, and took initiative for a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina awards a student at a programme as part of the Bangabandhu Srijanshil Medha Onneshan-2024 (Bangabandhu Creative Talent Search-2024) and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Scholar Award-2023. At the event, the premier also inaugurated the distribution of stipends, tuition fees and awards among insolvent and meritorious students. The programme was held in the city's Osmani Memorial Auditorium yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Help us resolve Rohingya crisis

PM urges China during meeting with Chinese minister Liu Jianchao

AGENCIES

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday sought Chinese support to solve the Rohingya crisis quickly.

"It has already been six years since the influx of the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals to Bangladesh. Bangladesh is now very much worried about the Rohingya crisis due to the uncertainty in finding solutions," she said.

The premier said this at a meeting with visiting Minister of International Department of the Communist Party of China Liu Jianchao at her Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban office, reports BSS.

PM's press secretary M Nayeemul Islam Khan briefed the reporters afterwards.

Nayeemul quoted Hasina as saying, "It [Rohingya crisis] is very much frustrating and worrying for us." He said the premier told the Chinese minister that "It's a special message [from myself] to convey to the Chinese president [to resolve the Rohingya issue]."

Liu Jianchao said China is committed and working with Myanmar to facilitate repatriation of the Rohingyas from Bangladesh, adds UNB.

"Even the Myanmar government does not have the position to implement any plan [regarding this issue]. The civil war situation has turned into a complex issue due to the conflicting situation [in Myanmar]," he said.

Jianchao also said China realises that Bangladesh is affected due to the Rohingya issue and they highly appreciate that Bangladesh is supporting the Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'Drive on to recover Babu's three mobile phones for evidence'

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, the relief and social welfare affairs secretary of the Jhenaidah Awami League, has allegedly used his cell phone to communicate and exchange photos with the suspected killer of lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar.

Babu communicated with the alleged coordinator of the killing mission Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan in phases, on behalf of Saidul Karim Mintu, general secretary of Jhenaidah AL, claimed detectives.

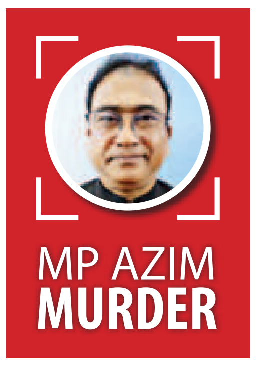
Mintu advised Babu to dispose of three cell phones used in communication to destroy evidence. Subsequently, the phones were discarded in two ponds near Payra Chattar in the district. Babu then filed a general diary reporting his phones were lost as per Mintu's direction, the cops said.

An official investigating the incident and a report submitted to the court by the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police revealed this information.

According to the investigation progress report, Amanullah returned from Kolkata after executing the killing mission on May 15 and communicated with Babu on May 16 night to give him updates.

At one stage, Babu and Amanullah held a meeting at Bhanga in Faridpur and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



CTG KALURGHAT RAIL AND ROAD BRIDGE

Project to see light of day after nearly a decade

Loan agreement with S Korea to be signed Thursday

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

AT A GLANCE

- Project Cost Tk 11,561cr
- South Korea to provide Tk 7,128cr loan
- Project Deadline Dec 2030
- 1 year defect liability period
- Project first taken in 2014
- Initial estimated cost Tk 1,163.27cr

After nearly a decade of planning, the complexities surrounding a project for a rail and road bridge at Kalurghat in Chattogram are finally set to be resolved with a loan agreement to be signed this week.

The Economic Relations Division (ERD) will sign a loan deal with South Korea on Thursday for the Tk 11,561 core project, officials said.

The Development Project Proposal (DPP) of the long-awaited project is now pending with the Planning Commission after the completion of all procedures and is expected to be approved soon, they said.

The new dual-gauge double-line rail plus double-lane road bridge is expected to replace the existing dilapidated bridge within the next five and a half years.

The proposed deadline for the project is December 2030, with a one-year defect liability period.

"With the signing of the loan deal, we hope all uncertainty over the project will be dispelled," Sardar Shahadat Ali, director general of Bangladesh Railway, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Built in 1931, the metre-gauge single-line rail bridge was reconfigured in 1962 so that vehicles could use it too.

But the bridge has become almost unsafe and the authorities have to repair the bridge occasionally, with the latest one in last year, to keep it usable. Trains have a speed limit of 10 kmph on the bridge.

Construction of the new bridge became more important after the opening of Chattogram-Cox's Bazar rail line last year, as the capacity of the new line could not be used due to bottlenecks.

However, the process to replace the bridge started in 2014 when the government

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Govt preparing list of top loan defaulters

Finance minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The list of top loan defaulters, both individuals and organisations, is being prepared, Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali informed parliament yesterday.

This announcement came in response to a query from Awami League MP Farida Yasmin, who asked for the names of the top 30 loan defaulters and the amounts they owe.

Meanwhile, AL MP Nurunnabi Chowdhury of Bhola-3 inquired about permanent measures taken to prevent loan scams in banks and financial institutions.

In response, the minister highlighted several initiatives, including amending the Bank Companies Act, 1991, issuing guidelines for identifying and addressing willful defaulters, conducting regular inspections and monitoring by Bangladesh Bank, implementing a specific action plan to reduce the classified loan ratio below 8 percent by June 2026 and ensure corporate governance in the banking sector.

The Finance Company Act, 2023 was also enacted to enhance transparency, accountability, and systematic management in finance companies, the minister added.

DECREASE IN DEPOSITS EXPLAINED

In response to AL MP M Abdul Latif from Chattogram-11, the finance minister attributed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

EID JOURNEY

Road crashes kill 262 in 13 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 262 people were killed and 543 were injured in 251 road crashes in the 13 days centring the Eid-ul-Azha holiday, said Road Safety Foundation yesterday.

Of them, 32 were women and 44 children.

Of the casualties, 104 were killed in 129 bike-related crashes between June 11 and June 23, which is 39.69 percent of the total deaths, it said through a press release.

The rate of motorcycle accidents was 51.39 percent, a 13.31 percent rise compared to the same period last year.

During this time, there were seven waterway accidents, resulting in 12 deaths and 3 injuries. There were also 16 railway accidents in which 14 people were killed and eight injured. Regional statistics of the accidents indicate that 28.68 percent of the accidents occurred in Dhaka division. Of them, 18 took place in the capital, resulting in 14 deaths and 11 injuries.

The organisation has also identified 10 main causes behind these road accidents, which include faulty vehicles, reckless speeding, incompetence and physical-mental illness of drivers, plying of slow-moving vehicles on highways, and reckless bike riding by the youth.

It has also made several recommendations, like ensuring strict monitoring systems on roads, waterways, and railways before and after Eid, formulating sustainable transport strategies, and implementing the "Road Transport Act-2018" without any hindrance.

Road Safety Foundation prepared the data by compiling several media reports. Referring to the IRAP (International Road Assessment Programme) method, the organisation said the country incurred a Tk 998.55 crore loss of human resources due to road crashes.

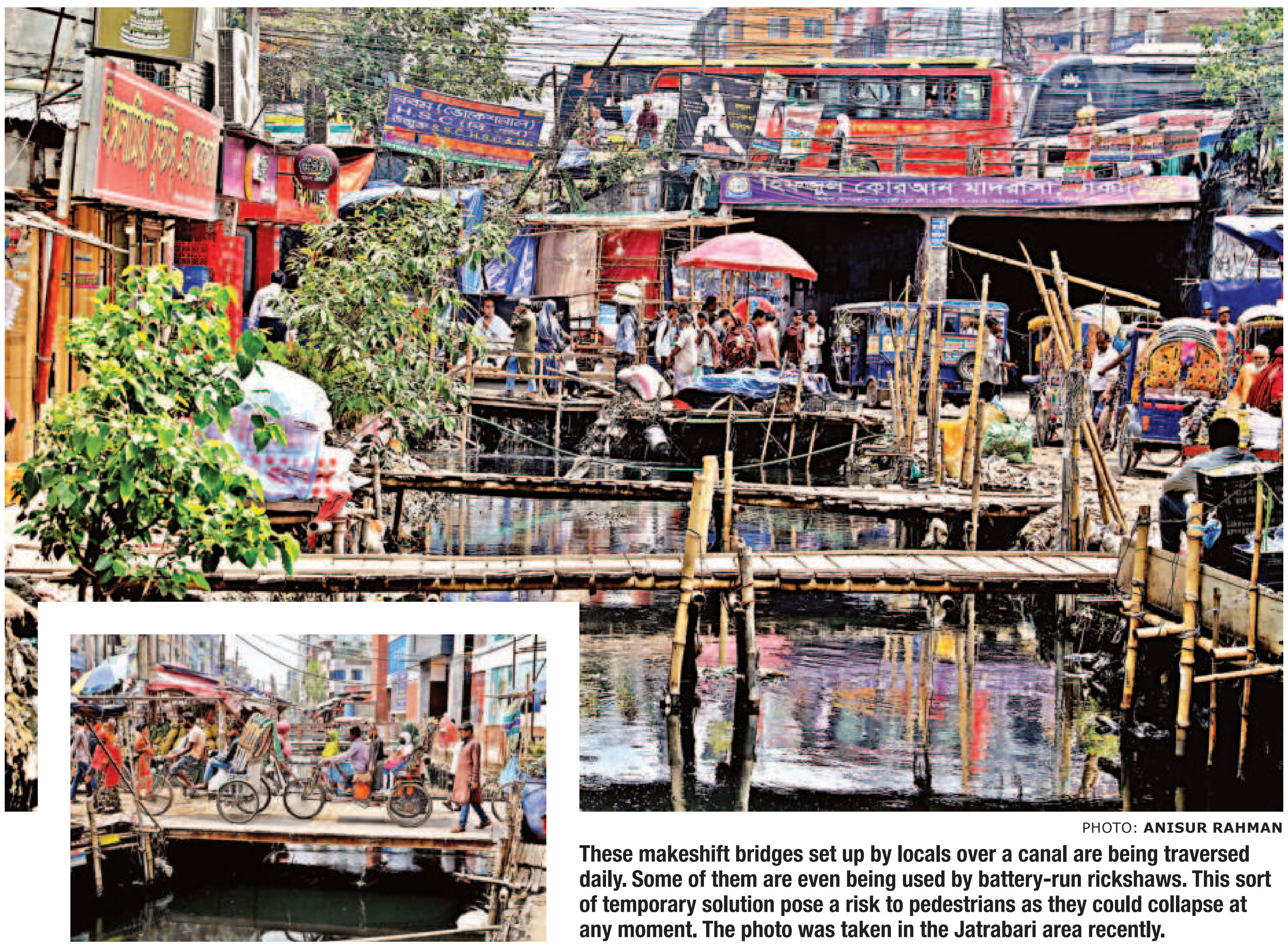


PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

These makeshift bridges set up by locals over a canal are being traversed daily. Some of them are even being used by battery-run rickshaws. This sort of temporary solution pose a risk to pedestrians as they could collapse at any moment. The photo was taken in the Jatrabari area recently.

'BPSA statement to encourage corrupt people'

Says Peshajibi Parishad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recent statement by the Bangladesh Police Service Association regarding the media and journalism would embolden corrupt individuals, said Bangladesh Sommilito Peshajibi Parishad in a statement yesterday.

The BSPP, a platform of pro-BNP professionals, described the police association's statement as a veiled threat to independent media and impartial journalism, aimed at shielding corrupt officials.

In the statement signed by its convener Dr AZM Zahid Hossain and member secretary Quader Gani Chowdhury, the BSPP said such threats are indicative of a police state.

The BSPP criticised the home ministry for

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

CMC, CRB see

FROM PAGE 5

bills as soon as possible, so we restored their connections at 3:00pm," the PDB official said.

Contacted, CMCH director Brig Gen Taslim Uddin, said as their annual budget did not cover it, they could not pay the bill on time. "We have written to the ministry for allocation to pay the outstanding bill."

CMC Principal Dr Shahena Aktar could not be contacted for comments.

The living

FROM PAGE 5

the allowance list."

Abdullah Al Mahmud Chowdhury, social service officer (additional duty) in Juri upazila, said all UPs are requested to periodically provide updated information about the beneficiaries.

"The social service office has no responsibility in this context. Those mistakenly excluded from the list as deceased will be reinstated," he said.

Lusikanta Hajong, UNO of Juri upazila, said, "The matter will be investigated and necessary action will be taken against those involved."

BPSA

FROM PAGE 3

requesting the information ministry to ensure media caution in reporting on police. This directive, they argued, wrongfully criminalises the media for exposing corruption.

Earlier on June 21, the BPSA issued a statement condemning what it termed a "smear campaign" orchestrated by certain media outlets against current and former members of the police force.

Help us resolve

FROM PAGE 3

Regarding Hasina's upcoming visit to China in next month, Jianchao said it will further strengthen the extraordinary friendship between the two countries.

"This visit will further cement our relationship," he was quoted as saying.

Earlier, Jianchao had a meeting with Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud at a city hotel.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, the minister said the premier is expected to visit Beijing between July 8 and July 11.

"We expect that the prime minister's upcoming visit to Beijing will significantly advance the development cooperation between Bangladesh and China," he told reporters.

"Liu's visit before our prime minister's visit to Beijing is significant... we are also looking forward to her visit," he said.

He said key issues such as trade and security will be prioritised during the PM's visit to China.

These large timbers are mainly imported from South Africa, Uganda, Malaysia, China and Myanmar. Each 50 feet by 25 feet block is valued at Tk 7-8 lakh. This wood is primarily used to make doors, various frames and furniture. The photo was taken in the Patenga area of Chattogram recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

BLOGGER NAZIMUDDIN MURDER

Court frames charges against 4 accused

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday framed charges against four members of the banned militant outfit Ansar al Islam in blogger Nazimuddin Samad murder case.

The four are Syed Ziaul Haque alias major (sacked) Zia, Akram Hossain, Sheikh Abdullah and Rashed-Un-Nabi Bhuiyan alias Tahsin.

Judge Md Majibur Rahman of the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal of Dhaka read out the charges to them, assistant public prosecutor Golam Sharuar Khan told The Daily Star.

Before that, the judge dismissed the petition submitted for discharging them from the charges.

The tribunal also discharged five accused -- Mozammel Hossain Saimon, Arafat Rahman Siam, Asadullah alias Foyjul, Sabbirul Haque Chowdhury and Junaid Ahmed alias Maulana Junaid -- from the case.

The judge set August 6 for starting trial of the case, said a staffer of the tribunal.

Among the accused, major (sacked) Zia, Akram, Asadullah, Sabbirul and Junaid have been absconding since filing of the case.

On April 6 of 2016, the 28-year-old law student of Jagannath University was hacked and shot to death by unidentified assailants in Old Dhaka's Sutrapur area.

Nazimuddin, who was critical of extremism on his Facebook posts, moved to Dhaka from Sylhet for higher studies.

The day after Nazimuddin's murder, Sub-inspector Nurul Islam filed a case with Sutrapur Police Station against some unknown assailants under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

On August 20, 2020, the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit of police submitted a charge sheet before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka, accusing nine members of Ansar al Islam.

'ARBITRARY JAILING'

Sherpur journo Rana acquitted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *M'singh*

A court yesterday acquitted journalist Shafiuzzaman Rana in a case, for which he was sentenced to seven months' imprisonment on March 5.

Rana, 45, Nakla correspondent for a Bangla daily, was sent to jail for allegedly misbehaving with a government official and an office staffer while trying to collect information from the UNO office in Nakla.

Following the allegation from Nakla UNO Sadia Ummul Banin, police arrested him. Later a mobile court sent him to jail.

Additional District Magistrate Jabun Nahar handed down the verdict, said Rana's lawyer Md Abdur Rahim Badal.

On March 5, Rana went to the UNO's office and entered the room of confidential assistant Shila Akter, looking for some documents. When Shila refused to deliver the documents without permission, Rana allegedly misbehaved with her, alleged the UNO.

Following Rana's arrest, Information Commissioner Shahidul Alam visited Sherpur to have a detailed inquiry on the matter.

Later, the commission recommended the public administration ministry for departmental action against the UNO.

Project to see light

FROM PAGE 3

decided to build the new bridge and decommission the British-era single-lane rail and road bridge there.

A feasibility study, financed by South Korea, was conducted in December 2015 that recommended building a two-lane road and single-line rail bridge.

A DPP for the new bridge with an estimated cost of Tk 1,163.27 crore was placed before an Ecnec meeting in August 2018, which decided that it would build a dedicated rail bridge with double lines.

In 2019, another feasibility study was launched but it was suspended as the authorities realised that the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority in November 2018 put the Karnaphuli river in a different category for which the bridge would need to give more clearance to vessels.

In the meantime, BR continued to go back and forth over the design.

Another Korea-funded study was launched in 2021 and it preliminarily recommended a double-decker bridge with a double-lane road on top and a dual-gauge double-line rail line on the bottom.

But the Prime Minister's Office in August 2022 directed that the bridge be single-decker with a double-line dual-gauge rail line and double-lane road, sources said.

The study estimated the cost would be Tk 13,824.19 crore (US $1=Tk 103). However, some changes were made in the cost estimation while BR submitted the DPP.

Following a meeting of the Project Evaluation Committee in April this year, the DPP was re-casted and the cost was put at Tk 11,561 crore, of which South Korea will give Tk 7,128 crore as loan, shows project documents.

"All the procedures are done and we hope the project will be approved by Ecnec soon," a BR official told The Daily Star yesterday.

Asked about the reasons behind the sharp rise in project cost, the official said when the DPP was prepared in 2018, the length of the proposed bridge was 3km, with 1km of the main bridge and 2km of embankments, with a vessel clearance of 7.62 metres.

Now the clearance has to be 12.2 metres and this has increased the total bridge length to 11.74km -- 1km of main bridge, 5km of viaducts on both sides and 5.74km of embankments on both sides, he added.

"This is a major reason behind the cost escalation," he said, wishing anonymity.

He also said the decision to have a bigger bridge with more capacity and the price of construction materials were the other reasons behind rise in project cost.

Govt preparing

FROM PAGE 3

the decrease in financial institution deposits to attractive investment opportunities in public and private sectors, rather than a lack of confidence or inflation.

NO LIQUIDITY CRISIS, BUT CHALLENGES PERSIST

Addressing AL MP Mahbubur Rahman from Chattogram-1, the finance minister said there is no liquidity crisis in any bank currently operating in Bangladesh.

However, he acknowledged that some banks face high non-performing loans, capital shortages, and liquidity problems.

To address these issues, Bangladesh Bank has assigned an observer to the board of directors of nine banks and a coordinator to seven banks, he said.

INFLATION PROJECTIONS

The minister expressed optimism that inflation will be controlled in the next financial year due to falling global prices of fuel, food products, and fertilisers, as well as initiatives to maintain food supply.

"The annual average inflation is estimated to be 6.5 percent at the end of the fiscal year 2024-25," he added.

Drive on

FROM PAGE 3

exchanged photos of MP Azim's "murder" scene.

Between May 17 and May 19, Babu communicated with Amanullah on WhatsApp in phases and exchanged messages.

They talked about the lawmaker's murder and payment for the killing, said investigators.

Mintu, currently in jail after a three-day remand, has not confessed any involvement in the killing, according to sources.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday rejected the request for a five-day remand for questioning Babu. Instead, the court ordered Babu to be transferred to Jhenaidah District Jail within 10 working days.

The investigation officer plans to conduct a search, supervised by a first-class magistrate, to locate the mobile phones Babu used to communicate with Amanullah via WhatsApp after the lawmaker's killing in Kolkata, as ordered by Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Akhtaruzzaman.

Earlier on June 9, Babu was placed on a seven-day remand. Later on June 14, Babu admitted his involvement with the killing and gave a confessional statement.

Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (DB) of the DMP, said they have received information about the destruction of evidence in Jhenaidah.

"Since there is digital evidence in Babu's phone, we will interrogate him further and try to recover where he dropped the phones," he added.

Besides Babu and Mintu, detectives also arrested three other accused for their alleged involvement with the killing. They are Amanullah, his nephew Tanvir Bhuiyan, and Celesty Rahman.

Lawmaker Azim went to Kolkata on May 12. Nine days later, India and Bangladesh police said he was murdered at a Kolkata flat.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 25

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-17
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-57	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Illegal housing mushrooms

FROM PAGE 5

facing issues with obtaining KDA approval for construction on their plots.

"I bought an 8-decimal plot in 2016, being unaware that it lacked approval. Now, I can't get my plan approved by KDA despite repeated attempts," said Abida Sultana, a retired school teacher from Dumuria.

The DoE has remained silent on these projects, which violate the Environment Conservation Act, 1995.

"Most of these projects have occupied khas lands, water bodies, cultivable lands, and tidal floodplains over the last two decades, which is illegal," said Gouranga Nandy, chairman of the Center for Environment and Participatory Research.

Prof Abdullah Harun Chowdhury of Khulna University said, "Unplanned housing in tidal floodplains damages natural systems and ecology, disrupting natural drainage."

Tanvir Ahmed, a KDA planning officer, emphasised that housing projects need registration and KDA approval per the Real Estate Development and Management Act, 2010.

"Each project should have at least 10 acres, with specified road widths and civic facilities," he said.

KDA has identified 126 projects failing to meet these requirements.

"Only 18 applied for registration. We demolished structures of 15 projects and issued notices. Further actions will follow," Ahmed added.

We want

FROM PAGE 3

creative education system in a bid to keep pace with the changing world.

She said the government wants to go for a system where there'll be learning amid a joyful atmosphere.

A total of Tk 2,208 crore will be disbursed among more than 6,470,000 (64.70 lakh) students from the secondary, higher secondary and graduation and equivalent institutions.

The stipends and tuition fees are being disbursed through online mobile financial service to the students under the G2P (government to person) system in the current fiscal year.

বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
BANGLADESH DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC.
(A State Owned Commercial Bank)

IT SECURITY UNIT

Reference: 11.2/203/236
Dated: 23/06/2024

e-Tender Notice

An e-Tender has been invited in the national e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for procurement of the following Goods.

S/N	e-Tender ID	Description	Last Date & Time for Submission through Web	Date & Time for Tender Opening
01	996236	Supply, installation, testing, commissioning and maintenance of the Hardware Security Module (HSM) for Bangladesh Development Bank PLC.	14/07/2024 3:00 P.M.	14/07/2024 3:00 P.M.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any branch of Bangladesh Development Bank PLC or any registered Banks' branches up to **11:00 A.M on 14/07/2024.**

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov..bd) (01762625528-31). (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

-Sd-
(Engr. Mohammad Moniruzzaman Monir)
Assistant General Manager
Tel : 02-223389908

GD-1029

ইনভেস্টমেন্ট কর্পোরেশন অব বাংলাদেশ
প্রধান কার্যালয়: বিডিবিএল ভবন (লেভেল ১৪-২১)
৮ রাজউক এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১০০০

আইসিবি'র বিভিন্ন ঋণ ও অগ্রিমের সুদহার পুনঃনির্ধারণ প্রসঙ্গে

সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ১০ জুন, ২০২৪ তারিখে অনুষ্ঠিত আইসিবি'র পরিচালনা বোর্ড এর ৬৪৪তম সভায় কর্পোরেশনের বিভিন্ন ঋণ ও অগ্রিমের সুদহার বৃদ্ধি করা হয়েছে। বর্ধিত সুদহার ০১ জুলাই, ২০২৪ তারিখ হতে কার্যকর হবে এ সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য আইসিবি'র সম্মানিত সকল ঋণ ও অগ্রিম গ্রহীতাকে কর্পোরেশনের সংশ্লিষ্ট কার্যালয়ের সাথে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য পরামর্শ দেয়া হলো।

কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমোদনক্রমে
বাবুল চন্দ্র দেবনাথ
উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক
ফাইন্যান্স ডিভিশন
ফোন: +৮৮০২২২৩৩৫৬৭০৫
E-mail: dgm_finance@icb.gov.bd

Janata Bank PLC.
Divisional Office, Sylhet
2nd Floor, Dewan Complex, Ambarkhana, Sylhet-3100
Tel: 02-996633940, 996632365
E-mail: sylhet@janatabank-bd.com Web: www.jb.com.bd

Invitation for Tender

Sealed tenders are invited under the provisions of the Public Procurement Rules-2008 for the Goods and related Services and under the terms and conditions outlined below and detailed in the Tender Document:

1. Tender Ref. : JBPLC/DO/SYLHET/IT243/OTM-01/2024
2. Tender name : Tender for Procurement of Computer Hardware & Printer & Scanner & Electrical Equipment & Network Equipment (Supply, Installation and Commissioning) for different office/branch under control of Janata Bank Limited, Divisional Office, Sylhet following open tendering method.
3. Brief description of Goods/services: The items shall be internationally renowned while the UPS must be at least BSTI/ISO certified. No clone/Assembled items will be accepted:

Lot	Sl	Item	Quantity
Lot-1	i	Desktop Computer (PC)	74 units
Lot-2	ii	Laser Printer	40 units
Lot-3	iii	Scanner	35 units
	iv	Line Interactive UPS-650VA	168 units
Lot-4	v	Network Router	05 units
	vi	Network Switch	05 units

4.	Time for completion of delivery	:	8 (eight) weeks for all Lot from the date of Contract Sign.
5.	Eligibility of tenderers	:	5.1 The tenderer shall be the developer/manufacturer/authorized dealer/distributor/reseller/ bonafide supplier having minimum 4 (Four) years of overall business and specific experience of supplying, installing, commissioning, operating of similar goods and providing support service to different organization/banks in Bangladesh in multi-user environment. 5.2 Must have strong presence and support offices in Dhaka/ Sylhet with well-equipped service cell manned by adequately qualified technical personnel for maintenance and support for the proposed Goods and Services. Floating or home address shall not be considered as established offices. 5.3 The participating company may offer proposals for the items in any or all lots and must quote all the items in that/those lot(s). Evaluation will be done Lot by Lot basis and contract will also be awarded Lot by Lot basis. Partial offer for any lot will not be accepted. 5.4 The offers should have validity for at least 120 (one hundred & twenty) days from the date of opening the tender.
6.	Name and address of the office(s) selling tender document	:	Janata Bank PLC, Divisional Office, Sylhet, 2nd Floor, Dewan Complex, Airport Road, Ambarkhana, Sylhet-3100. Interested tenderers may view the Notice at the website of the Bank. (Website: www.jb.com.bd)
7.	Price of tender document	:	Tk. 2000/= (two thousand) only (non-refundable) in the form of Pay Order favoring "Janata Bank PLC." from any scheduled Bank in Bangladesh for a single lot. Interested tenderers have to purchase different tender documents for different lots.
8.	Amount of tender security	:	A tender security money favoring Janata Bank Limited shall be required for: Lot-1: BDT 1,20,000/- (one lac twenty thousand) only. Lot-2: BDT 35,000/- (thirty-five thousand) only. Lot-3: BDT 35,000- (thirty-five thousand) only. Lot-4: BDT 30,000/- (thirty thousand) only. The Tender Security must be valid till: 22/10/2024
9	Last date and time for selling tender document	:	08-07-2024 within 3.00pm.
10	Last date and time for submission of tenders	:	09-07-2024 within 3.00pm.
11	Name and address of the office(s) receiving and opening tenders	:	Deputy General Manager, Janata Bank PLC., Divisional Office, Sylhet, 2nd Floor, Dewan Complex, Airport Road, Ambarkhana, Sylhet-3100.
12	Date and time for opening of tenders	:	09-07-2024 at 3.30pm. Tenderer's authorized representative(s) are allowed to attend, if any.
13	Special instructions	:	a. The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the Tender proceedings without showing any reason. b. The procuring entity shall not be under any obligation to accept the lowest quotation. c. If any **"force majeure"** situation arises in the specified date mentioned in the tender data sheet or/and invitation for tender, the event will take on the next working date.

Md. Monir Hossain
Deputy General Manager
Janata Bank PLC.
Divisional Office, Sylhet

GD-1027

Illegal housing mushrooms

153 projects running without KDA, DoE approval

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

As many as 153 housing projects have sprung up illegally in Khulna and its adjoining areas without approval from the city's development authority and the Department of Environment.

These developments are primarily in Dumuria, Batiaghata, Rupsha, and Phultala, where government khas lands, waterbodies, arable lands, and tidal floodplains are being encroached upon, aided by the inaction of the authorities.

Agricultural lands are being filled with sand for these projects, notably in Koiya Bazar, Jolma, Zero Point, Labonchhara, and Horintana. Experts warn these areas are crucial tidal floodplains.

In 2007, Khulna City Corporation proposed extending its boundary by 40.10 sq km from the existing 45.65 sq km. Since then, unplanned constructions have proliferated in these areas. Mentionable, the areas are under the jurisdiction of Khulna Development Authority.

"If unplanned housing continues, the city corporation will struggle with waste management, street lighting, roads development, and other services. Residents will suffer, and the areas will turn into concrete slums," said Abirul Jabbar, KCC's chief planning officer.

Several housing companies are defying the Land Development Rules, 2004 (amended in 2012 and 2015). The KDA's master plan spans 824 sq km, covering areas from Jashore's Noapara municipality in the north to Bagerhat's Fakirhat upazila in the south.

Any development within this area requires KDA approval.

Biswas Properties, Khulna's largest housing project, lacks KDA approval. The project, which has sold 4,000 plots, features narrow roads and no playgrounds or school compounds, despite these being advertised.

"We have applied for project registration with KDA," said Asgar Biswas Tara, owner of Biswas Properties. "It is impossible for any housing project to fully comply with KDA's rules given Khulna's context," he said.

Other projects, including Ujan Nibash, Bismillah, Tanisha Residential Projects, Arafat Housing, Shikder Residential Projects, and Golden City, also lack KDA approval. Yet, they continue to sell plots.

More than 30,000 plot owners are

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

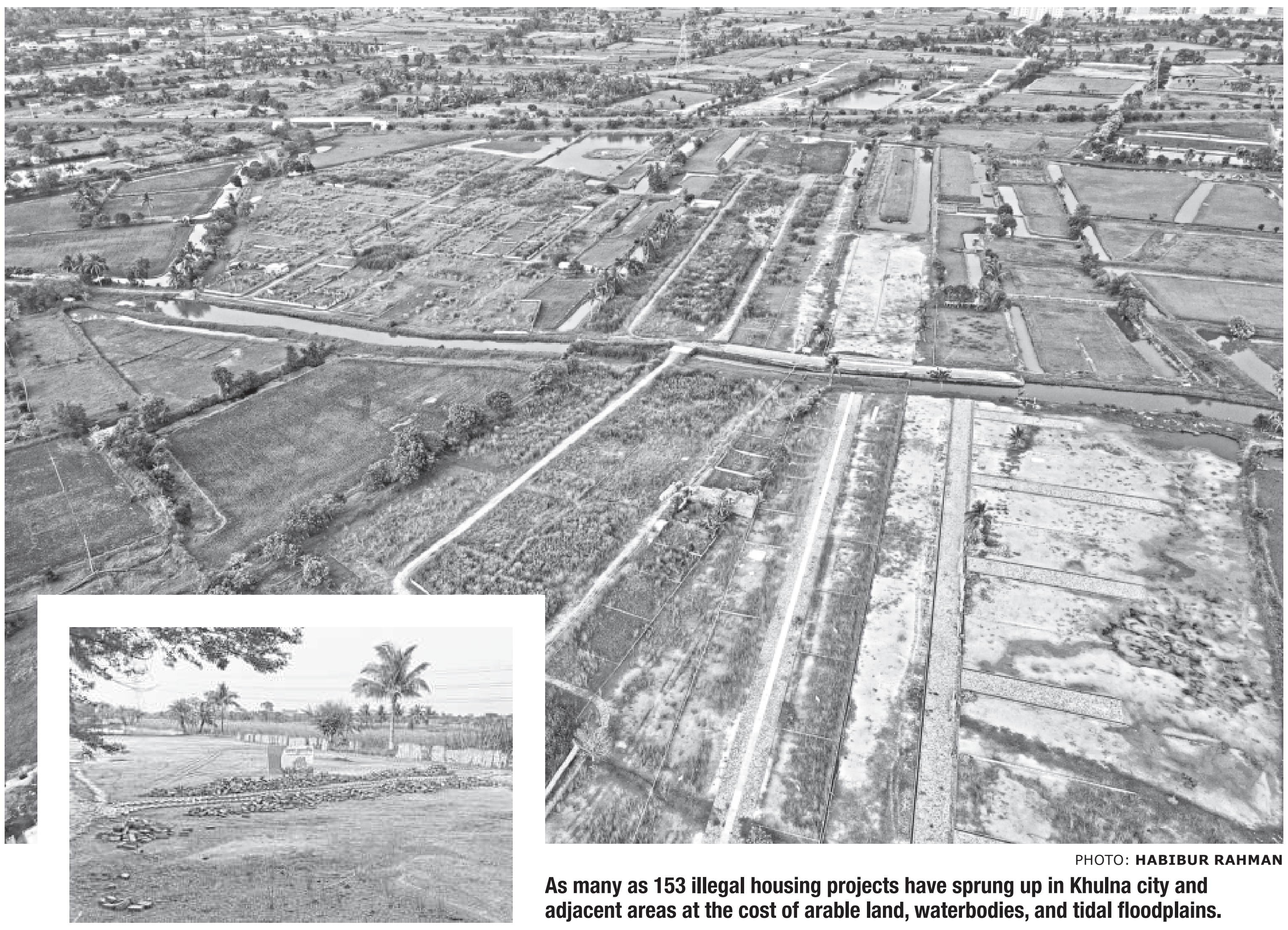


PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

As many as 153 illegal housing projects have sprung up in Khulna city and adjacent areas at the cost of arable land, waterbodies, and tidal floodplains.

The living 'dead'

Mystery death certificates strip four disabled citizens of allowances

MINTU DESHWARA, *Moulvibazar*

Md Enamul Haque, a living and breathing individual, has recently discovered a shocking truth.

According to the local social service office, he's been dead for nearly three years!

Enamul, a physically challenged individual of Goalbari union under Moulvibazar's Juri upazila, has been receiving disability allowance since 2018.

But the payment suddenly stopped towards the end of 2023. So he recently visited the social service office with his allowance card in hand to learn the reason.

"You have been dead for three years," an official told Enamul. The official records showed Enamul breathed his last in April 2021.

The cause of this celestial confusion? A death certificate, signed by the Goalbari Union Parishad Chairman Md Abdul Qayyum and Member Zainal Abedin, declaring Enamul deceased.

Meanwhile, he has not received his monthly allowances since 2023. "I am a person with disability. I need the money to survive," he told this correspondent recently.

Enamul Haque

Enamul is not the only soul in the union experiencing "afterlife" while being very much alive.

Shaira Begum, Sharijun Nesha and Anjali Rani Deb of the union have also been removed from the disability allowance list thanks to a mysterious update in October last year. The three were shown dead in July 2021.

The four now find themselves in the strange predicament of having to prove they are still alive to a system that is already convinced of their demise.

Unless new paperwork declares their resurrection, these four individuals of Goalbari union won't receive their rightful allowances.

Contacted, UP Chairman Abdul Qayyum said, "We were asked to issue death certificates for the mentioned individuals by the upazila social service office, so we did. Later, I found out that these people are alive, and new certificates have been requested to include them in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Digitalisation push to cost CWasa Tk 200cr

Installed a few years ago, 90,000 meters worth Tk 27cr to be replaced; experts, residents skeptical

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*

The Chattogram Water Supply and Sewerage authority purchased and installed 90,000 water meters at a cost of around Tk 27 crore between 2018 and 2022 to collect bills from consumers properly.

However, CWasa recently sent a development project proposal to buy 90,000 digital meters at an estimated cost of Tk 200 crore to replace the existing meters, aiming for digitalisation and upgrading of the existing billing process.

This DPP is now with the Planning Division to be sent to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council for approval.

"If government approves the project, we will purchase these digital meters," said Maksudul Alam, chief engineer of CWasa.

The state agency earlier bought the existing meters in two phases -- 50,000 in 2018-19 at a cost of Tk 10.39 crore and 40,000 more between 2020-22 at a cost of around Tk 16.50 crore, according to documents.

As such, the agency's expenditure of around Tk 27 crore to purchase and install these meters will become nothing but a waste of public money, said experts and consumers.

Muhammad Rashidul Hasan, head of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, questioned why CWasa had installed these meters earlier without doing the necessary study.

If CWasa installs digital meters without using service life of the existing mechanical meters, it will be a sheer waste of public money, he said.

Rokeya Begum, a resident of Mokbul Ahmed Society in the port city's Patenga area, alleged that CWasa has been continuously collecting money from us, citing improvements in service including pipeline renovation, and meter change, all while not supplying water properly.

"First supply us water regularly, then think about installing digital meters," she added.

Asked why CWasa bought analogue meters instead of digital ones earlier, Maksudul Alam claimed that digital meters were not popular in the country at that time.

> **CWasa has been continuously collecting money from us, citing improvements in service including pipeline renovation, and meter change, all while not supplying water properly.**
> **First supply us water regularly, then think about installing digital meters.**
>
> **ROKEYA BEGUM,** a resident of Patenga

SM Nazer Hossain, vice president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh, termed the CWasa's initiative a waste of money in the name of digitalisation.

"The consumer has to bear the cost of installing digital meters. The state agency's officials took commission from meter supplying companies," he alleged.

The government should take action against those responsible for such unplanned activities, he added.

CMC, CRB see 5hr power cut over outstanding bills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

The authorities of Power Development Board, Chattogram yesterday morning snapped the power connection of Chittagong Medical College and Central Railway Building, the headquarters of Eastern Railway, over outstanding bills.

The power supply to these two institutions remained disconnected for around five hours from 10:00am before it was resumed around 3:00pm.

According to CMC sources, PDB staffers snapped its power connection around 10:00am, adding that the power supply to the hospital, however, was not disconnected.

According to PDB officials, Eastern Railway and CMC have outstanding bills of Tk 1.58 crore and Tk 1.29 crore respectively.

There are two connections on CMC campus, one for the college and the other for the hospital. We disconnected the power connection of CMC's academic building as they did not pay bills for six months despite repeated notices, said Humayun Kabir, chief engineer of PDB, Chattogram.

"However, we did not disconnect the hospital's power supply for the sake of patients," he also said.

"The authorities of Eastern Railway and CMC in separate letters assured us to pay their outstanding

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

A student studying amid power cut at Chittagong Medical College.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

REMAL'S AFTERMATH

400km rural roads damaged in Bagerhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bagerhat*

The Cyclone Remal in its trail of destruction left 400 kilometres of rural roads significantly damaged in Bagerhat.

At least 120 other structures, including bridges and culverts, also sustained damages.

The damage is estimated to be worth around Tk 150 crore, according to Local Government Engineering Department in Bagerhat.

While urgent repairs are needed to the damaged roads, bridges and culverts, there has not been any steps taken to this end, leaving the residents amid immense sufferings.

Visiting different areas in Morrelgonj, Sharankhola, Mongla, Rampal and Sadar upazilas, this correspondent observed that the tidal surge under influence of the cyclone had washed away bitumen from paved roads and bricks and soil from unpaved ones, rendering those unusable for vehicular movement as well as for pedestrians at many places.

The damaged bridges and culverts further added to the woes. At many places, locals resorted to constructing makeshift bamboo bridges for movement.

The main road in Ghoshiakhali area of Baharbunia union in Morrelganj upazila has been found broken in several places, with bricks and soiling washed away into nearby waterbodies.

"It has already been a month since the disaster and no step has been taken to repair the damaged road," said Sattar Sheikh of Ghoshiakhali area.

Ruhul Amin from Khaulia village echoed him.

Contacted, Md Sharifuzzaman, executive engineer of LGED in Bagerhat, said they have assessed the extent of damage to the roads and other infrastructures sustained in the cyclone.

Morrelganj upazila has been the most affected, he said.

"We have started repairing some rural unpaved roads temporarily with soil. Major repairs to the damaged roads and other infrastructures will begin once new budget allocation comes in this regard," he added.

Bangladesh 50

Cumilla City Corporation
Cumilla
cocc.portal.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo no.46.17.19.50.024.00.36.2022.1895 Date: 24/06/2024

Tender Notice No. 14/2023-2024

e-Tender is invited in the National e-gp system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the

Sl. No	Tender ID Number	Method of Tender	Tender Documents Last Selling Date	Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	999817 999818 999819 999820 999821	OTM	24-Jul-2024 17:00	25-July-2024 12:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited on line through any registered banks branches up to 17.00 PM on 24.07.2024.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and also from E-mail : se@cocc.gov.bd Or Call to +88028165714

Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

24.6.24
G. P. Chowdhury
Chief Engineer
Cumilla City Corporation

GD- 1028

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

'THE WAR IS NOT OVER YET'

Mashruk Ahmed tells of 1971's unsung heroines

FAHIN RAHMAN AUNGKITA

"If only they knew how we fought, with our life and with our youth, with weapons and in life later on... I will fight more wars. I will keep fighting till death."

Halima Parvin, Jessore

> **Everyone who will see, listen, and read about these stories will be overcome with several questions in silence. This experience will prove to be thought-provoking for all, while also helping to give a voice to the unheard.**
>
> **MOFIDUL HUQ,** Bangladesh Liberation War Museum trustee

Entering the photo exhibition's gallery, white curtains gently swayed, displaying cyanotype prints of the portraits of *Birangonas* (Bangladeshi female freedom fighters), much like how their valiant stories have been hidden behind the curtains for far too long.

The aforesaid arrangement is regarding Mashruk Ahmed's exhibition, ***The War Is Not Over Yet***, which was inaugurated on June 21 at La Galerie, Alliance Française de Dhaka (AFD). It not only attempts to bring the war heroines' stories to the forefront but also enables an exploration of the places where each of their stories culminated. The exhibition, the photographer's first major work, tells the tale of 30 female freedom fighters of Bangladesh's Liberation War of 1971.

In monochrome photos, there is an intrinsic sadness juxtaposed with utmost dignity on each face of the women who lost everything during the Liberation War. Jubilant in portraits, prominently hued in blue, these photos of 30 brave women are accompanied by their oral testimonies, video footage, and written statements. A space at the heart of the gallery also features handwritten notes, letters, and photographs collected from the freedom fighters. Through their aching voices, one can hear the fearless accounts of many who are with us no more today.

যুদ্ধ
এখনো
শেষ
Mashruk Ahmed
Curator
ASM Rezaur Rahman

Mashruk Ahmed during his speech at the exhibition.

একজন বাঙালী এসে
দরজা খুলে দিয়ে
চিৎকার করে বলেছিল,
পালাও তোমরা!"
ঐ সময় গভীর রাত।
আমার গায়ে কোনো
কাপড় ছিল না।

PHOTOS: **RATUL CHOWDHURY**

Mashruk Ahmed, the Bangladesh-based documentary photographer, completed this project in seven years for which he reached out to the female freedom fighters in person and visited each of the sites that the war heroines described in their stories. His objective was to take photographs of those places where it all happened in an attempt to reconstruct the memories for the audience. In the photo exhibition, colourful photos of those sites paint the walls beside the accounts of the incidents that took place at the locations Mashruk visited. He said, "After taking the photos, I realised each of these is a large story in itself. I, therefore, tried to make sure every individual's story is presented in the way they wished."

The inauguration ceremony of the exhibition was graced by numerous distinguished guests including Mofidul Hoque, writer, researcher, and trustee of Bangladesh Liberation War Musem; Navine Murshid, writer and associate professor of the Department of Political Science at Colgate University; Saiful Huq Omi, photographer and founder of Counter Foto; Durjoy Rahman, art collector and founder of Durjoy Bangladesh Foundation (DBF); and curator ASM Rezaur Rahman. Also present throughout the event was Francois Grosjean, director of Alliance Française de Dhaka.

Saiful Huq Omi of Counter Foto, stated with pride, "Mashruk's courageous work is an example of how stories of past events can be told, especially those that people do not like to discuss." Durjoy Rahman also spoke on the need to inspire platform providers to enable artistes to inspire a wider audience through their art.

The voice of history has characteristically been told by men, about men, and rarely have women been brought up in mainstream discussions with due recognition. The title of *Birangona* or war heroines is one that was stigmatised and taken advantage of as well. Their war continues to this day; it is not over yet.

Navine Murshid, the only female guest on the panel, hence stressed the masculine narrative throughout the course of history. In a discomforting yet necessary conversation between rape victims and the patriarchy, a male curator has presented a male photographer's research on many women. She thereafter asked, "Would it have been a slightly different story if these were said to a female artiste? Most of these stories are told in a certain way to a certain person. What Mashruk has done is put forward everything for the rest of the world to participate in and be a part of the interpretations that emerge from here.

Mofidul Huq, Bangladesh Liberation War Museum trustee, described the exhibition as a silent experience for every spectator. He said, "Everyone who will see, listen, and read about these stories will be overcome with several questions in silence. This experience will prove to be thought-provoking for all, while also helping to give a voice to the unheard."

The exhibition was attended by a diverse crowd of all ages, including nationals, foreigners, and well-known personalities such as photojournalist Shahidul Alam. However, the center of all attraction were the stories themselves — the stories of women who endured inhumane torture and, as victims, were inspired to continue to liberate this country.

The research and dissemination are because of these women: Aklima Begum, who took her favourite dog Bhulu with her to listen to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman speak on March 7; Halima Parvin, who fled her home at 17 to take up arms; Maimuna Khatun, whose husband left while the Pakistani army raped her; Shamsun Nahar, who lived in the woods, helped freedom fighters with food, and punched a soldier in the face when attacked; Kakon Bibi, who spied as a beggar to gather intel and misled the military to save the Muktibahini; Kanchanmala, who returned to her house after independence to only be tortured and humiliated by her husband; Razia Khatun, accused of giving birth to a Pakistani child; Ferdousi Priyabhashini, the first woman to publicly take on the mantle of a *Birangona*; and many others whose stories remain unsung.

The exhibition, currently underway at La Galerie, Alliance Française de Dhaka (AFD), is supported by Durjoy Bangladesh Foundation, Counter Foto, and Alliance Française Dhaka. It will run until June 26 from 3pm to 9pm every day, except Sundays.

NEWS

BPSA statement a moral support

FROM PAGE 12

misleading reports for the sake of "public safety and public order".

It also requested the media to be "more cautious and follow the principles of journalism properly" while publishing any report about the police force.

The NOAB yesterday said the media publish reports regarding the achievements and positive works of the police force.

The media with due professionalism also run investigative reports on the accumulation of illegal wealth through abuse of power by government officials, it added.

"In case of any errors in reporting on these issues, the responsibility lies with the respective media outlet. In this regard, the institution or the individual concerned, if necessary, may take the issue to the Press Council following the relevant rules and regulations," said the statement.

Instead of doing so, the BPSA resorted to "blame game" by protesting the reports and threatening the media in the name of asking it "to be extra cautious" while reporting on the police force, said NOAB.

The association expressed optimism that the police force will continue its support for the media's efforts to implement the government's anti-corruption policies.

'WITHDRAW STATEMENT'

Crime Reporters' Association of Bangladesh (CRAB) in a statement yesterday demanded withdrawal of the BPSA statement, saying it is detrimental to independent journalism.

Expressing grave concern, the CRAB said such a statement may encourage corrupt officials.

The journalists' platform said investigating corruption and irregularities and exposing the abuse of power is part of responsible journalism.

"Recently, some reports were published on the amassing of unusual assets by some former and current officials. We don't think those reports were run with any specific intent," said the statement.

The CRAB said the language of the BPSA statement is against independent journalism.

The organisation sought cooperation from all quarters to implement the government's "zero tolerance" policy against corruption.

Earlier, the Editors' Council, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), Dhaka Reporters' Unity and Broadcast Journalists' Centre issued separate statements protesting the BPSA statement.

56 state entities owe Tk 51,391cr to banks

FROM PAGE 12

In reply to a query from ruling Awami League MP Ali Azam from Bhola-2, Ali said the per capita income of Bangladesh in fiscal 2023-24 is $2,784 as per the temporary account of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Replying to another query of Jatiya Party MP ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader from Patuakhali-1, Ali said the gross foreign reserves stood at $24.2 billion as of May and $18.63 billion as per the BPM6 methodology of the International Monetary Fund.

The country can meet the import bills of four-and-a-half months with the gross foreign currency reserves, he added.

About the volatile situation in the foreign exchange market, he said if a country has an import cover of three months, it is not considered a crisis.

"Bangladesh's current reserve amount is about $24.40 billion, which is enough to pay about five months of import liabilities. This means the foreign exchange market is stable," Ali said.

In his question, AL MP Afzal Hossain from Kishorganj-5 asked whether it is true that two-thirds of the businessmen think that corruption, bureaucracy and the volatile situation in the foreign exchange market are the biggest obstacles to doing business in Bangladesh.

The ruling party MP also wanted to know whether the government had taken any effective initiative to stop corruption in business.

In response to a query from Laxmipur-2 MP Nur Uddin Chowdhury Nayan, Ali said a total of $10.57 billion came as remittance between January and May, with the highest amount coming from the UAE.

Rampaging Rohit leads India into semis

FROM PAGE 12

throw Group 1 wide open.

Josh Hazlewood drew first blood as he bounced out Virat Kohli for a duck after Australia elected to field.

Rohit has not been in the best of form but the India captain threw Starc out of the attack by hitting the fast bowler for four sixes in a 29-run over.

Pat Cummins, who claimed back-to-back hat-tricks in his last two games, was pressed into service to end the batting carnage.

Rohit greeted him by depositing the seamer's first ball on the roof of the stadium for a monster six en route to a 19-ball fifty, his first of the tournament.

India raced to the 100-mark in the ninth over but Starc returned to deny Rohit what could have been the first hundred by a batter in this tournament.

Suryakumar Yadav (31) and Shivam Dube (28) produced breezy cameos and Hardik Pandya made 27 not out to propel India to their first 200-plus total of the tournament.

Arshdeep Singh rattled Australia by removing David Warner in the first over in what could be the opener's last game in an Australia shirt.

Mitchell Marsh (37) joined Head and they counter-attacked to put Australia's chase back on track.

Axar Patel leapt to take a stunning one-handed catch at deep square leg to dismiss Marsh but Head raced to a 24-ball fifty.

Kuldeep Yadav castled the dangerous Glenn Maxwell (20) and Jasprit Bumrah effectively sealed India's victory when he dismissed Head with a clever change of pace.

Once a victim himself, Noyon now fights

FROM PAGE 12

According to the State Department report, Noyon is a welcoming first face to trafficking survivors and migrants as they return to Bangladesh.

In his capacity as manager of BRAC Migration Welfare Center onsite at Dhaka airport, Noyon has supported more than 34,000 Bangladeshi trafficking survivors and migrants over the last 15 years.

"As a fellow trafficking survivor, he is uniquely qualified and motivated to help them rebuild their lives."

Born to a family of modest means, his dream of a better life turned into a nightmare when he fell victim to trafficking in Malaysia in 2007.

"But, as he now shared, that is not how his story ends. His motivation to support fellow survivors has long motivated him to serve as a member of ANIRBAN, a trafficking support platform made up of survivors who raise awareness about human trafficking and advocate for survivors and their rights," says the report.

Noyon believes education is one of the best ways to insulate Bangladesh's next generation from the perils of human trafficking.

In a reaction to the recognition, Noyon said he understands the pain of those who fall victim to trafficking.

"Upon return, I started working for the migrants and trafficking survivors. I try to stand beside such victims at home and abroad as a manager of BRAC Migration Welfare Centre.

"I also got in trouble while working to support them. I was imprisoned for working for the trafficking victims."

Others who received the award include lawyer Sonia Marcela Cecilia Martinez Sempertegui of Bolivia; Brig Mustafa Ridha Mustafa Al Yasiri of Iraq; Edith Wairimu Murogo of Kenya; Oumou Elkhairou Niare of Mali; Samson JR Inocencio of the Philippines; Majijana Savic of Serbia; Rosa Maria Cendon Leris of Spain and Letitia Agnes Pinas of Suriname.

ADC suspended for 'disciplinary rules violation'

FROM PAGE 12

Jisanul the information over his official WhatsApp number.

The PHQ made the move after GMP Deputy Commissioner (south) Mohammad Nazir Ahmed Khan submitted a probe report, read the letter.

The GMP initiated the probe after a journalist made a social media post regarding Asaduzzaman. In the post, the journalist posted a Telegram channel link where NTMC-verified information of Asaduzzaman was available.

It was found that the information was downloaded using the ID of the assistant sub-inspector, read the PHQ letter signed by Mohammad Anowar Hossain, additional DIG of the PHQ.

Former DMP commissioner Asaduzzaman recently hogged headlines for alleged corruption.

The action against Jisanul was taken days after the Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA) in a letter on Friday urged journalists to be "more cautious and follow the principles of journalism properly" while publishing any report about the police force.

The association described recent media reports, mainly on graft allegations against some former and current officials, as a "smear campaign". It claimed that the reports being run by print, electronic, and social media outlets were "partial, motivated, exaggerated, and misleading".

Form special commission to stop rampant corruption

FROM PAGE 12

of a tribunal to try loan defaulters and embezzlers.

He said the US Financial Intelligence Institution has shown that $7 billion is being smuggled out of Bangladesh every year and being invested in "Begum Para" in Canada, second homes in Malaysia, modern shopping malls in Singapore and Dubai, and real estate and hundi businesses.

There is no initiative to bring back the laundered money, but the expatriates are being taxed on the income they send home, he added.

"One of the means of earning illegal wealth is taking a loan from the bank and not returning it."

Menon opposed the provision of whitening black money in the proposed budget, saying, "All the arguments being given in its favour are not only baseless but also contrary to the previous position of the government in this regard.

"I hope the finance minister will withdraw this proposal and rid the parliament of this burden."

Referring to the murder of ruling AL MP Anwarul Azim, he said the image of the parliament and its members are in question because of the media publishing stories about gold and drug smuggling, and the criminal underworld in the southwestern part of the country.

"This matter needs to be further looked into. Self-criticism is needed."

He said rising commodity prices, corruption, money laundering, embezzling, anarchy in the banking sector and defaulted loans have left the country's economy in a fragile state.

"It's necessary to restore the economy, to bring back relief to the public and state life. But no effective measures are seen in the budget for that purpose."

Russia warns US after Ukraine strikes Crimea

Summons US envoy

REUTERS, *MOSCOW*

The Kremlin yesterday directly blamed the United States for an attack on Crimea with US-supplied ATACMS missiles that killed at least four people and injured 151, and Moscow formally warned the US ambassador that retaliation would follow.

The war in Ukraine has triggered the biggest confrontation between Russia and the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, and Russian officials have said that the conflict is entering the most dangerous escalatory phase to date.

But directly blaming the United States for a deadly attack on Crimea - which Russia annexed in 2014 and now considers to be Russian territory although most of the world considers it to be part of Ukraine - is a step further.

"You should ask my colleagues in Europe, and above all in Washington, the press secretaries, why their governments are killing Russian children. Just ask them this question," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters of the attack.

At least two children were killed in the attack on Sevastopol on Sunday, according to Russian officials. People were shown running from a beach near Sevastopol and some of the injured being carried off on sun loungers.

Russia said that the United States had supplied the weapons, while US military specialists had aimed the weapons and provided data for them.

Meanwhile, a Russian missile attack on Ukraine's eastern town of Pokrovsk killed at least four people and injured 34 more, the regional governor said yesterday. Two children were among the injured, Vadym Filashkin said on Telegram.

Israel's offensive shatters Palestinian pupils' dream

85pc of educational facilities are out of service in Gaza

AFP, *Khan Yunis*

Children look on from a damaged building at al-Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip yesterday.
PHOTO: AFP

Teenagers across the Gaza Strip should have been taking their final exams this month, a last hurdle before university and lifelong dreams, but the Israeli offensive in the Palestinian territory has crushed those hopes.

According to the education ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip, 85 percent of educational facilities in the territory are out of service because of the offensive.

"I was eagerly awaiting the exams, but the offensive prevented that and destroyed that joy", said Baraa al-Farra, an 18-year-old student displaced from Khan Yunis in southern Gaza.

"At first we were waiting in the hope that the offensive would end and we would catch up," he said.

But "we don't know how long it will last or how many years it will deprive us of our educational lives."

The Education Cluster, a UN-backed organisation, estimated in a report this month that more than 75 percent of Gaza's schools would need full reconstruction or major rehabilitation to reopen.

Many have been turned into shelters for Gaza's displaced and others have been damaged in bombardment.

Liliane Nihad, an 18-year-old displaced to Khan Yunis from Gaza City, in the territory's north, said she and her fellow students had "been waiting 12 years to take these exams and pass and feel happy and enter university... but we have been deprived of all that by this damned offensive".

Nihad said she had been hoping to study English and to get a doctorate, "but all of that has evaporated".

Displaying their anger at the situation, dozens of students and teachers held a protest in Gaza City's Al-Rimal neighbourhood on Saturday. "We demand our right to take high school exams" and "We want books, not bombs" they chanted, while empty chairs were laid out to symbolise those students killed in the offensive.

In the West Bank, violence has further escalated since the start of the Gaza offensive. According to the Palestinian official news agency Wafa, 20 high school students are among the hundreds of Palestinians killed there.

Wafa reported that 89,000 students from Gaza and the West Bank had been expected to take high school exams this year. Back in Gaza, however, there will be no exams at all.

The UN, citing the Palestinian ministry of education, said about 39,000 high school students in Gaza are unable to take their tests.

Sulaf Mousa, an 18-year-old from Al-Shati Camp west of Gaza City, hit by a deadly air strike on Saturday, said he had hoped to study medicine and become a doctor.

"Now, we hope we will survive the offensive and not lose more than we have already lost," Mousa said.

INDIA PARLIAMENT

Modi appeals to opposition for 'consensus'

AFP, *New Delhi*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday appealed to an emboldened opposition for "consensus", as parliament opened following an election setback that forced him into a coalition government for the first time in a decade.

Expected in the first session, which will run until July 3, is a preview of Modi's plans for his third term and the likely formal appointment of Rahul Gandhi as leader of the opposition -- a post vacant since 2014.

"To run the country, a consensus is of utmost importance", Modi said in a speech shortly before entering parliament, calling on the opposition to play a constructive role.

"People want substance, not slogans," he said.

Autocracy is 'evil'

Says Taiwan president after China threatens death for separatism

REUTERS, *Taipei*

Democracy is not a crime and autocracy is the real "evil", Taiwan President Lai Ching-te said yesterday after China threatened to impose the death penalty in extreme cases for "diehard" Taiwan independence separatists.

On Friday, China ramped up its pressure on Taiwan by issuing new legal guidelines to punish those it says support island's formal independence, though Chinese courts have no jurisdiction on the democratically governed island.

Emergency personnel carry the body of a person killed in a deadly fire at a lithium battery factory owned by South Korean battery maker Aricell, in Hwaseong, South Korea yesterday.
PHOTO: REUTERS

Blaze in South Korea battery plant kills 22 workers

AFP, *Hwaseong*

Twenty-two people were killed in a massive fire at a South Korean lithium battery plant yesterday, most of them Chinese nationals, in one of the country's worst factory disasters in years.

Over 100 people were working in the factory when workers heard a series of explosions from the second floor, where lithium-ion batteries were being inspected and packaged, a firefighter said.

In the blaze that ensued, 22 people were killed, including 20 foreign nationals -- 18 Chinese, one from Laos, and one of unknown nationality, he said.

BANGLADESH UNIVERSITY OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY, DHAKA

No: R- 8997 Date: 24-06-2024

Admission into Postgraduate Programs
Semester: April 2024

Applications are invited for admission into the following postgraduate programs for **April 2024 Semester**. An applicant must complete the online Application Form and upload the supporting documents (as described below) using the postgraduate admission section of the BUET website (http://pgadmission.buet.ac.bd) within the period from **29.06.2024 to 15.07.2024** (Until 11:59 p.m.). **Last date of application fee submission is 14.07.2024.**

A) Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree Offered by the Departments/ Institutes:
Ph.D. in Architecture, Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Computer Science and Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Industrial and Production Engineering, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Materials and Metallurgical Engineering, Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, Petroleum and Mineral Resources Engineering, Physics, Urban and Regional Planning, Water Resources Engineering, Nanomaterials and Ceramic Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Institute of Water and Flood Management, Institute of Information and Communication Technology.

B) Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) Degree offered by the Departments:
M.Phil. in Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics.

C) Master's Degree Offered by the Departments/ Institutes:
(i) M.Sc.Engg./M.Engg.in Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering(Environmental), Civil Engineering (Geotechnical), Civil Engineering (Structural), Civil Engineering (Transportation), Environmental Engineering, Computer Science and Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Industrial and Production Engineering, Advanced Engineering Management, Mechanical Engineering, Materials and Metallurgical Engineering, Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, Petroleum and Mineral Resources Engineering, Water Resources Engineering, Glass and Ceramic Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Humanitarian Engineering, Nuclear Power Engineering, Information and Communication Technology, Information Security, Disaster Risk Reduction Engineering.
(ii) M. Arch., MS. Arch. in Architecture.
(iii) M.Sc. in Cyber Security, Data Science, Computing, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Biochemical Technology, Occupational Process Safety, Energy Technology and Management, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics, Materials Science, Glass and Ceramic Science, Humanitarian Engineering, Climate Modeling and Risk Management, Disaster Risk Reduction Engineering, Disaster Risk Reduction Science.
(iv) MURP in Urban and Regional Planning by Course and Thesis
(v) M.Sc. in Water Resources Development
(vi) M.Sc. in Management of Technology

Important Information

- During the submission of the online application through the postgraduate admission section of the website of BUET, the following supporting documents must be uploaded within the period **29.06.2024 to 15.07.2024** (Until 11:59 p.m.) and **last date of application fee submission is 14.07.2024.**
  1. Attached copies of certificates of all public examinations.
  2. Attached copies of transcripts/ grade-sheets/ mark-sheets of all public examinations.
  3. Attached copies of testimonial/ character certificate from the institution last attended.
  4. Letter of consent, in prescribed form, from the employer for applicants in employment.
- After submission application, Pay 505/- (Five Hundred Five only) taka online as Application Fee.
- Prospectus containing detailed qualification requirements for admission into different programs and information regarding the submission of application is available at the postgraduate admission section of BUET website.
- Applicants in employment whether part-time or full-time must apply through their employers for both part-time and full-time enrollments.
- Selection of candidates for admission into a postgraduate program is performed by respective department/ institute. The selection procedure may vary from one department to another. Candidates are advised to contact the respective department/ institute for information regarding the selection procedure.
- A few Teaching Assistantships/ Fellowships may be awarded to suitable full-time students.
- Degrees obtained from institutions other than BUET will be subjected to equivalence by appropriate authority of BUET before a candidate is finally selected for admission to a degree/diploma program.
- **Last date for submission of the application is 15.07.2024** (Until 11:59 p.m.), **last date of application fee submission is 14.07.2024 and classes will commence from 10.08.2024.**
- The schedule regarding postgraduate admission may change due to any situation. Updated information will be available on the postgraduate admission section of BUET website.

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MYANMAR CRISIS

First junta conscripts to begin duty at end of month

AFP, *Yangon*

A first batch of 5,000 conscripts called up by Myanmar's junta will begin duty at the end of this month, military sources told AFP yesterday, as the generals struggle to crush opposition to their coup.

The junta enforced a conscription law in February, three years after it seized power and sparked a widespread armed uprising that has spread across swathes of the Southeast Asian country.

The law allows the military to summon all men aged 18-35 and women aged 18-27 to serve in the armed forces for at least two years.

"The first batch of recruits, who started in early April, will conclude training at the end of this month," one military source said.

The source said that upon graduation the 5,000 conscripts would be posted to "different military commands around the country to serve their duty", without giving details on how they would serve.

He requested anonymity as he was not authorised to talk to the media.

VIOLATING CRASH SETTLEMENT

US prosecutors for charging Boeing

REUTERS, *WASHINGTON*

US prosecutors are recommending to senior Justice Department officials that criminal charges be brought against Boeing BA.N after finding the planemaker violated a settlement related to two fatal crashes, two people familiar with the matter told Reuters.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) must decide by July 7 whether to prosecute Boeing. The recommendation of prosecutors handling the case has not been previously reported.

In May, officials determined the company breached a 2021 agreement that had shielded Boeing from a criminal charge of conspiracy to commit fraud arising from two fatal crashes in 2018 and 2019 involving the 737 MAX jet.

Under the 2021 deal, the Justice Department agreed not to prosecute Boeing over allegations it defrauded the Federal Aviation Administration so long as the company overhauled its compliance practices and submitted regular reports. Boeing also agreed to pay $2.5 billion to settle the investigation.

Boeing declined to comment. It has previously said it has "honored the terms" of the 2021 settlement, which had a three-year term and is known as a deferred prosecution agreement. Boeing has told the Justice Department it disagrees with its determination that the company violated the settlement, Reuters reported this month.

A spokesperson for the Justice Department declined to comment.

The two sides are in discussions over a potential resolution to the Justice Department's investigation and there is no guarantee officials will move forward with charges, the two sources said. The internal Justice Department deliberations remain ongoing and no final decisions have been reached, they added.

Criminal charges would deepen an unfolding crisis at Boeing, which has faced intense scrutiny from US prosecutors, regulators and lawmakers after a panel blew off one of its jets operated by Alaska Airlines ALK.N mid-flight January 5, just two days before the 2021 settlement expired.

The sources did not specify what criminal charges Justice Department officials are considering, but one of the people said they could extend beyond the original 2021 fraud conspiracy charge.

Alternatively, instead of prosecuting Boeing, the DOJ could extend the 2021 settlement by a year or propose new, stricter terms, the sources said.

In addition to financial penalties, the strictest settlements typically involve installing a third party to monitor a company's compliance. The DOJ can also require the company to admit its wrongdoing by pleading guilty.

DAGESTAN ATTACK

Death toll rises to 20

Moscow launches terror probe

REUTERS, *MOSCOW*

The death toll from a series of brazen attacks on churches and synagogues in Russia's mainly Muslim region of Dagestan rose to 20 yesterday after gunmen went on the rampage in coordinated attacks in two of the republic's most important cities.

Gunmen with automatic weapons burst into an Orthodox church and a synagogue in the ancient city of Derbent on Sunday evening, setting fire to an icon at the church and killing a 66-year-old Orthodox priest, Nikolai Kotelnikov.

In the city of Makhachkala, about 125 km (75 miles) north on the Caspian Sea shore, attackers shot at a traffic police post and attacked a church.

Gun battles erupted around the Assumption Cathedral in Makhachkala and heavy automatic gunfire rang out late into the night. Footage showed residents running for cover as plumes of smoke rose above the city.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Russia's Investigative Committee said 15 policemen and four civilians were killed.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

BPSA stance a threat to media freedom

Police would be better off focusing on investigating graft allegations

We are troubled by the Bangladesh Police Service Association's (BPSA) scathing assessment of recent media reports on the alleged involvement of some retired and serving police officials in corruption, which it termed "partial," "ill-motivated," and "exaggerated." In letters sent to all media editors on Friday, the BPSA came down heavily on the media for what it called a "smear campaign" against police. As has been pointed out by the journalist community, the tone and disposition of the statement appeared to intimidate journalists, urging caution about reporting on the police force. This, along with the news of some BPSA members apparently demanding legal action at an internal meeting of the platform, rightly got journalists worried at a time when independent journalism is already under serious strain.

The reports published in the media made serious allegations of corruption against certain police officials. But they didn't portray the whole force as being corrupt. Therefore, the claim that the reports were aimed at "tarnishing police image" is a slippery slope argument. In fact, the media has constantly played a significant role in celebrating and pointing out the critical role played by any police force, including ours. At the same time, it is the duty of the media to hold those in power to account for any abuse of authority. Reports unearthing corruption by police officials are but an exercise in that vein. Instead of deeming them as ill-motivated, a more appropriate response would have been a prompt announcement of internal investigations or support for independent probes into these serious allegations, as correctly pointed out by the Transparency International Bangladesh.

Interestingly, even though said media reports do not make a blanket accusation against the police force, the BPSA seems to do just that in its portrayal of the media. Moreover, while calling out the reports as a "smear campaign" against its members, it did not name any victims of alleged defamation, which is necessary. The importance of being precise and accurate, whether in journalism or police work, cannot be overstated. In any case, independent media certainly deserves a more considerate appraisal of the crucial role it plays in upholding democracy and people's constitutional rights.

What we are most worried about is the effect of such statements. At a time when police are failing to show "zero tolerance" for corruption within the force, even in the small number of cases that are reported, a defensive and thinly-veiled intimidating statement may further shrink the space for investigative journalism that brings out such instances of corruption. Moreover, for the police administration to use the association, which involves all in the police, for this purpose sets a dangerous precedent. Therefore, we hope that the police administration will take cognisance of these concerns, bolster its internal investigative and disciplinary mechanisms to stop corruption, and extend unconditional support to the media to perform its duty of keeping the nation informed.

Clamp down on online misogyny

Malicious Facebook content targeting female politicians raises alarm

In a country that has been governed only by women for the last 33 years (barring two years of state of emergency), it is distressing to see how misogyny is still the weapon of choice to dissuade, intimidate and harass women seeking leadership roles. A recent study on Facebook content posted around the time of the 12th national election of Bangladesh reveals a disturbing picture: gendered disinformation was used to attack female leaders (on both sides of the political aisle) as well as journalists and analysts. This is another proof that online violence against women continues unabated amid feeble government attempts to regulate cybercrimes.

As part of an investigation into technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), the research analysed nearly 25,000 pieces of Facebook content—collected between December 1, 2022 and January 15, 2024—to see how gendered disinformation was used during the election. Among them, more than 1,400 posts contained gendered attacks, a staggering 70 percent of which were of sexual nature. Incorrect and made-up content, deep-fake content, doxxing, hate speech, violent threats, and unwanted explicit content were some of the prevalent forms of TFGBV that were used. The number of female BNP politicians who were subjected to such violence compared to their Awami League counterparts is tenfold, according to the study. Among the high-profile victims were BNP's Khaleda Zia, Shama Obaid and Rumeen Farhana, as well as Awami League's Sheikh Hasina and Momtaz Begum.

What does it say about a country that boasts of facilitating women's empowerment? In recent elections, women's participation in politics has been on a downward trend. In the last election, less than five percent of all candidates were women. The political landscape of Bangladesh has generally been unfavourable for women due to the age-old bias that politics is the realm of men. So, when women defy social norms to participate in civil and political activities, gendered intimidation tactics are readily used to dissuade them. We have seen in recent years how rape has been used as a tool of political intimidation against both voters and candidates.

This state of affairs is absolutely unacceptable. We need to bring in more women in policy- and decision-making roles, and gendered attacks and disinformation, especially on social media, will only act as a deterrent. The government claims to be working on installing various mechanisms to monitor and regulate the cyberspace to curb cybercrimes, including circulating disinformation. But we need results, not reassurances. Therefore, it must rethink its work plan and undertake strict measures against TFGBV. That should be one of the top priorities in Smart Bangladesh.

TROUBLED

Mental health challenges of our school children

Dr Syed Saad Andaleeb
is distinguished professor emeritus at Pennsylvania State University and former vice chancellor of BRAC University.

SYED SAAD ANDALEEB

When Ms Matin saw Mamun after a decade since his kindergarten years, she was appalled. The child she knew was happy and energetic: what became of him in his adolescent years? Mamun looked frail, lacked energy, and had a distant and troubled expression on his face. His father recounted how Mamun had withdrawn from his friends and social activities, had difficulty concentrating on studies, and suffered bouts of headaches and other ailments that did not respond well to treatment. His friends seemed to have abandoned him and his teachers left him alone, whispering among themselves about this strange and alien being. Here was an adolescent child drifting away, far from friendly shores, alone and helpless.

Mamun's mental health situation is not uncommon and probably reaching contagion proportions in schools worldwide. In Bangladesh, the subject is taboo. Lack of understanding, fear, and social stigma often prevent school children and their families from seeking timely help. This exacerbates the child's difficulties and hinders her/his overall well-being. Unfortunately, a child like Mamun is often told, "get over it" or "it's all in your head." The problem gets quickly swept under the rug with its attendant burdens and severe consequences.

VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

Troubled school children suffer mental stresses for a variety of reasons: The competitive education system, family and societal expectations, emphasis on academic success over learning, authoritarian teachers, and insensitive peers who make life miserable. Many children find themselves struggling with high academic standards without guidance or support, abused by the acerbic tongue of some teachers, and being bullied day in day out by peers. It's a rough world for the throbbing little hearts, yearning to be free like the butterfly; yet being battered constantly by the whirlwinds of family, teachers, and peers.

> **Family dynamics and expectations are the starting point of the travails of many children. High expectations, strict parenting styles, pressures to conform to societal norms, and career aspirations deemed prestigious or financially rewarding begin to build pressure at home with crushing force. Some children find their achievements constantly compared with the children of other family members, friends, or peers. Constant criticism or disapproval when the child is unable to perform leaves her/his self-esteem in tatters and contributes to feelings of rejection.**

Sources of mental challenges

Family dynamics and expectations are the starting point of the travails of many children. High expectations, strict parenting styles, pressures to conform to societal norms, and career aspirations deemed prestigious or financially rewarding begin to build pressure at home with crushing force. Some children find their achievements constantly compared with the children of other family members, friends, or peers. Constant criticism or disapproval when the child is unable to perform leaves her/his self-esteem in tatters and contributes to feelings of rejection. Families also have specific expectations for how boys and girls should behave and what career paths they should pursue even if their abilities and interests are at cross-purposes. Beyond academics, families may also expect their children to excel in extracurricular activities such as sports, arts, or music. In some families, the emphasis on success is so high—to claim "first boy" status—that "second boy" is not acceptable! Expressing vulnerability, seeking emotional support, or even giving up under the circumstances is not an option and severely discouraged. The constant demands of family expectations can significantly impact, even cripple, the mental health of school children, sometimes leading to suicidal inclinations.

Parents must understand the weight of their words on their children and take a balanced approach to academics, emphasising individual growth over strict achievement targets. They must learn to open up communications channels to understand the academic challenges of their children and engage in open discussions about career aspirations in a supportive environment. When they begin to appreciate the uniqueness of each child and their individual strengths, abandoning comparisons and providing a supportive environment where even small achievements are celebrated, it is a win-win situation. Encouraging their progeny to learn from mistakes as a natural part of development can also help raise a child's self-worth and create conditions for a healthy mind to evolve.

Teachers can also trigger mental health breakdowns, knowingly or unknowingly, that significantly impacts school students. While a great number of teachers are devoted to fostering a positive learning environment, some of them stand out for their abysmal and erroneous demands in the classroom that include excessive demands to perform, frequent testing, and creating intense competition among peers to create a high-stress environment. A rigid teaching style that doesn't appreciate or accommodate alternative learning styles may also lead to frustration and a feeling of inadequacy among many learners who learn differently. Placing them in "learning cages" with no manoeuvrability is simply inappropriate.

> **It is important for teachers to focus on holistic learning and individual progress in a collaborative and supportive learning environment where teaching methods cater to different learning styles. Teachers must also encourage open communication and be receptive to students' concerns by cultivating positive and two-way communication, providing constructive feedback, and offering encouragement. These traits are not necessarily inborn; they must be nurtured.**

Then there are teachers who do not hesitate to utter biting comments, express constant criticism, or display dismissive behaviour that affect a student's self-esteem and confidence. Mistakes of students are sometimes rebuked with ill temper instead of using positive communication, constructive feedback, and encouragement. Some teachers are prone to treating mistakes as opportunities to punish learners—a dreaded classroom environment. Favouritism is also a trait some teachers exhibit openly; those in disfavour experience sour behaviour and unfair treatment. Unrealistic expectations of teachers regarding classroom behaviour, performance, or conformity may similarly lead to stress and anxiety. These teachers need training to be sensitive or identify signs of mental health challenges of the young learners.

It is important for teachers to focus on holistic learning and individual progress in a collaborative and supportive learning environment where teaching methods cater to different learning styles. Teachers must also encourage open communication and be receptive to students' concerns by cultivating positive and two-way communication, providing constructive feedback, and offering encouragement. These traits are not necessarily inborn; they must be nurtured. Teachers receiving mental health awareness training must also develop adequate skills to recognise signs of distress to assist and guide young learners or refer them to appropriate support services.

Peers are an additional source of severe mental stress, especially when students are exposed to bullying which is manifested in a variety of ways. Verbal bullying involves using words to hurt, threaten, or manipulate another person. This can include name-calling, teasing, taunting, and spreading rumours that can induce low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and a sense of powerlessness in the victim.

Physical bullying involves the use of physical force to harm another person. This may include hitting, kicking, pushing, or any form of physical aggression that may result not only in physical injuries but also emotional trauma.

Social bullying involves manipulating social relationships to harm, control, or exclude someone. This can include spreading rumours, gossiping, or intentionally excluding individuals from social groups that create feelings of isolation, loneliness, and rejection.

Another hurtful practice is prejudice-based bullying which involves targeting individuals based on their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, physical handicap, or even a spoken dialect that is perceived as different. Such practices are manifested in discriminatory behaviour, hate speech, or exclusion.

Sexual bullying involves inappropriate comments, gestures, or actions of a sexual nature. This can include sexual harassment, inappropriate touching, or making explicit remarks, resulting sometimes in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for which victims may struggle with issues related to body image and self-worth. When teachers engage in sexual bullying, that should call for immediate termination.

Of late cyberbullying has emerged through social media, messaging apps, and online forums. These digital platforms are used to harass, embarrass, or intimidate others. It's important to note that the various forms of bullying are often interconnected, and an individual may experience multiple types of bullying simultaneously.

Educational reforms are being introduced in several South Asian countries to alleviate the mental abuse of school children. Some initiatives include curriculum revisions to promote holistic learning, integrating mental health education into the curriculum, and introducing counselling services within schools to provide emotional support to students.

Important interventions

When children feel compelled to fulfil their family's career expectations, it can lead to a sense of inadequacy or dissatisfaction if their own interests and passions are compromised. Family counselling programmes and workshops are thus vital to help parents understand the impact of their expectations on children's mental health. Parental education programmes must emphasise the importance of a balanced approach, fostering positive communication within the family, and supporting children's emotional well-being.

Professional development opportunities for teachers include learning to use varied teaching methods and to be flexible and adaptable in instructional approaches that promote the importance of learning (not regurgitating) and emotional intelligence. They must also be trained to encourage open communication and empathy. Teachers who employ negative reinforcement, criticism, or an authoritarian approach must receive special training to change the uncomfortable and anxiety-inducing classroom atmosphere they create and to encourage a supportive and respectful classroom culture where students feel safe and encouraged to express themselves.

It is also important to introduce recognition programmes, positive feedback, and two-way communication. Cultivating a culture of appreciation and involvement with the school community can go far in building an exemplary learning environment that recognises and respects mental health issues.

Schools and affiliated communities can prevent bullying by fostering a culture of empathy, promoting awareness, and implementing anti-bullying policies and counselling interventions for both victims and perpetrators. Early identification and appropriate intervention are key to mitigating the long-term mental health effects of bullying on school children.

Educational initiatives must also be designed to foster togetherness and empathy among students by creating a more inclusive and supportive school environment. Such an environment conveys the language of fellow-feeling and love every beating heart understands, empathy connects each soul, and inclusiveness is the playground where the children can flourish in camaraderie, team spirit, and mutual respect. Let the processes begin—now!

This article was adapted from an earlier version written for a school newsletter.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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reporting@thedailystar.net

Advertisement: 01711623910
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Finance is key to Bangladesh's energy transition

Shafiqul Alam
is lead energy analyst for Bangladesh at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA).

SHAFIQUL ALAM

Bangladesh is facing a double whammy. On one hand, climate-change induced events continue to ravage the country, compelling it to spend 6-7 percent of its annual budget on adaptation each year. On the other hand, transitioning to capital-intensive clean energy is also a necessity for the country given its reliance on fossil fuels, which increases costs and drives up inflation. These competing priorities mean that Bangladesh will need to consistently invest in critical climate-resilient infrastructure and clean energy technologies in the next several decades.

To achieve these goals, it is important that Bangladesh streamline its funding schemes and identify viable sources of financing.

Drivers of a clean energy transition

Cyclone Remal, which hit Bangladesh in May 2024, affected as many as 3.8 million people, damaging 150,000 houses. This was not a one-off event. Although Bangladesh is prone to cyclones of similar magnitude or more, such extreme events are likely to become frequent in future. As a result, the country will need more funding to adapt to climate change.

There are several reasons why Bangladesh should invest in clean energy. Dependence on imported fossil fuel has proven costly for Bangladesh. Apart from the high price volatility of fossil fuels in the international market during 2022-23, the recent devaluation of the Bangladeshi taka by Tk 7 per US dollar in May 2024 has made fossil fuel imports more costly. As a result, the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) incurred an additional cost of roughly Tk 5 billion ($42.3 million) to import fuel oil in May 2024. BPC's annual cost may increase by Tk 60 billion ($511 million), which is enough to install a combined rooftop solar capacity of more than half a gigawatt (GW).

Since importing fossil fuels such as liquefied natural gas and coal is also expensive now, the government will feel the pressure of increasing tariffs for electricity and gas.

However, raising tariffs cannot eliminate the subsidy burden. The subsidy for the power sector soared to Tk 395.35 billion ($3.34 billion) in fiscal year (FY) 2022-23 from Tk 296.58 billion ($2.51 billion) in FY2021-22 despite the 15 percent tariff hike on electricity between January and March 2023.

Bangladesh must invest more in renewable energy and energy efficiency to reduce fossil fuel imports to reverse the increasing trajectory of the subsidy burden.

Energy transition will necessitate billions in financing

According to the Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP 2023), Bangladesh plans to install a total of 37.8GW new renewable energy (primarily solar and wind) capacity until 2050 under the advanced technology scenario (ATS) (taking the in-between growth scenario which considered the average of the growth rates projected in the country's perspective plan and the International Monetary Fund's estimates). The IEPMP estimates that the combined capacity of 37.8GW renewable energy without energy storage systems will cost Bangladesh $37.4 billion.

However, renewable energy capacity may reach 26.2GW in 2050 under the in-between growth case, excluding ATS. The changed IEPMP scenario indicates that the country may have 17 percent renewable energy by 2050, implying that the installed renewable energy capacity will be less than 20GW.

According to IEEFA's estimate, even the installation of 20GW renewable energy capacity with battery storage for 30 percent of the capacity for four-hour back-up may require around $1 billion investment a year through 2050.

Bangladesh should set a mission that is fit-for-purpose to lead an effective energy transition, with finance at its core. This is not only due to insufficient financing schemes, but also the challenges posed by the current banking and finance framework in the country. For instance, Bangladesh Bank's refinancing scheme of $33.84 million for environment-friendly projects has recently been increased to $84.6 million, but the cap for a loan to a solar park is only $2.54 million. The loan amount is inadequate in relation to the required finance volume even for a 10MW solar power project.

Financing the energy transition

Bangladesh should set a mission that is fit-for-purpose to lead an effective energy transition, with finance at its core. This is not only due to insufficient financing schemes, but also the challenges posed by the current banking and finance framework in the country.

For instance, Bangladesh Bank's refinancing scheme of Tk 4 billion ($33.84 million) for environment-friendly projects has recently been increased to Tk 10 billion ($84.6 million) but the cap for a loan to a solar park is only Tk 0.3 billion ($2.54 million). The loan amount is inadequate in relation to the required finance volume even for a 10 megawatt (MW) solar project.

To accelerate its energy transition, Bangladesh should explore available financing avenues, such as multilateral development banks (MDBs), green bonds, private equity funds, investment promotion and financing facilities.

The Infrastructure Development Company Limited, a non-banking financial institution (NBFI), finances utility-scale clean energy projects in Bangladesh with funding from multilateral and bilateral agencies. Likewise, another NBFI, the Bangladesh Infrastructure Finance Fund Limited, can extend debt finance to clean energy projects. However, other local financial institutions should also develop the capacity to access the low-cost finance offered by MDBs. As the country mostly imports clean energy technologies, funding in US dollars is of utmost importance to ensure a smooth opening of letters of credit (LCs) for projects.

Bangladesh Bank published a policy for the issuance of green bonds by banks and financial institutions in 2022. Green bonds can help expedite the clean energy transition in Bangladesh by raising funds for capital-intensive clean energy projects. Institutional investors have a major role to play as a large-scale renewable energy project may require funding worth several hundred million US dollars. It is imperative to incentivise individual investors with green bonds when the government's saving instruments provide lucrative returns.

A lack of equity among sponsors often delays renewable energy projects. Private equity firms with a focus on environmental, social and governance (ESG) may invest in renewable energy projects. These firms are still at a nascent stage in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Bank's Investment Promotion and Financing Facility, supported by the World Bank, helped develop infrastructure projects in the country. While the funding phase has ended, a new phase, if launched, may speed up the energy transition. The scheme will be fit for purpose as the fund is disbursed in dollars with a tenor of 20 years.

Early preparation to identify and access finance while developing the capacity of local financial institutions is key to driving an effective and sustainable energy transition. The situation demands a bold response—defining a path that will not compromise the needs of the country, both on the climate adaptation and energy transition fronts.

Responsible is something to be

Review of 'We Are the Leaders We Have Been Looking For' by Eddie Glaude Jr

Amitava Kar
is a writer based in Ottawa.

AMITAVA KAR

A new book explores how people can regain their political fate from professional politicians and be the heroes that we need today. Eddie Glaude Jr, a professor at Princeton University and a preeminent scholar, is the author of *We Are the Leaders We Have Been Looking For* (2024). His previous best-selling books include *Begin Again* (2020).

It is a beautiful book—some called it "a lyrical meditation"—but in reading it, it also feels like there is an urgency to the writing. What is driving that? Professor Glaude contends that people have subcontracted their responsibility for democracy for too long. They have outsourced it to charismatic leaders and the so-called heroes. If we do not take responsibility now, we may very well lose it. And we are going to need to take a hard look at what we take ourselves to be.

What exactly would he like us to do?

His idea is simple. If people are going to become the leaders they have been looking for, they are going to have to become better people. And if they are going to be better people, they need to help make a more just world, because the world as it is currently designed, values self-centeredness and greed. It gives license to hate and fear.

EDDIE S. GLAUDE JR.
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF BEGIN AGAIN
WE ARE
THE
LEADERS
WE HAVE BEEN
LOOKING
FOR

He suggests that the messiness of the world is in part a manifestation of the messiness of our inner lives. We must start treating the wounds inside, so that we can open up to the beauty and the brilliance of other people, so that we can commit to the idea of immutable justice that we so often talk about. Reaching for a higher form of excellence in pursuit of a better world.

But isn't it human nature to turn people into heroes, to aspire to a higher ideal? Is he saying that it undermines democracy? He posits that when heroes become larger than life, we end up giving ourselves over to them. And the moment we start giving ourselves over to them, we stop doing the difficult work of becoming better human beings.

Professor Glaude contends that people have subcontracted their responsibility for democracy for too long. They have outsourced it to charismatic leaders and the so-called heroes. If we do not take responsibility now, we may very well lose it. And we are going to need to take a hard look at what we take ourselves to be.

He writes about Ella Josephine Baker (1903-1986), iconic leader of the civil rights movement who criticised professionalised, magnetic leadership and promoted grassroots organising and the ability of people to comprehend their conditions and advocate for themselves. She worked not only to lift those up who fall in the cracks and crevices of American democracy but also to create a politics where people could understand their own power. She believed in the hard work on the ground of creating the conditions of building community with others.

In the discussions about the search and effort to become a better person, Professor Glaude turns the lens on himself as well. He writes about what he calls his own primordial wound, one caused by his father. Why did he feel obligated to include that in the book? People often try to hide their vulnerabilities. Martin Luther King, for example, would not smoke in public. We only see glimpses of great leaders in their biographies.

What the renowned professor wanted to do was to heal his own wounds, to understand how his brokenness shaped who he turned out to be. He loves his father and has a wonderful relationship with him today. But he was terrified of him as a child. His father could just look at him and he would cry. By dint of the fear his father deposited in him, he thought he was a coward. And so, he reached for heroes. He found Malcom X—a form of masculinity in the face of what felt like being humiliated daily.

In the end, the book is a message of hope. And his is an abiding faith in the capacity of everyday people to act. Where does he derive that faith from? People. He reminds us that African- Americans who once were nothing but slaves, according to some, have come far. He, however, expresses his reservations about interpreting Obama's presidency as the eventuation of the civil rights movement. The quest for justice goes beyond mere representation.

Nothing makes sense anymore, remarked comedian Colin Jost at the 2024 White House Correspondents' dinner in April. The country will have a presidential election in six months. The Republican candidate reportedly owes millions in fines for bank fraud and has been found guilty on all 34 criminal charges in a porn star hush money trial. And the race is tied!

The book is written in the context of the United States. Its universality is undeniable.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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12 Dancer Castle
13 Exams for absentees
15 Airport sched. abbr.
16 Tissue layer
17 Even score
18 Belgrade setting
20 On this spot
21 Wet, in a way
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23 Become prevalent
25 Anxiety about exclusion, for short
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34 Old auto
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40 Shake your booty
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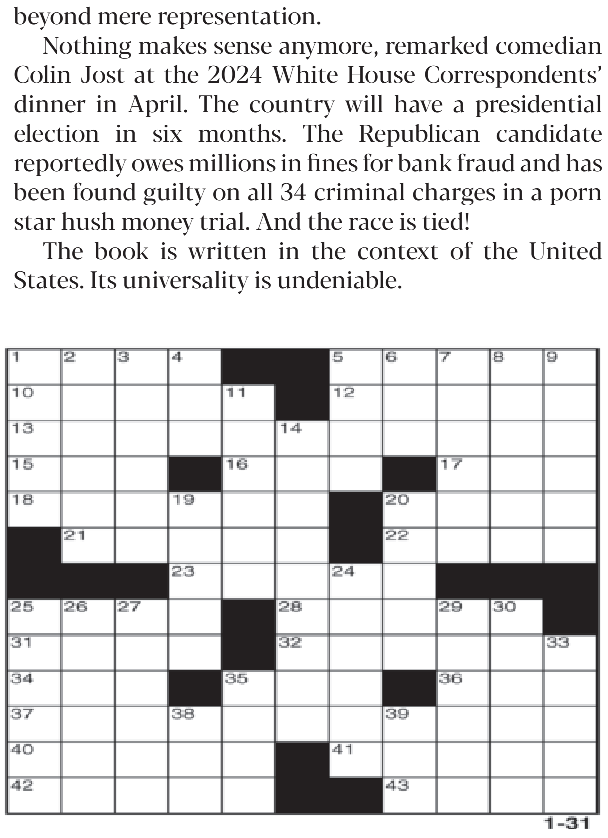
14 Tries out, as a game
19 Plains grazer
20 Delhi tongue
24 Coves
25 Historic events
26 Boxing combo
27 Secured to the dock
29 Prolific inventor
30 Ready for the body shop
33 Impudent
35 Invites
38 Pitching stat
39 Quarterback Manning



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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

AI is making way for a new era of soft skills. Here's how

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

A common argument that often pops up nowadays is that AI is killing jobs. While such a bold statement may hold some truth for roles like data entry and supply chain optimisation, the fact that the rise of AI has given birth to new jobs and opportunities often goes unnoticed. With AI gaining popularity across various workplaces, there arises a demand for skilled professionals capable of effectively How to not handle a crisis communication: A lesson from Coca-Cola operating AI models to yield the most desirable outcomes. Moreover, beyond these roles, there is a growing need for positions that AI simply cannot replicate, owing to its inherently non-human nature.

The fact remains: AI cannot replicate soft skills

A recent blog by LinkedIn Learning supports this notion, indicating that the three most sought-after skills by employers in 2024 are: communication, customer service, and leadership. These skills are indispensable in almost any job, yet notably, none of them can be adequately replicated by modern AI. While it can be argued that automated customer service may outperform human agents in answering queries efficiently, AI cannot emulate the empathy, flexibility, and personal understanding that a human agent provides during customer interactions. Furthermore, communication and leadership, being inherently human traits, are cultivated through years of physical interaction with fellow humans in a variety of social settings. This, yet again, is a trait that AI cannot replicate.

According to a finding by Ryan Roslansky, CEO of LinkedIn, since November 2022, LinkedIn has witnessed a remarkable 21-fold increase in job postings mentioning 'GPT' or 'ChatGPT', a testament to how much value modern organisations place on employees with relevant AI skills. However, despite this undeniable emphasis on AI skills, Roslansky notes that there has also been a notable rise in demand for soft skills such as communication and flexibility. "In fact," he states in his blog, "based on LinkedIn's June 2023 Executive Confidence Index, 72% of US executives agree that soft skills are more valuable to their organisation than AI skills."

The ever-human trait of learning from experience

If there's one lesson we've learned from modern AI, it's that the demands of the job market can change rapidly. From the shift to remote work during Covid-19 to the recent surge in demand for AI-related skills in contemporary jobs, predicting the next significant trend in the ever-evolving job market is a tall order. However, certain timeless skills will always remain relevant. Seasoned leadership abilities and adaptability, refined through experience across different industries and workplaces, are among these enduring competencies.

If you're someone who has led different teams across different industries, you have been exposed to a wide range of workplace challenges, management styles, and organisational structures. As an experienced leader, you can adapt your approach and rethink strategies whenever an unforeseen situation may arise, and, based on your years of knowledge and emergency handling, you will be able to identify best practices and implement them effectively in new situations. This adaptability in leadership - a wholly humane trait through and through - has re-solidified itself as the skill modern companies want in higher-level employees.

It's the humane skill that counts

During a 2023 interview, Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, shared that degree or coding skills are not a requirement to get hired by Apple. Instead, the tech giant leader focused on three key soft skills: collaboration, curiosity, and creativity. While Cook probably didn't have AI skills in mind when sharing his company's hiring strategies, the pattern of companies valuing skills that cannot be replicated by AI is once again seen here. While it's true that AI can, and is meant for, handling repetitive tasks and data analysis, it often lacks contextual understanding and creative problem-solving abilities. This is where the aforementioned skills come in: the innovative curiosity of the human mind, when put into action through productive collaboration, can find unique and creative answers to the toughest of problems.

At the end of the day, it is impossible to tell what the most in-demand professional skills will be several years down the line. With transient technical skills often becoming devalued owing to the ease and accessibility of generative AI models, banking on the evergreen reliability of soft skills seems like the way to go. So, instead of resisting the ever changing trends, embrace them - and look into ways to further improve your soft skills. If not anything else, these are the skills that are sure to take you far in your long, winding professional journey.

> **These skills are indispensable in almost any job, yet notably, none of them can be adequately replicated by modern AI. While it can be argued that automated customer service may outperform human agents in answering queries efficiently, AI cannot emulate the empathy, flexibility, and personal understanding that a human agent provides during customer interactions.**

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

BRAC University

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Minimum experience: 2 years

Banglalink

Campaign Planning Manager

Deadline: June 27

Eligibility:

- Bachelor's degree preferably in Business/ Computer Science.

Minimum experience: 4 years

Care Bangladesh

Manager, Program Analytic and Learning

Deadline: June 29

Eligibility:

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Minimum experience: 5-6 years

General Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

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Minimum experience: 1-2 years

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Don't count the days, make the days count."

MUHAMMAD ALI

THE STORY OF NVIDIA

The world's most valuable company

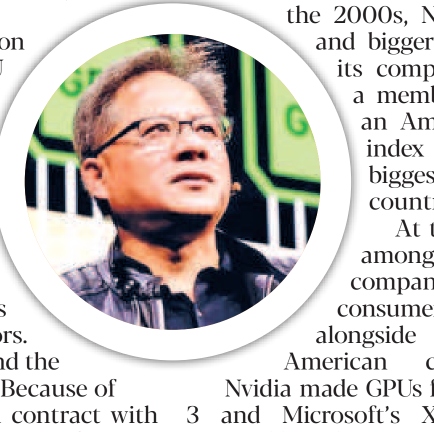
AZMIN AZRAN

There is a new winner in the race to become the world's most valuable company. On June 19, 2024, American tech giant Nvidia surpassed Microsoft to become the company with the highest market cap in the world — an eye-watering $3.34 trillion.

While previous members of the $3 trillion club, Apple and Microsoft, have vast consumer popularity to go with their enormous value, Nvidia operates from the background, relatively speaking. To video game and computer enthusiasts, Nvidia has long been the most popular and dominant graphics processing unit (GPU) manufacturer in the world. In fact, that is how the journey of Nvidia began.

In the early 1990s, when computers had just started entering the public consciousness, Nvidia's founders — Jensen Huang, Chris Malachowsky, and Curtis Priem — predicted a crucial detail in the future of computing. Video games, already popular at the time, were about to become the largest driver of revenue among computer applications, and increasingly complicated and visually engaging video games required computers that were capable of performing massive computations at breakneck speed. The central processing unit (CPU) of the computer bore that burden until then, but Jensen Huang and co. realised that this task could be more efficiently executed through dedicated GPUs that functioned parallel to CPUs.

All of this was discussed in an outlet of Denny's — an American-style diner chain — where Jensen Huang had worked as a busboy when he was a teenager. In 1993, however, when Nvidia was founded, Huang was a division head at LSI Logic, building specialised integrated chips (IC) for various computer products. He left that job to found Nvidia, a name that the trio came up with later by dropping the "i" from invidia, the Latin word for "envy".



Nvidia then embarked on the journey to solve the GPU problem, and it was a stop-start journey that began with a product called NV1 in 1995. It was a "graphics accelerator", which used quadrilateral (four-sided) shapes as the building blocks of computer graphics, as opposed to the triangles that were used by competitors. The triangle approach won, and the NV1 ended up being a failure. Because of this, Nvidia lost a substantial contract with Japanese video game console manufacturer Sega, and were at one point close to going bankrupt. But Sega saw the potential in Nvidia, and invested $5 million in the company.

The company was struggling when it shifted strategies to develop a graphics accelerator that worked with triangles. This new product, called the RIVA 128, was launched in 1996 and became a massive success. But even as it was released, the unofficial company motto had become "Our company is thirty days from going out of business". RIVA 128 changed that reality, and gave Nvidia the launchpad it needed to start the GPU revolution.

In 1999, the company released a product whose name gamers today will be able to relate to. The GeForce 256 was Nvidia's first proper GPU, and the name GeForce has managed to stick around to the present. Throughout the 2000s, Nvidia became bigger and bigger, acquiring much of its competition, and became a member of the S&P 500, an American stock market index for only the 500 biggest companies in the country.

At this point, Nvidia was among only a handful of companies who produced consumer grade GPUs, alongside AMD — another American chip manufacturer. Nvidia made GPUs for Sony's PlayStation 3 and Microsoft's Xbox. The company invested heavily in research and development (R&D) throughout, continuously improving its technology and taking video gaming technology to a whole new level.

In 2016, the GTX 1080 and 1070 were launched, bringing Nvidia massive success in the realm of PC gamers for whom discrete GPUs such as these marked a huge technological jump. These came on the back of GTX 700 and 900 series graphics cards, and Nvidia had become the overwhelmingly dominant force in this space.

Subsequent releases such as the GTX 1600 series, and the RTX 2000, 3000 and 4000 series have given Nvidia an unassailable share in the discrete GPU market. As of the first quarter of 2024, 88 percent of discrete GPUs in use today are Nvidia products, leaving competitors AMD and Intel (a new entrance) in the dust.

But video games and PCs were not enough to take Nvidia to the heights where it is now able to challenge software and mobile giants like Apple, Microsoft, and Google. What got them there was the buzzword of our times, Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Companies that use AI to develop cutting edge products like OpenAI's ChatGPT or Google's Gemini require computers that are capable of computing enormous mathematical calculations. Nvidia's GPUs, which were already capable of executing complicated mathematical functions for graphics usages, could also be used for the maths required for these AI training models.

At first, AI researchers needed to format their data to fit Nvidia's graphics focused products. In 2006, Nvidia introduced a new architecture, called CUDA, that would simplify the use of its products as parallel processors for computational problems.

Things have only gone from good to better since. When cryptocurrency started ballooning in value during the Covid-19 pandemic, Nvidia GPUs became the primary tool with which miners completed the computational tasks needed to produce more bitcoin, and Nvidia's sales skyrocketed as a result. Shortly followed by that were the large language models (LLM) that brought the power of AI to the forefront of public imagination, and as every tech company in the world started getting their hands dirty to develop their own AI products. Nvidia's GPUs, which would aid them in this process, fell massively into demand.

Nvidia was prepared for this. The GV100, followed by the A100 and subsequent models, have started targeting AI data centres where GPUs power the processing of massive amounts of data, engaging them in complex matrix calculations that are the building blocks of today's AI models. The rise of AI, and the competition between other tech giants to get their noses ahead in the AI rat race has benefitted Nvidia, who alongside developing their own AI products, supply the tools necessary to create machine learning models.

Nvidia stock has almost tripled since the beginning of 2024, and shows no signs of slowing down. Some who are sceptical think that this is all a result of an AI bubble, but Nvidia's standing is backed up by solid technology and consistently growing revenue. Jensen Huang, the superstar CEO and founder of Nvidia whom Mark Zuckerberg has called the "Taylor Swift of the tech world", cuts a calm but intimidating figure, as it's his shoulders and his company's on which the much promised AI future of mankind is being built.

Star
SPORT
DHAKA TUESDAY JUNE 25, 2024, ASHAR 11, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV & STAR SPORTS 1 HD
T20 World Cup
Afghanistan vs Bangladesh
Live from 6:30 am
T SPORTS & SONY SPORTS 2, 5
France vs Poland
Netherlands vs Austria
Live from 10:00 pm
Denmark vs Serbia
England vs Slovenia
Live from 1:00 am
(Wednesday)

Pothas cries 'power' crisis but offers no solution

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh assistant coach Nic Pothas has argued that batters did not have the required power to have confidence about them that they are going to make up for deliveries they use up to get in.

The South African used West Indies as an example, almost a near-exception in terms of power-hitting capabilities.

"I think one thing you've got to acknowledge is you can't fight genetics. You have to have a genetic predisposition to power initially. I mean, we've seen what Rishad [Hossain] can do. Rishad has improved and come on since that New Zealand series to now. But power is something that takes a lot of time. If you're not predisposed to being strong; West Indians don't have to find power. They're born with power. We're not born with power, so we have to do it a different way," Pothas said at a press conference in Antigua on Sunday.

While Pothas urged for 'finding power', it is well documented that the team's batting unit has digressed in terms of application during his tenure, which started in May 2023. Given how Bangladesh batters approached match phases such as Powerplays or death overs, especially during this T20 World Cup, it is evident that Pothas, like many others in the coaching panel, has failed to prepare batters tactically for the situations they face.

In fact, when asked how to solve the 'power' crisis, Pothas ended with 'we've got to find solutions.'

Generally, Bangladesh batters take a lot longer to settle in and play their shots. In majority of the competitive sides, there are big power-hitters who accelerate the scoring rate but Bangladesh have historically struggled to find batters of that nature. It should not need another World Cup to know that these problems existed.

Bangladesh batters have also struggled immensely with shot-selection in this World Cup. If it is argued that power-hitting capabilities can help them play more calmly, power would still not help batters pick the right deliveries to hit, or which bowlers to target -- the more tactical nuances of batting.

Yet, Pothas found something new to learn from the defeats to Australia and India in the Super Eight stage.

"I think we would be making a very big error if we didn't learn and understand why there is the gap between where we are and where the top teams are," he said. "One thing that is very, very obvious throughout this tournament, if you haven't got power, you can't compete. So, it's all about power."

Pothas argued that Bangladesh have not moved forward since the 2007 World Cup. When he should be answering questions about why the likes of Liton Das or Tanzid Tamim look shaky instead of being confident in their shot-making abilities, Pothas was suggesting about what questions have to be asked.

"If Bangladesh is still doing the same thing they were doing in 2007, then it shouldn't be a surprise that they haven't moved forward. And the rest of the world has moved forward, therefore the gap has become bigger. So that's the question we need to be asking. What is different now to 2007? Not what we need to do," he said, adding 'we need to find power from somewhere.'

He argued in the same press conference that Bangladesh needed power-hitting capabilities while suggesting that one has to find a different way if they are not born with it.

It seems that it is not just batting power that Bangladesh lack; there seems to be a need for some inspired brand of coaching too.

Orpita aims to lay women's hockey's foundation

Midfielder **Orpita Pal** played a vital role in Bangladesh's surprising runners-up finish in the just-concluded Women's Junior AHF Cup, scoring 10 of Bangladesh's 31 goals in six matches, during which she bagged three Player of the Match awards. Orpita, who orchestrated the build-up play and fed the scorers when required, also ended up becoming the joint second top-scorer along with eventual champions Chinese Taipei's Lai Ya-Han. The 11th-grade BKSP student spoke to **Anisur Rahman of The Daily Star** after the team's arrival from Singapore yesterday. Following are the excerpts of the conversation:

The Daily Star (DS): Your feelings after achieving a surprising result.
Orpita Pal (OP): We were given a big reception on our arrival at the airport, which we really did not expect to get. Of course, it has been a good feeling to achieve something more than what we expected.

DS: Despite hardly any international experience, how did it all materialise?
OP: Of the 18-member squad, 15 players are from BKSP where we have been training together by availing all facilities since 2020, so there has been a good bonding and understanding among the players. Besides, we also played under the same coach [Zahid Hossain Raju] who trained us at BKSP, so we were able to show our strength in Singapore. The coaching staff also provided a lot of mental support.

DS: Why did you choose hockey, which has almost no future in the country?
OP: Usually, I played athletics, handball, kabaddi, and basketball at the school level where I also succeeded in athletics, but I grew interested in playing hockey when hockey was being trained at our school -- Dinajpur Jubilee High School. Then I got admitted to grade seven at BKSP in 2020. [About hockey's future in Bangladesh] Yes, there is hardly any future in women's hockey in Bangladesh, but we want to lay a foundation of women's hockey from where others will step in to develop it.

DS: Your playing experience before getting admitted to BKSP?
OP: Before getting admitted to BKSP, I had been selected for the national women's U-21 hockey team, ahead of the Women's Junior AHF Cup in 2019, and I started in the best eleven in three matches out of five we played against Kazakhstan and played two matches from the bench.

DS: What do you expect from the federation ahead of the Women's Junior Asia Cup?
OP: We want the federation to take the initiative to have a long-term training camp and arrange warm-up matches abroad so that we can hone our skills more in a bid to produce good results against the strong teams in the Women's Junior Asia Cup. Besides, we also want the federation to introduce competitions for women, so that the girls can grow their interest in playing hockey in the future.

Powell praises Windies' revival despite exit

AGENCIES

West Indies captain Rovman Powell expressed pride in reigniting enthusiasm for Caribbean cricket during the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup, despite the team exiting in the Super Eight stage yesterday.

Needing a victory against South Africa in Antigua to advance to the semi-finals, the co-hosts fell short in a rain-affected match, losing by three wickets. Powell acknowledged the team's progress, saying, "I think the cricket that we've played in the last 12 months or so is commendable."

He praised the team for their significant improvement, moving from ninth to third in world rankings. Powell also highlighted the renewed excitement for West Indies cricket, attributing it to the team's performance and the passionate support from fans, both at matches and on social media.

"They [crowd] have been fantastic. It's good to see that some buzz is back in the Caribbean for cricket because we know for how long that has died down," he noted.

Reflecting on the team's history -- an all-conquering team whose authority faced since the late 1980s -- Powell hoped this tournament would signal a new beginning for the two-time T20 World Cup champions.

"Now is where the work starts for us to continue to work as a group [and] still be tight, and hopefully we can continue to climb the rankings and make the Caribbean people proud," he concluded.

Slowly shedding the 'Chokers' tag?

ASHFAQ-UL-ALAM

The stage was set for another classic South African choke in an ICC event when they took on West Indies in a virtual knockout fixture in the Super Eight stage of the ICC T20 World Cup yesterday in Antigua.

Even after winning all five of their previous matches, South Africa somehow found themselves in a do-or-die encounter against the Caribbeans, where the winner would move onto the semifinals while the loser's campaign would come to an end.

It was a low-scoring thriller, something the ongoing edition has seen plenty of, which also included a rain interruption in the Proteas' chase, adding more drama to an already nervy affair.

South Africa had already lost a couple of wickets in the first two overs when rain stopped play and once action resumed, they were set a revised target of 123 in 17 overs.

From there, what proceeded resembled a boxing bout between two heavyweights, constantly exchanging heavy blows but no one gaining the upper hand.

Almost every middle-order batter in the South African line-up got starts, reaching scores of 20s and thereabouts. But whenever it looked like the Proteas would take the ascendency, West Indies would counterpunch with breakthroughs.

Eventually, with 23 needed off 24 balls and five wickets in hand, it seemed like the Proteas had this one in the bag. But then set batter Tristan Stubbs succumbed to the pressure of the situation, just like many South African batters of the past in knockout scenarios, trying to hit a six off Roston Chase only to get caught at long-on.

The echoes of South Africa's past horrors in knockouts got even louder when Keshav Maharaj got caught off the same bowler in the penultimate over, with a risky shot when only 13 were required off 11 balls.

The raucous home crowd at the Sir Vivian Richard Stadium erupted at the dismissal, while the few South African fans present looked on fearing another heart-breaking elimination from a World Cup.

But the Aiden Markram-led side is different to the past South African sides in ICC events at least in one crucial account. Unlike past teams, this group of players have repeatedly shown they can hold their nerves till the end and eke out victories.

South Africa are the only team in the tournament who have won all of their matches, but their victories have been far from dominant. The Proteas have been in vulnerable situations in all of their matches and have had to scratch and claw themselves out of a hole, which was perfect preparation for the situation they found themselves in against West Indies yesterday.

With pressure mounting, Kagiso Rabada hit a crucial four in the final ball of the 16th, leaving five runs for the final over.

The pressure, this time, got the better of pacer Obed McCoy, who dished a ball right in Marco Jansen's hitting zone, who muscled it over long-on for a six and took South Africa to the semis.

The close wins in the first round and Super Eight, although impressive, are not enough to shed South Africa's dreaded choker tag. To get rid of that moniker, the Proteas must go all the way for the first time. But even before that, they need to win the semifinal, something they have never done in senior cricket.

Lacklustre England must make their presence felt

REUTERS, *Blankenhain*

While England already have one foot in the knockout round of Euro 2024 and can finish no lower than third in their group, they need to make their presence felt at a tournament that has seen optimism around them wither after two lacklustre games.

England need to avoid defeat against Slovenia in Cologne to guarantee progress and will definitely top the group with a win. If Denmark fail to beat Serbia in the other Group C match, England will qualify regardless of their result against Slovenia.

Slovenia will go through to the last 16 if they win.

Supporters and pundits have levelled scathing criticism at Gareth Southgate's England side after their 1-0 win over Serbia and anxious 1-1 draw with Denmark that saw fans boo them off the pitch.

Southgate had some concerning post-game comments, pointing to the players' conditioning after long and gruellingly seasons.

"We are not pressing well enough, with enough intensity," he said.

The biggest questions are around what changes Southgate will make after he went with the same lineup in both games for the first time in 16 matches.

Southgate took off Trent Alexander-Arnold, who is struggling out of position in midfield, early in the second half against Denmark, and forwards Harry Kane, Bukayo Saka, and Phil Foden followed some 15 minutes later.

Kane, who said he is fully fit for the game amid speculation about a back injury that bothered him late in the Bundesliga season, hit back at former England players for their scathing criticism of the team's performances.

"I would never want to be disrespectful to any player, especially a player who has worn the shirt and knows what it is like to play for England," said Kane.

"(But) the bottom line is we haven't won anything as a nation for a long, long time and a lot of these players were part of that as well and they know how tough it is."

Slovenia were heading for their first victory at a European Championship when Serbia's Luka Jovic equalised seconds before the final whistle to snatch a 1-1 draw.

"We have proven that we deserve to be at Euro 2024," Slovenia manager Matjaz Kek said. "Football can be really cruel. But I am convinced that this team will get its satisfaction."

England's defence could have their hands full coping with Slovenia striker Benjamin Sesko, who has drawn comparisons to Manchester City's towering forward Erling Haaland.

"(England) know we have played two great games, they are not at their best, they're still great of course, but I think now is the best opportunity to play against them and show them the best we can," said Sesko.

France need goals with or without Mbappe

REUTERS, *Dortmund*

France will try to finally get the goals flowing against already-eliminated Poland as they seek to finish top of their Euro 2024 group on Tuesday, but questions remain about the availability of key forward Kylian Mbappe.

The striker -- who broke his nose in France's opener against Austria and sat out the following game against the Netherlands -- donned a mask to take part in a practice match on Saturday.

France have so far failed to find the net themselves in Germany -- they beat Austria in their opener courtesy of an own goal and drew 0-0 with the Dutch -- so coach Didier Deschamps will be tempted to bring Mbappe back against Poland, especially since the striker scored twice and helped France to an easy 3-1 win when the two sides last met in a game in 2022 World Cup.

Netherlands sit top of Group D, having scored more goals than the French.

Should France finish in third place, they could face England or Spain in the last 16.

PHOTO: AFP

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Once a victim himself, Noyon now fights trafficking

Bangladeshi man wins US state dept award

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Once a victim of human trafficking, Al-Amin Noyon is now a source of hope for thousands of survivors.

Recognising his unique contribution in combating human trafficking, the US government has awarded him the Trafficking in Persons Hero Award.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken handed over the award to Noyon at the annual TIP report launching ceremony in Washington DC last night.

"We thank the nine TIP Heroes who have made significant changes to the lives of people across the world," said Blinken.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Rohit Sharma wreaked havoc with a 41-ball 92 as India posted 205 for five before the bowlers restricted Australia to 181 for seven to win their Super Eight fixture of the T20 World Cup by 24 runs at Daren Sammy National Cricket Stadium in Saint Lucia by yesterday, thereby booking a semifinals berth.

PHOTO: BCCI

Rampaging Rohit leads India into semis

REUTERS

India marched into the T20 World Cup semifinals on Monday after skipper Rohit Sharma's blistering 92 set up their 24-run victory over Australia, who are now on the brink of elimination.

Rohit clobbered eight sixes in his 41-ball blitz to lay the foundation for India's imposing 205-5, their highest total in the tournament, in Gros Islet, St Lucia.

Travis Head led Australia's chase with a belligerent 76 but India managed to restrict them to 181-7 to remain unbeaten in the tournament.

The Super Eight clash between two former champion teams had assumed greater importance after Afghanistan stunned Australia on Saturday to

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

ADC suspended for 'disciplinary rules violation'

He gave journo NID details of ex-DMP chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Additional Deputy Commissioner Jisanul Haque of the city special branch and protection unit of the Gazipur Metropolitan Police has been suspended for breaching disciplinary rules.

The Public Security Division of the home ministry suspended him after the Police Headquarters requested his suspension and departmental action. The PHQ accused Jisanul of providing a journalist with personal details of ex-DMP commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia, which were stored in the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre (NTMC).

The ministry issued a circular, signed by Jahangir Alam, secretary to the Public Security Division, on Sunday stating that primarily the allegations against Jisanul have been found to be true.

On June 19, the PHQ wrote to the secretary saying Jisanul had asked an assistant sub-inspector of the Lawful Intersection Cell of the GMP for the National Identity Card (NID) details of Asaduzzaman against his mobile phone number.

The sub-inspector downloaded NID card details from the NTMC and provided

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Israeli tanks push into north, west of Rafah

28 more Palestinians, including senior Gaza health official, killed in bombing

REUTERS, *Cairo*

An Israeli air strike at a medical clinic in Gaza City killed the director of Gaza's Ambulance and Emergency Department, the enclave's health ministry said yesterday, while Israel's military said the strike had killed a senior Hamas armed commander.

In Rafah, near the border with Egypt, Israeli forces which took control of the eastern, southern, and central parts of the city pursued their raid with tanks into the western and northern areas, said residents, describing heavy fighting.

The health ministry in Gaza said the killing of Hani al-Jaafarawi brought the number of medical staff killed by Israeli fire since October 7 to 500. At least 300 others have so far been detained.

In a statement, the Israeli military said the strike targeted Mohammad Salah, who it said was responsible for developing Hamas weaponry.

"Salah was part of a project to develop strategic weaponry for the Hamas terrorist organisation, and he commanded a number of Hamas terrorist squads that worked on developing weapons," it said.

More than eight months into the fighting, international mediation backed by the United States has so far failed to bring a ceasefire agreement. Hamas says any agreement must bring an end the offensive, while Israel says it will agree only temporary pauses in fighting until Hamas is eradicated.

In the north of the enclave, where Israel had said its forces completed operations months ago, residents said tanks had pushed back into Gaza City's Zeitoun suburb and were pounding several areas there.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 37,626 people have been killed during more than eight months of offensive. The toll includes at least 28 deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

Since early May, fighting has focused on Rafah, on Gaza's southern edge where around half of the enclave's 2.3 million people had been sheltering after fleeing other areas.

» Offensive won't end till Hamas no longer controls Gaza: Netanyahu

» 500 medical staff killed by Israeli fire since Oct 7

» Gaza death toll rises to 37,626

Foreigners sent home $130.6m in 10 months of FY24

Says finance minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreigners living in Bangladesh remitted $130.58 million to their respective countries in the first 10 months of the 2023-24 fiscal year, Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali told parliament yesterday.

Among them, Indian citizens remitted $50.60 million, he said responding to a query from independent MP AK Azad from Faridpur-3.

Mahmood said info about foreign nationals' annual income is not stored at Bangladesh Bank.

He said Chinese nationals living in Bangladesh remitted $14.56 million, Sri Lankans $12.71 million, Japanese $6.89 million, South Koreans $6.21 million, Thais $5.30 million, UK nationals $3.59 million, Pakistanis $3.24 million, US citizens $3.17 million, Malaysians $2.40 million, and citizens of other countries sent home $21.92 million during the same period.

56 state entities owe Tk 51,391cr to banks

Finance minister informs JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 56 government-owned organisations owed about Tk 51,391 crore to different public and private banks as of March 31, Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali told parliament yesterday.

Of the total 56 government organisations, the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation owes the highest amount: Tk 15,550 crore, he said in response to a query from ruling Awami League MP Morshed Alam from Noakhali-2.

The BADC owes the most, Tk 15,550 crore, while DUET owes the least, Tk 78 lakh.

Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology owes the least amount to banks: Tk 78 lakh.

The state-owned sugar mills owe Tk 7,813 crore, while the fertiliser, chemical and pharmaceutical industries owe Tk 7,250.71 crore.

The Trading Corporation of Bangladesh owes Tk 5,018.06 crore, Biman Bangladesh Airlines Tk 4,441.38 crore, the food ministry Tk 644.80 crore and the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation Tk 603.41 crore.

Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory, a commercial automobile assembly plant of the Bangladesh Army, owe Tk 587.03 crore and Bangladesh Services, the parent company of Intercontinental Dhaka, Tk 580.10 crore.

Dhaka Electric Supply Company owe Tk 277.60 crore, Equity and Entrepreneurship Fund Tk 265.95 crore and Jahangirnagar University Tk 144.78 crore.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

BPSA statement a moral support for the corrupt

Says NOAB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Police Service Association's (BPSA) statement on some recent news about amassing of unusual wealth by former and current police personnel has further tarnished the image of the police force and provided moral support to the corrupt officials, said the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh.

In a press release, signed by NOAB President AK Azad and Vice-President ASM Shahidullah Khan, the association yesterday said the media has been threatened in the name of requesting to be more careful in publishing any report about the police force, and it is against the practice of independent media and impartial journalism.

Several reports, run by different media outlets about the acquisition of unusual wealth by former and current police personnel, have sparked discussion across the country.

In response, the BPSA on Friday sent copies of a letter to different media outlets, expressing concern.

In the letter, the BPSA urged journalists to refrain from publishing

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Buses heading towards Mohakhali intersection block the ramp of Mohakhali Flyover, *not in picture*, in the capital's Chairmanbari area, leading to tailbacks on this busy road. The photo was taken around noon yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Form special commission to stop rampant corruption

Menon asks govt in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon yesterday in parliament demanded the government form a special commission to stop the scourge of corruption in the country.

"There's no way to deny that the corruption of the former police chief and army chief is only the tip of the iceberg. If this spread of corruption is not stopped by taking special measures now, the country's progress will be crushed by the iceberg."

Menon, also a key leader in the ruling AL-led 14-party alliance, made the remarks at a general discussion on the proposed budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

The veteran politician also mentioned the statement made by the Bangladesh Police Service Association, saying, "Unfortunately, journalists are being rebuked for reporting on corruption."

He also called for the confiscation of corrupt people's assets and the formation

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

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KSRM
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Flood leaves wildlife in peril
P3

ICC issues arrest warrants for Russia army chief
P6

Rethinking university faculty recruitment
P8

Afghanistan win, so does cricket
P11

'Will implement Teesta project with help from India'

Says PM, sees nothing wrong in maintaining ties with both India, China

- Some people make so much money that they have to flee the country
- Rail connectivity is for the development of both the countries
- Hasina invites Modi to visit Bangladesh as soon as possible

STAR REPORT

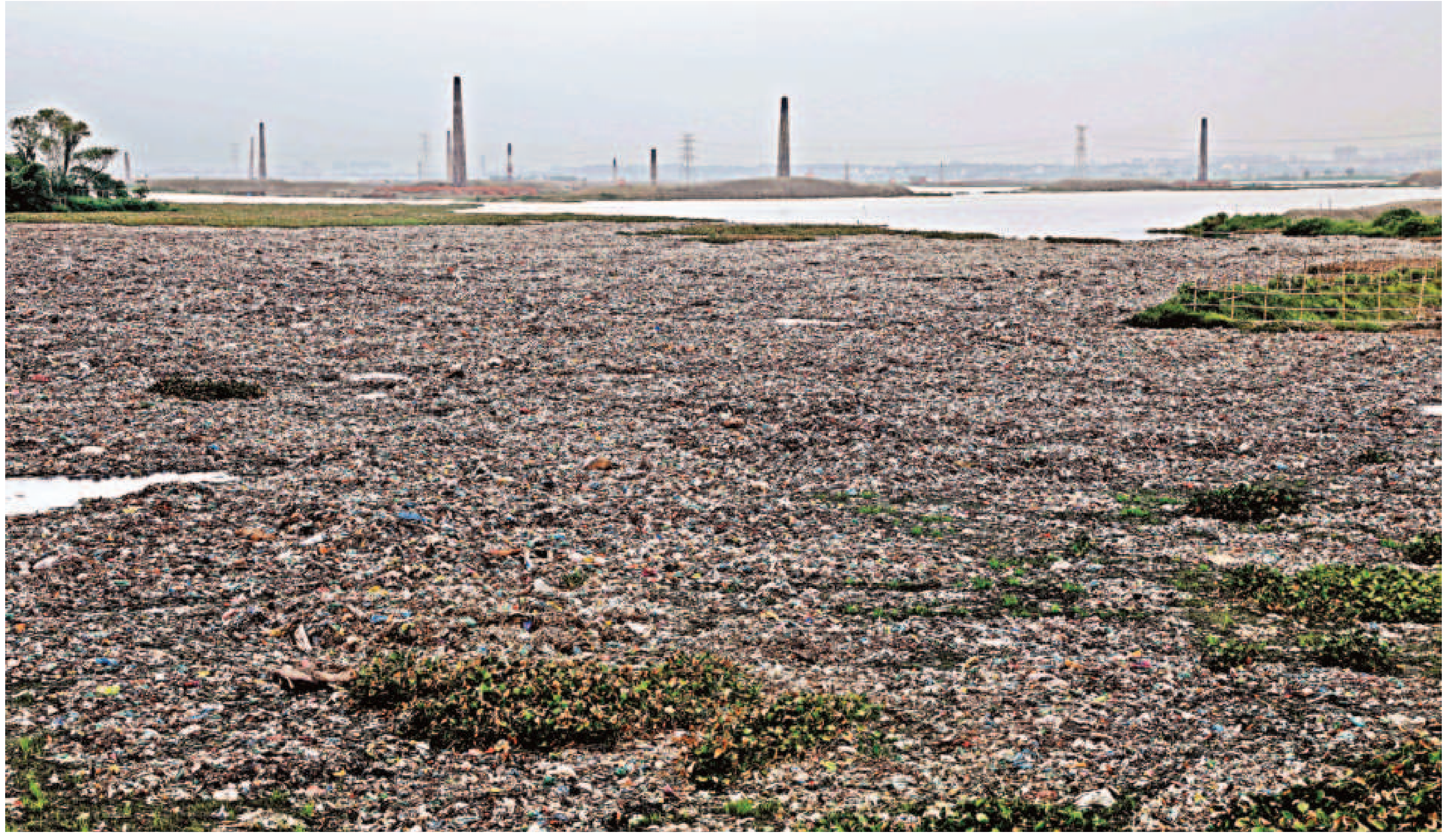
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said her government will implement the Teesta project with assistance from India and it has got assurances from the neighbouring country in this regard.

As Bangladesh has a longstanding issue with India over the sharing of Teesta waters, it would be easy for Dhaka if the Teesta project is implemented by Delhi, she said.

"As India has come forward, we think if we implement the Teesta project with India, we will not have to face problems regarding water every day. We will have that benefit," she said.

The premier was addressing a press conference at the Gono Bhaban yesterday

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Waste dumped in the capital's Aminbazaar landfill is flowing into the nearby waterbody, potentially threatening the health of the surface water. In the absence of proper management and segregation of the waste, which is needed for its decomposition, areas surrounding the landfill are becoming polluted. The photo was taken recently.
PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

'Come, let's have a debate'

PM to Yunus; says she has no yearning for Nobel Prize

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday aired her exasperation against Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus once again and invited him to have a debate with her on any issue that concerns him.

"Come and have a debate with me like it is done in the USA," she said while responding to a question during a press conference at the Gono Bhaban over the outcomes of her India visit.

"Let him come, and we will have a talk," she said.

Hasina made the remarks after a journalist asked her to comment on an article published by the Time magazine on Prof Yunus on Monday, narrating the Nobel laureate's legal perils in Bangladesh.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

New deals with India 'go against country's interest'

Says Mirza Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has said the MoUs and agreements signed with India during the prime minister's recent visit are "against the country's interest".

The party said it will wage a movement protesting those agreements and MoUs.

"BNP is rejecting those agreements as those are against the interest of Bangladesh. I want to say that BNP was formed to protect the sovereignty of the country. The party will take all measures to protect the country's independence and sovereignty. We will hold a press conference on June 28. After that, you will know about the programmes to be taken up by us, if necessary," said Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party.

Speaking at a press conference at the party chairperson's Gulshan office in the capital yesterday, the BNP leader said the movement is not against India but against the Bangladesh government.

During a meeting, the BNP standing committee expressed concern over those agreements fearing they could jeopardise the country's sovereignty and independence, he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Graft taking shine off govt triumphs

2 AL MPs tell JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Awami League lawmakers in parliament yesterday said widespread corruption is taking the shine off all the achievement of government.

Joining the discussion on the proposed budget for FY25, AL MPs Mahbubul Alam Hanif and Motahar Hossain said politicians are having to take responsibility for bureaucrats indulging in corruption even though politicians are not involved in graft.

Hanif, the lawmaker from Kushtia-2, said the government could not curb corruption despite its zero-tolerance policy.

Also joint general secretary of AL, Hanif said the market looks unstable and commodity prices have increased. The market can never be controlled if there is corruption.

"A herd of cattle was bought for Tk 1 crore. Who bought it and why? Those

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

THE MINIKET MOCKERY

Rice millers defy ban, continue over-polishing in absence of government policy

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Defying a ban, millers across the country continue polishing rice excessively and marketing it as "miniket" in the absence of monitoring.

In 2023, the government issued a ban on polishing rice and selling it under fake names, with the aim to protect the nutrients of the grains and prevent wastage.

According to the "Production, Storage, Transfer, Transportation, Supply, Distribution and Marketing of Food Products (Prevention of Prejudicial Activity) Bill-2023", manufacturing or marketing food products by removing or altering any natural ingredients in whole or partially is prohibited and a punishable offence.

The law also prohibits marketing foodstuff manufactured from an approved variety of food grain under a different or fictitious name without mentioning it as a by-product.

However, millers continued polishing different varieties of rice and were selling them as miniket, claiming they were yet to get a polishing guidelines from the food ministry.

In Bangladesh, rice is a staple food and the primary source of carbohydrates. Nearly 39 million tonnes of rice are produced annually, with an average per capita consumption of 493 grams per day, accounting for 58 percent of an individual's calorie intake, according to the Department of Agriculture Extension.

- Over 30pc rice sold as "miniket" in city markets
- Excessive milling removes vital vitamins and minerals
- 16 lakh metric tons of rice – 0.06 percent of the country's demand -- wasted in polishing process

Researchers said the excessive milling of rice removes essential nutrients like iron, calcium, and vitamin B, all of which are vital for health.

Polishing rice by 10 percent or above also reduces protein by 9-18 percent, fibre by 8-19, magnesium by 6-21, and folic acid by 8-50, shows a joint study by Dhaka University and Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI).

"Every year, polishing rice more than 10 percent results in the waste of 16 lakh metric tons --0.06 percent of the entire demand," DAE officials said.

Meanwhile, Habibul Bari Shozib, one of the researchers of the joint study, reiterated that vital minerals and vitamins are lost in the process of polishing rice by 10 percent or above.

According to the study, millers polish rice excessively to make it finer and market it as miniket to attract consumers, though no such rice variety exists.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

ACC quizzes 8 officials over passports of Benazir, family

The ex-IGP allegedly misused power to get a passport renewed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday quizzed eight officials of the Department of Immigration and Passports to get information on seven passports issued to former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed and his family members.

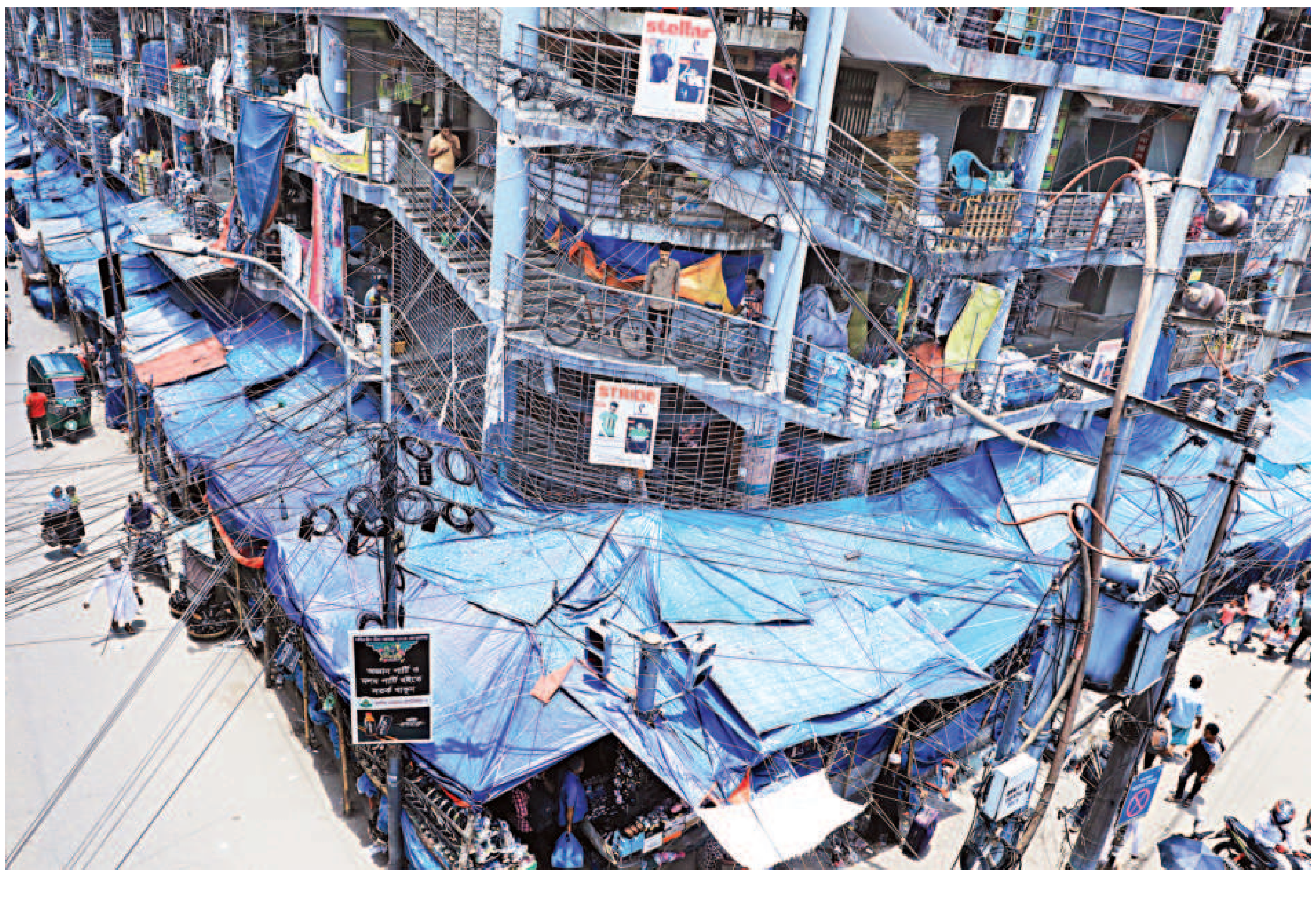
Benazir allegedly obtained a general passport hiding the fact that he is a government official. Government officials get blue passports, lawmakers and diplomats get red passports while individuals get green general passports.

As a government official, he was supposed to have a blue passport, said sources in the ACC.

They said the passport-issuing authorities noticed that he had a green passport and halted its renewal.

At that time, Benazir was the director general of Rab and a letter in this regard was sent to Rab headquarters, they said. But Benazir managed to get his passport renewed by abusing his power, the sources added.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Traders set up makeshift shops occupying the footpath next to a multi-storey shopping mall in the capital's Gulistan, forcing pedestrians to walk on the street. The photo was taken around noon yesterday.
PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Matiur used clout to stop his transfers

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

So strong was the clout of former National Board of Revenue member Matiur Rahman that he could not be transferred unless he wanted to be transferred.

A number of high officials at the tax authority said Matiur has friends in high places, and he entertained many of them at resorts he or his family owns. He used his connections and influence to have at least two transfer orders, issued by the NBR cancelled.

Matiur had worked at the Chattogram Customs, Benapole Customs, Large Taxpayer Unit (LTU), Customs VAT Commissionerate in Dhaka and Chattogram, which are considered by many officials as "lucrative".

Matiur fell in hot water after his son posted on social media a photo of a sacrificial goat worth Tk 12 lakh. The photo went viral and questions were raised about his sources of wealth. Several mainstream media outlets reported on his and his families' huge wealth and lavish lifestyle.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5
BANKS, NBFIS ASKED TO FREEZE ACCOUNTS OF MATIUR, FAMILY -- PAGE 2

Hasina's China visit to elevate ties between two countries

Says Chinese minister

UNB, *Dhaka*

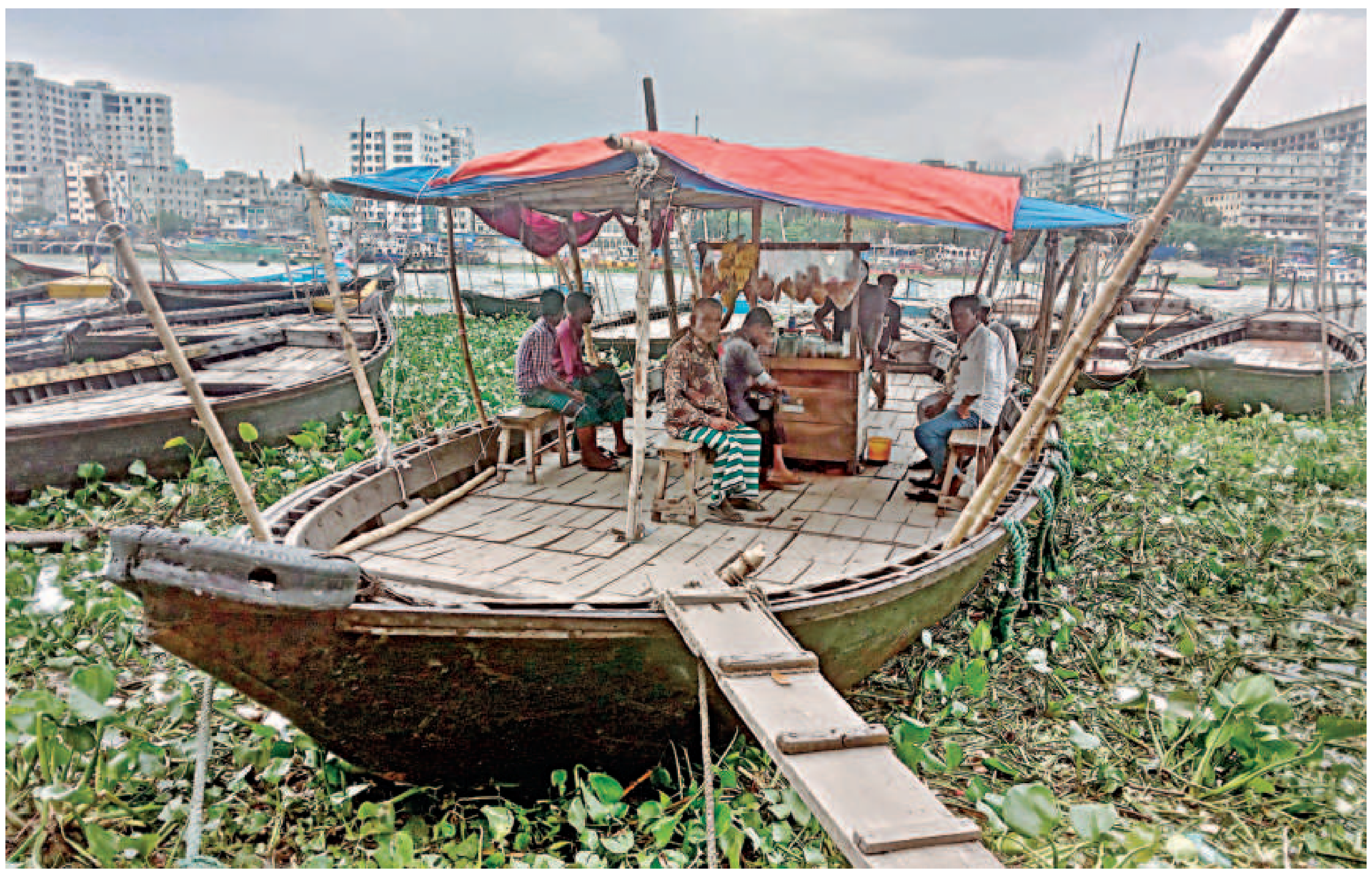
Visiting Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, Liu Jianchao, has underscored the significance of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's upcoming visit to China in July, which he thinks will help uplift the relationship, engaging in new areas of cooperation for mutual benefit.

Liu Jianchao

"I'm sure that during this visit, the relationship will be uplifted again. We are really grateful for her (PM Hasina) tremendous contributions to China-Bangladesh relations," he said while speaking as the chief guest at a dialogue in the capital yesterday.

Jianchao said that China and Bangladesh are breaking new ground for further and stronger

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



Miraj Hossain, 55, had bought this boat eight months ago with Tk 3 lakh to transport goods from the capital to other areas. With more and more people opting to carry their goods in other vessels, such as launches, he was about to lose his livelihood until he had the unique idea of setting up a tea-stall on the boat, moored to a Buriganga bank. For the past four months, Miraj and his son have been making a living through their "floating tea-stall" . The photo was taken in Keraniganj yesterday. PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

Banks, NBFIs asked to freeze accounts of Matiur, family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two financial sector regulators yesterday asked banks and financial institutions to freeze all accounts of revenue official Matiur Rahman and his family members.

These include mobile financial service (MFS) accounts and beneficiary owner (BO) accounts used for investing in the share market.

"We have issued letters to all banks and non-bank financial institutions to freeze the accounts of Matiur Rahman, his two wives, and five children," said a top official of the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) seeking anonymity.

The accounts should remain frozen for 30 days, the BFIU also ordered.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) also blocked the BO accounts of Matiur and his family members, said Rezaul Karim, spokesperson of the stock market regulator.

The banks, non-bank financial institutions, and MFS providers have also been asked to send the details of transactions and account opening data, along with KYC of all accounts of Matiur and family members, to the BFIU in the next five working days.

The development comes after the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) launched an inquiry into the allegations of amassing illegal wealth and money laundering by Matiur.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Teachers go on

FROM PAGE 12

said, adding that, however, the scheduled exams were held.

FBUTA will hold similar programmes today and tomorrow.

Teachers of Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, and Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, among others, took part in the abstention programme yesterday, according to FBUTA.

They are protesting the government decision to include all officers and employees, joining the service of autonomous, self-governing, nationalised, statutory, or similar organisations and their subordinate institutions, under the UPSon or after July 1, 2024.

FBUTA said the teachers who will be newly appointed in public universities will fall under the new pension scheme instead of the current pension facilities offered by the universities.

They fear that many people will not join the teaching profession if the new scheme, which they termed "discriminatory", is implemented.

They have also been demanding the cancellation of the gazette in this regard through several peaceful protests since May 26.

Furthermore, the university teachers also demanded a separate pay scale and the inclusion of professors in the "super" grade.

New deals

FROM PAGE 1

"The government has completely failed to reach out to India or to have its demands met. You [government] are trying to sign agreements without getting water from the transboundary rivers."

The BNP leader said Bangladesh needs Teesta water first but the government wants to work on a Teesta project. "This is because the project involves a lot of money and the government is targeting that money."

Raising questions about the benefits of the agreements, Fakhrul said, "How will Bangladesh be benefited from the corridors? India will surely be benefited. Connectivity is essential, but it should be in our interest. It must not be done at the cost of our interest."

Criticising the government, he said the government kept mum on sharing water of the transboundary rivers and border killings.

"Sheikh Hasina has completely failed to secure anything from India. This has happened due to the subservient foreign policy of the government. This government has deliberately made Bangladesh dependent on India."

KHALEDA'S CONDITION STABLE

Talking about the health of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Fakhrul said her condition was "stable" following the installment of a pacemaker in her heart on Sunday.

"So far I know until this [yesterday] morning, she was shifted to a cabin with CCU facilities."

The BNP leader said all arrangements were made by Khaleda's family to send her abroad for treatment, but the prime minister turned down the application seeking permission in this regard.

Amid such a situation, the party's standing committee expressed concern over Khaleda's deteriorating health, Fakhrul said.

He said the BNP chief's imprisonment is "solely motivated by political vengeance". The BNP standing committee members deem this as unconstitutional and unlawful, he added.

Fakhrul alleged that Khaleda was sentenced and imprisoned on false charges as the government's primary objective was to removeher from politics.

He said the BNP standing committee also observed that the "illegitimate government is systematically preventing Khaleda from receiving advanced treatment abroad with an aim to kill her and consolidate its power".

Will implement Teesta project

FROM PAGE 1

to brief the media about the outcome of her June 21-22 state visit to India, report BSS and UNB.

Responding to a query from a journalist, the premier, however, said her government will accept either a Chinese or an Indian proposal for the Teesta Master Plan Project considering which one would be the most beneficial for the country.

"We have taken up the Teesta project. China and India have put forward separate proposals to implement the project.

"But we must consider which proposal will be beneficial for the people, how much loan we will take and how much we will have to repay after the completion of the project, and also the capability of repaying the loan," Hasina continued.

China has completed a physical survey on the Teesta project while India wants to carry out another one, she said.

The PM said India has expressed its willingness to send a technical team to Bangladesh in this regard and Bangladesh will sit with the team.

"We will accept that survey which would be more suitable and beneficial for us."

In her written speech, Hasina said, "We discussed renewal of the Ganges River Water Sharing Agreement and India's assistance in the Teesta River Water Management and Water Conservation Project in Bangladesh. However, this has no link with the long-standing Teesta water sharing issue.

"We will implement the whole Teesta project with assistance from India, and we have got assurances from India in this regard," she said.

The Teesta project involves dredging the river, building strong embankments and a water reservoir, setting up townships and industries on the banks of the river, and irrigation.

Replying to another query about a news on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's objection to Indian government's move over the sharing of Teesta and Ganges waters with Bangladesh "bypassing her", Hasina said she does not want to make any comment on the issue as it is solely India's internal matter.

The premier, however, said she has a good relationship with all political parties in India, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Mamata.

She said she particularly has a good relationship with Sonia Gandhi and their children, and the family members of late Indian president Pranab Mukherjee.

About balancing Bangladesh's relations with India and China, Hasina said there is nothing to balance as her government is following the foreign policy -- "Friendship to all, malice to none".

"India is very important for Bangladesh as they along with the freedom fighters shed blood for the independence of Bangladesh during the Liberation War in 1971," she said.

There are many things to be learnt from China about how a country can be developed, the PM said. "We maintain relations considering all these aspects."

She said she does not see any problem with maintaining relations with both India and China.

Hasina said those who say that her government is selling Bangladesh off to India have already sold themselves to India. "They criticise India publicly and flatter it secretly or they were the agents of Pakistan in 1971."

She said everyone should keep in mind that India was the only allied force in the world which left a country they helped liberate.

Talking about rail transit to India, the premier said everyone should keep in mind that she does not sell off Bangladesh as her party liberated the country.

She said Bangladesh and India are resuming rail connectivity which is beneficial for trade and commerce and socio-economic development of the two nations.

She came down heavily on those who criticise rail connectivity by describing it as an attempt to sell off the country.

The premier said, "Look at Europe where there are no borders. Is one country selling itself to another there? Every country is sovereign."

She questioned if Bangladesh would keep its doors shut.

Hasina said some people became greedy and made so much money that they could not keep the money at home, and thus they had to flee the country to keep the money abroad.

"What is the benefit if someone has to leave the country after making money?" she added.

Terming her India visit very successful, Hasina in her written speech said, "The visit was short but very fruitful. I think this visit will play a far-reaching role in strengthening the existing excellent relations between India and Bangladesh."

She said that the visit opened new avenues of cooperation for the socioeconomic development of the people of the two neighbouring countries.

"Bangladesh-India relations have grown to a unique height over the last 15 years. The people of both countries are enjoying the benefits."

Hasina said she discussed with Modi politics and security, peaceful and secured border management and curbing border casualty to 'zero' level, trade and connectivity, sustainable management of common rivers and water sharing, energy, regional and multilateral cooperation, among other issues of mutual interest.

She said Modi assured her that Bangladesh is at the centre of India's Neighbourhood First, Act East, and "Sea and Indo-Pacific" policies.

The PM said she invited Modi to visit Bangladesh as soon as possible at his convenience.

The miniket mockery

FROM PAGE 1

Over 30 percent of the rice sold in city markets in Bangladesh is refined into a different shape, size, and color and branded as miniket, according to an International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) study published on May 1 this year.

The study titled "Research-backed policy to eliminate miniket rice in Bangladesh will improve nutrition", found that the so-called miniket rice is largely fashioned from rice varieties like BRRI-28 and BRRI-29 and has up to 70 percent less zinc than other varieties.

The report said that the name "miniket" was derived in 1985, when a high-yielding slender rice variety called Shatabdi was distributed in "mini kits" to farmers in India's West Bengal.

The IFRI report said the Shatabdi variety of rice is no longer produced.

According to Bangladesh Auto Major and Husking Mills Owners Association (BAMHMOA), rice is polished in at least 4,000 automatic rice mills across the country.

The Daily Star reached out to two dozen rice mill owners in Dinajpur, Dhaka, Narayanganj, Sunamganj, Chapainawabganj, Rangpur, Faridpur, Nilphamari, and Jashore.

All of them said they polish rice by 10-16 percent depending on the quality.

Sabbir Ahmed, general secretary of Sylhet Division Auto Rice Mills Owners Association, said, "As the government is yet to set any specific guidelines on an acceptable polishing limit, mill owners are polishing rice at will, potentially compromising public health."

Nirod Baron Saha Chandan, president of the Paddy-Rice Wholesalers and Traders Association in Naogaon, said millers across the country polish rice by 15 percent.

"People prefer whiter rice, so millers over-polish in the absence of any government guidelines," he said, adding that the government should introduce a policy in this regard soon.

Julfiqar Mahmud Niyaz, owner of Bhola Auto Rice Mills Limited and general secretary of Barishal Division Mills Owners Samity, and Masud Rana, owner of Ma Vandari Auto Rice Mill and co-organising secretary of the Auto Major and Husking Mills Owners Association in Kushtia, echoed Chandan's views.

HR Khan Pathan, general secretary of BAMHMOA, said polishing also hikes the prices of rice.

"After polishing, we get 26kg rice from 40kg paddy. But without polishing, we can save 1-1.5kg rice and the price could be reduced by Tk 2-3 per kg."

Food officials in different districts said they were unable to take any action against the millers in the absence of government guidelines.

Mohammad Babul Hossain, food controller in Kushtia, said, "There's no government policy ... We have not received any instructions on rice polishing from the government or high officials."

This correspondent contacted seven district food controllers, who said the same thing.

Ismiel Hossain, secretary of the Ministry of Food, told The Daily Star that the law clearly states that rice cannot be polished.

"[Though] the policy does not specify a percentage for rice polishing, there is no way to violate the law."

Kamal Hossain, public relations officer of the ministry, said, "A rice polishing policy has been prepared and is currently at Bangladesh Government Printing Office."

Talking to this correspondent on June 20, Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder said, "Four crore tonnes of rice is produced in the country every year. This rice is polished five times to make it bright. This reduces the weight of the rice by 4 to 5 percent. As a result, the annual rice production is reduced by 16 lakh metric tons. If the polishing can be done only twice, the nutritional value of rice will increase, while the losses will come down."

"By adopting this approach, the cost of rice production will lower and the consumers will also get rice at more affordable prices."

ACC quizzes 8 officials

FROM PAGE 1

An ACC team led by its Deputy Director Md Hafizul Islam, head of the enquiry team formed to investigate the graft allegations against the former police chief, quizzed the officials at its headquarters in the capital for over three hours yesterday, said officials.

On June 13, the anti-graft body sent letters to passport officials -- Md Mohsin Islam, Abu Md Motaleb Hossain, Abdul Jalil Mondol, Munshi Mueed Ikram, Abdullah Al Mamun, Abu Naeem Masum, Saidur Rahman, and Subas Chandra Roy -- for quizzing.

Benazir and his family members had skipped the ACC's questioning over allegations that they amassed huge wealth through illegal means.

On May 28, the ACC issued a notice, asking Benazir to appear at its office on June 6, and his wife and two daughters on June 9.

In separate letters, they requested the ACC to defer the quizzing by 15 days.

The anti-graft body then asked Benazir to appear on June 23 and his family members on June 24.

Matiur used clout

FROM PAGE 1

The Anti-Corruption Commission finally launched an inquiry into his wealth a few days ago. At least four complaints were filed with the graft watchdog against him over the years, but the ACC did not launch a probe before.

On Sunday, he was transferred to the Internal Resources Division of the finance ministry.

Two NBR chairmen failed to have him transferred before.

During the caretaker government rule in 2007, then NBR chairman Badiur Rahman transferred Matiur from the Chattogram Customs House to the VAT Commissionerate in Rajshahi.

During a TV talk show recently, Badiur said, "As the NBR chairman, I ordered the transfer of Matiur. After the order was issued, Matiur visited my office and even went to my home to meet me. But I did not meet him. Later, I was surprised by what happened."

Badiur said then army chief Moeen U Ahmed and three other army officials had called him to stop the transfer.

"I did not cancel the order," he said, adding, "I told the army chief that transfer me if necessary and bring Matiur back, but I will not change the order."

And this is exactly what happened. Badiur was transferred elsewhere and Matiur returned to Chattogram Customs House within a month.

In July 2022, NBR Chairman and Senior Secretary of Internal Resources Department Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem also failed to have Matiur transferred.

An order was issued to transfer Matiur again to the Rajshahi VAT Commissionerate from the Customs, Excise, and VAT Appellate Tribunal. He did not even join his new post in Rajshahi, and within 15 days a new order was issued cancelling his transfer.

NBR officials said in February that year, the government appointed Matiur as a director of Sonali Bank without the consent of the NBR chairman or clearance from the tax authority.

They claimed that, for this reason, Matiur was among 13 officials who were transferred as part of routine.

While the 12 others joined their new work places, Matiur did not. So strong were his connections and influence that he could have his transfer order cancelled, the officials said on condition of anonymity.

This paper has copies of the transfer orders.

The government on Monday removed Matiur from the Sonali Bank board of directors.

Following an ACC appeal, the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka issued a travel ban on Matiur and two of his family members.

Assange set to be freed

FROM PAGE 12

embassy in London as he fought accusations of sex crimes in Sweden and battled extradition to the US, where he faced 18 criminal charges.

The US government viewed him as a reckless villain who had endangered the lives of agents through WikiLeaks' mass release of secret US documents - the largest security breaches of their kind in US military history.

But to free press advocates and his supporters, which includes world leaders, celebrities and some prominent journalists, he is a hero for exposing wrongdoing and alleged war crimes, and was persecuted for embarrassing US authorities.

Assange is due to be sentenced to 62 months of time already served at a hearing in Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands, at 9:00 am local time.

The US territory in the Pacific was chosen due to Assange's opposition to travelling to the mainland US and for its proximity to Australia, prosecutors said.

Australian-born Assange left Belmarsh maximum security jail in the early hours of Monday, before being bailed by the London High Court and later boarding a flight, his wife, Stella Assange said. He was currently on a stopover in Bangkok, she said.

"I feel elated," Stella, who flew to Australia from London on Sunday with the couple's two children, told Reuters. "I also feel worried ... Until it's fully signed off, I worry, but it looks like we've got there."

A video posted on X by Wikileaks showed Assange dressed in a blue shirt and jeans signing a document before boarding a private jet. After the hearing in Saipan, Assange will fly to Canberra where he will arrive today, his wife said.

He had recently won permission to appeal against the approval of his US extradition and the case was due to be heard at London's High Court next month, a factor that Stella Assange said helped galvanise talks over a deal.

The Australian government, led by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, has been pressing US President Joe Biden for Assange's release but declined to comment on the legal proceedings as they were ongoing.

"There is nothing to be gained by his continued incarceration and we want him brought home to Australia," Albanese said in the country's parliament.

WikiLeaks came to prominence in 2010 after it released hundreds of thousands of classified US military documents on Washington's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq along with swaths of diplomatic cables.

The trove of more than 700,000 documents included battlefield accounts such as a 2007 video of a US Apache helicopter firing at suspected insurgents in Iraq, killing a dozen people including two Reuters news staff. That video was released in 2010.

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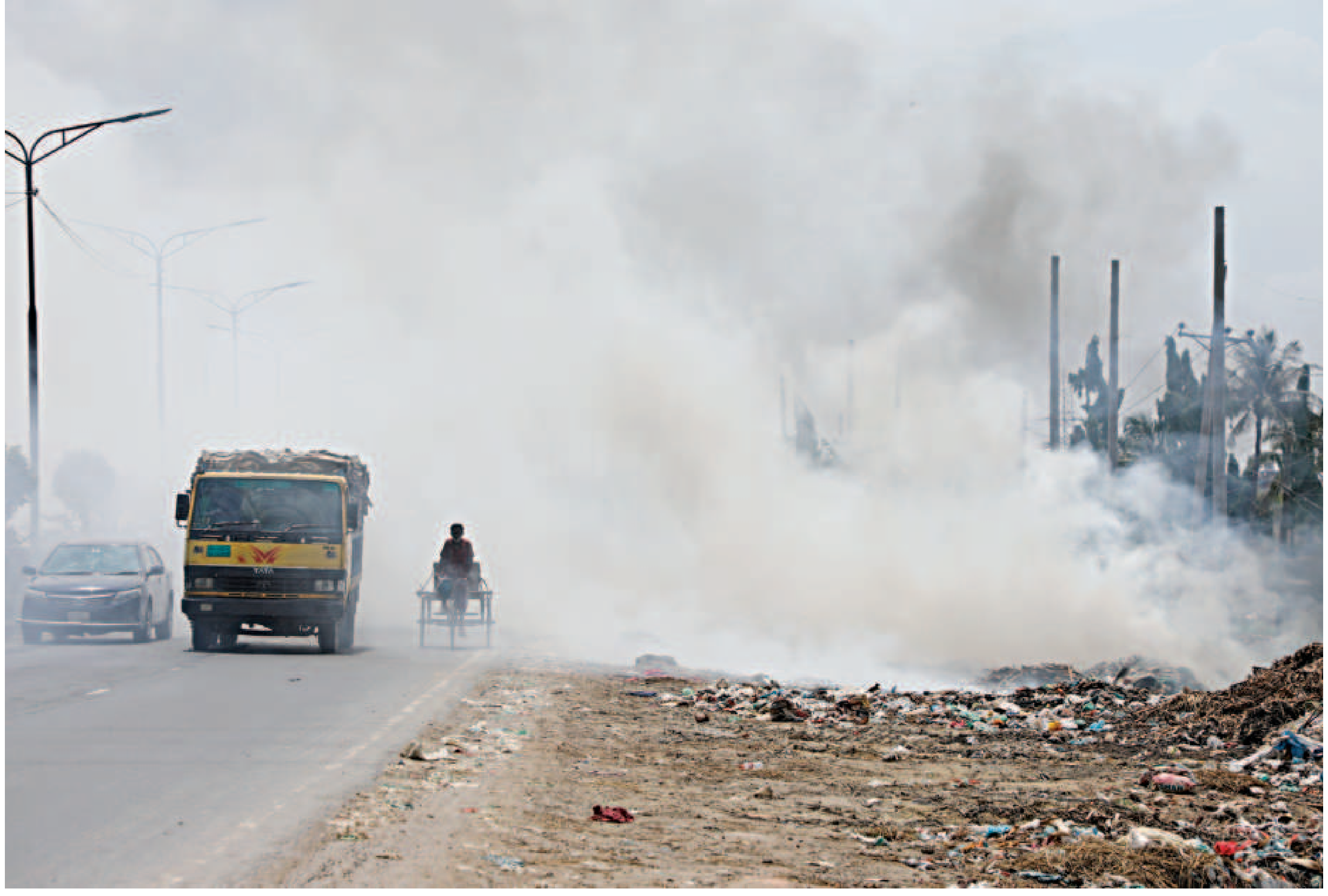


PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

A pile of illegally dumped waste was set on fire in the Boliarpur area on the Dhaka-Savar highway, polluting the surrounding air. The smoke is also a hindrance to passing vehicles, as it reduces visibility on the road and could even result in an accident. The photo was taken recently.

Sylhet Flood leaves wildlife in peril

MINTU DESHWARA, *Moulvibazar*

The ongoing flood across the Sylhet division has left wildlife in the region in peril.

Locals in Kamalpur village under Ajmeriganj upazila of Habiganj district on June 24 rescued a fishing cat from the overflowing Kalni river, barely clinging to its life by clutching at water hyacinths to stay afloat.

Zobair Ahmed Jabed, member of the local union parishad, said the fishing cat was fed after rescue and kept safe. Staffers of wildlife conservation department will come and relocate it, he added.

Another injured fishing cat was rescued in Sylhet's Companiganj upazila from a bridge.

Kabir Ahmed, a local, said the cat was there seeking shelter.

Continuous downpour, flood and landslides have caused significant damage to habitats of local wildlife as vast stretches of area have become inundated, leaving animals without food and safety.

Animals like fishing cats and foxes were seen looking for shelter in various localities, where they are unfortunately vulnerable to attacks by villagers.

Livestock are also suffering.

"Flood water inundated our area last week. Our house and cattle-shed are submerged. We are worried that the cattle might get bitten by snakes coming with floodwater," said Abdur Rashid of Mohammadpur village in Sunamganj.

Many others echoed him.

"The flood has left wildlife in Sylhet vulnerable. Also, ongoing panic over Russell's viper, instigated by misinformation, has left other snake species in danger. People are unaware and likely to kill other harmless snakes," said Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon's Sylhet Chapter.

A rescued fishing cat in Sylhet. PHOTO: STAR

Muntasir Akash, lecturer of zoology department at Dhaka University, expressed concern over possible loss of wildlife in Sylhet due to the ongoing flood.

Dr Jahangir Alam, divisional forest officer in Sylhet, said they are working on rescuing wild animals from flood-affected areas, when informed.

ROAD CRASHES DURING EID

Govt, NGO data don't match

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 230 people were killed and 301 were injured in 235 road crashes across the country in 13 days during the rush centring Eid-ul-Azha, according to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder yesterday revealed the information at a press conference at BRTA headquarters in the capital's Banani.

However, the BRTA statistics are much lower than the road crash data of a non-government organisation for the same period.

13-DAY EID VACATION	BRTA	ROAD SAFETY FOUNDATION
Total accidents	235	251
Number of deaths	230	262
Injured	301	543

The growing number of road crashes and deaths has turned into a major concern lately and the number usually sees a rise during the Eid rush as the number of vehicles and road users rises sharply at this time.

Nur Mohammad said BRTA, along with other government agencies, took numerous steps to make people's Eid journey safe and hassle-free.

"Our steps worked and we could offer a relatively hassle-free Eid journey," he said, adding, "But road crashes and deaths often undermine the success."

He said between June 11 and June 23, around 230 people were killed and 301 were injured in 235 road crashes.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

AFTERMATH OF FLOOD, REMAL

Over 250km of RHD roads damaged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 250 kilometres of roads under 13 divisions of Roads and Highways Department were affected due to the ongoing flood in the northeast region and the cyclone Remal last month.

RHD, however, could not assess the financial losses caused by the flood and cyclone yet, officials said.

Earlier, floods in 2017, 2019, 2020, and 2022 damaged many roads under RHD network, and the authorities had to spend a large amount of money to repair them.

Transport experts and environmentalists often blame poor planning ahead of road construction and ignoring the impacts of climate change as the main reasons for floods causing so much damage to roads and resulting in high repair costs.

RHD officials, however, said although many roads built decades ago were not properly engineered structures, they were now constructing properly engineered structures with climate-adaptive designs.

According to RHD data, 25 roads under Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Moulvibazar with a length of 155.41km were damaged till June 23 due to ongoing flood.

A damaged road in Bagerhat after cyclone Remal.

Of the affected roads, 6.90km are national highways; 45.44 km are regional highways and 103.07km are district roads.

Some parts of these roads were washed out partially while the embankment of some roads collapsed and numerous potholes were developed in many roads, reads the preliminary report.

Zikrul Hassan, superintendent engineer (maintenance circle) of RHD, said they have already formed a monitoring team that will visit the affected areas next week.

They will give a report assessing the extent of damage caused by the flood and will take necessary measures accordingly, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

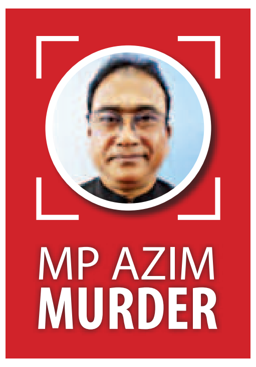
SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Daughter to visit Kolkata on July 3 for DNA test

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mumtarin Ferdous Doreen, daughter of Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim Anar, is scheduled to travel to Kolkata on July 3 along with family members and DB investigators. She will provide DNA samples to match against recovered flesh and bones from a septic tank and canal in Kolkata.

The results aim to confirm whether the remains belong to her father, MP Azim, who was allegedly murdered in a New Town flat in Kolkata.



Abdur Rouf, the lawmaker's personal assistant, said they are now waiting for the government's final approval for the trip. A source within DB has also confirmed the development.

Meanwhile, Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, the relief and social welfare affairs secretary of the Jhenaidah Awami League, was shifted to Jhenaidah prison from Keraniganj central jail yesterday following a court order.

Babu has allegedly used his mobile phone to communicate with and exchange photos with the suspected killer of Azim.

He later disposed of three mobile phones used in communication to destroy evidence, claimed DB.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'Be scared of humans, not snakes'

PM suggests caution, saying animals vital for ecological balance

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stated yesterday that animals and snakes do not attack humans unless they feel threatened.

The premier said this while replying to a question at a press conference in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

The Russell's viper conundrum

Misinformation leads to killing of snakes, experts blame lack of awareness campaigns

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

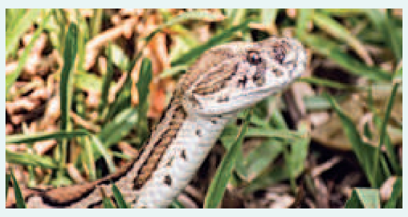
Russell's viper is not a snake species of a foreign land, rather they have coexisted in the natural ecosystem of the Indian sub-continent for centuries.

Although the name gives off a mysterious vibe, these vipers also have a simple Bangla name -- Chandrabora.

These snakes are in fact, beneficial, especially to farmers, as they mainly feed on rats on agricultural lands.

Recently, however, their population has proliferated. This surge is linked to the decline of their natural predators -- mongooses, monitor lizards, forest cats, eagles, and cranes due to indiscriminate hunting.

Misinformation on social media fueled panic, leading people to kill any snake they saw, fearing it was a deadly viper. In the frenzy, many



Although the name gives off a mysterious vibe, Russel's vipers also have a simple Bangla name -- Chandrabora. These snakes are in fact, beneficial, especially to farmers, as they mainly feed on rodents on agricultural lands.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

ANTIVENOM

Govt served legal notice to ensure supply

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday served a legal notice on the government yesterday, asking it to ensure adequate supply of antivenom to every hospital, clinic and health centre.

Advocate Bahauddin Al Imran sent the legal notice to the secretary at the public security division of the home ministry; secretary at the health services division of health ministry; director general of Directorate of Health Services and director general of Directorate of Drug Administration for taking necessary measures in seven days.

Antivenom shortage at Barishal hospitals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barishal*

Sher-e Bangla Medical College Hospital, the largest healthcare centre in Barishal division, does not have any antivenom in stock for treating snake bites.

Dr Saiful Islam, director of SBMCH, stated he plans to visit Dhaka soon to secure a supply.

He noted that in the last three days, three snake bite patients were treated, but none required anti-venom as the snakes were non-venomous.

On average, SBMCH treats 50-60 snake bite patients annually, with 80 percent bitten by non-venomous snakes.

Meanwhile, in the last three months, 70 snake bite patients were treated at upazila hospitals, with only seven bitten by venomous snakes.

However, three deaths were reported in the past two months in Bhola, Jhalkathi, and Barguna districts.

Dr Shyamal Krishna Mondal, director of the Divisional Health Office, claimed there are adequate antivenom stocks. However, medical staff and locals from the grassroots alleged otherwise.

Dr Shishir Kumar Gain, resident medical officer in Agailjhara upazila, said they have 30 vials of antivenom, sufficient for treating only three patients.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Arrest warrant issued against Mamunul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Narayanganj court issued an arrest warrant against former Hefazat-e-Islam leader Mamunul Haque yesterday.

Judge Nazmul Haque Shyamal of Narayanganj Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal passed the order as Mamunul was absent on the day of the cross-examination of witnesses, said Public Prosecutor Rakibuddin Ahmed.

Earlier, Mamunul got bail from the same court on April 4 in a case filed with Sonargaon Police Station in Narayanganj over rape charges.

Rakibuddin said the court had earlier fixed yesterday for cross-examination of witness SI SM Shafiqul Islam, the case's investigating officer, in presence of Mamunul.

On Mamunul being absent, Rakibuddin said, "Defence is trying to delay the trial at the last stage."

However, defence lawyer Omar Faruk Nayan said Mamunul was ill and doctors prescribed him bed rest.

The defence pleaded for another date, but the court denied the plea bargain and issued an arrest warrant.

As floodwater recedes in Sylhet, families return to their homes from shelter centres after 10-12 days. *Inset*, many areas in Companiganj and Gowainghat still remain submerged, forcing families to travel to Santuk market by boat to buy essentials. The photos were taken in the Santuk area of Gowainghat yesterday. PHOTO: **SHEIKH NASIR**

The Russell's viper

FROM PAGE 3

harmless snakes lost their lives.

At least eight snakes -- four buff striped keelback, one python and common wolf snake, and two Siebold's snakes -- were killed in a single week.

Additionally, at least 16 Russell's vipers were beaten to death in the last two weeks, eight in Rajshahi, five in Munshiganj, two in Faridpur, and one in Madaripur, as per officials.

Russell's viper is protected under the Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act, 2012, as it plays a crucial role in controlling rodent population and its venom is used to produce life-saving medicines. Killing these snakes is a punishable offense.

Meanwhile, nine people have died from Russell's viper bites in the last three months, with five deaths in Manikganj, three in Rajbari, and one in Faridpur.

Experts have pointed fingers at the government, criticising their lack of public awareness campaigns.

Health Minister Dr Samanta Lal Sen has instructed public hospitals to maintain an adequate stock of antivenom.

"The most important task is to take snakebite victims to a doctor at the quickest possible time... timely medical intervention can fully cure snakebite victims through proper treatment," he said.

INADEQUATE AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

In Bangladesh, there are around 100 snake species, with 37 being venomous, including Russell's viper.

A 2018 study by Professor Farid Ahsan of Chittagong University suggested arranging training for medical staff and awareness campaigns for people in areas where such snakes are present.

However, after talking to government officials from 14 districts, this correspondent found that campaigns were conducted in only five districts.

Forest officials of these districts said they did not get any direction from the ministry.

Imran Ahmed, conservator of forests at the Wildlife and Nature Conservation Circle, admitted that awareness programmes are inadequate.

As such, people resort to killing snakes after being misled by rumours.

"We are issuing letters to involve local administration in awareness raising activities and developing long-term plans to overcome the panic," he added.

POPULATION BOOM

Killing natural predators of the viper is the main reason behind their increase in number. Besides, an improved irrigation system now allows year-round crop cultivation, increasing the rodent population, which is the snake's main food source, said Kamrul Hasan, professor of Zoology at Jahangirnagar University.

Also, rising temperatures in the Rajshahi-Barendra region have increased the female snake population to 80 percent, he said.

Russell's vipers, being good swimmers, have spread from Rajshahi to other riverside districts via the Padma.

As many as 235 people were treated at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital over 11 years after being bitten by the viper. Around 29 people have died in the region during this time. They were mostly brought in after it was too late, RMCH sources said.

Student loses

FROM PAGE 5

was recommended by doctors.

Imran Hossain Shajib, Boalkhali UNO, said actions would be taken following an investigation.

Madrasa director Mohiuddin Mahmud Manik claimed CCTV footage showed no such incidents took place at the madrasa. He said the child might have been injured in a separate incident.

He said the madrasa covered some medical costs following the complaint.

Over 250km of RHD

FROM PAGE 3

Cyclone Remal hit the coastal area of the country on May 26, which damaged 69 roads under 13 RHD divisions. The divisions are: Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Patuakhali, Barguna, Barishal, Pirojpur, Bhola, Faridpur, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar, and Noakhali.

Of the 98.47km of affected roads, 18km were national highways, 10.01km were regional highways and 70.47km were district roads, according to RHD data.

Zikrul said all the affected roads have already been made passable except for a ferry service in Bagerhat.

He said they were assessing the financial losses caused by cyclone Remal and will take necessary steps following the assessment.

RHD is responsible for a 22,476km network of roads and bridges across the country.

Apart from the RHD roads, many local roads under Local Government Engineering Department have also been affected by the floods and Remal.

Seven collapsed

FROM PAGE 5

Amtali upazila, said they are yet to take any measures due to a lack of allocation to this end.

"Due to the high level of salinity in water in this region, the iron pillars of the bridges are getting corroded, leaving those in a dilapidated state, while some have already collapsed," he said.

"We have sent a proposal to the higher authorities for construction of girder bridges in place of the existing bridges. The construction will begin once allocation is received," he added.

Govt, NGO data

FROM PAGE 3

However, Road Safety Foundation, a non-government organisation working on road safety issues, on Monday published a report on road crashes during the Eid rush.

The organisation, compiling media reports, said at least 262 people were killed and 543 were injured in 251 road crashes in the 13 days from June 11 to June 23.

Without mentioning the name of the organisation, Nur Mohammad said, "The report of such an organisation is not acceptable and the data mentioned in their report is confusing."

He mentioned 10 reasons behind the road crashes during Eid journey, including riding bikes without helmets, rash driving and over-speeding, risky overtaking, drivers not following traffic signs and road markings, and the carelessness of pedestrians while crossing the road.

Nur Mohammad said executive magistrates of BRTA and district administrations filed 3,739 cases against errant vehicles and drivers and realised Tk 85.41 lakh from them between June 13 and June 24.

He, however, said it is difficult to get the expected results in curbing a multifaceted problem like road accidents only with the enforcement of law and taking administrative measures.

Everybody has to obey traffic laws and above all, a social movement has to be launched to reduce road crashes, he said.

Antivenom

FROM PAGE 3

Meanwhile, Barishal General Hospital has 60 vials, enough for six patients.

As of Monday, upazila-level hospitals in Barishal had 280 vials, enough for only 28 patients, confirmed Dr Maria Hasan, civil surgeon of Barishal.

She said arrangements are being made to send enough antivenoms in these hospitals so that each facility can treat at least 20 patients.

There are rumours of Russell's viper snakes in Barishal, but no confirmed bites have been reported, she added.

The officials also urged people to maintain caution.

Daughter to visit

FROM PAGE 3

He has been shifted to Jhenaidah prison as drives will be conducted with him to recover the discarded phones, said Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Local police are ensuring no one recovers the phone before investigators reach the spot, Harun said.

Magistrates, fire service divers and fishermen will be present in the drives to recover the phones, he said.

"Babu initially filed a general diary reporting lost phones, but later gave confessional statements saying he discarded them in a pond on a leader's order," the DB chief said.

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and stayed at a friend's house for a night. He left the following day, saying that he would visit a doctor.

On May 22, India and Bangladesh police said the lawmaker was murdered.

Besides Babu, detectives also arrested four other accused for their alleged involvement with the killing. They are Mintu, general secretary of Jhenaidah AL, Amanullah, suspected coordinator of the killing mission, his nephew Tanvir Bhuiyan, and Celesty Rahman.

Be scared of humans

FROM PAGE 3

Gono Bhaban held over the outcome of her recent visit to India.

Journalist Shykh Seraj in his question said a panic has been created on social media centring Russell's viper. He asked if the government would take any steps to raise awareness in this regard.

In response, the prime minister said animals are important to maintain the ecological balance. She suggested people to remain cautious. "You [people] should be scared of humans, not animals or snakes," said Hasina.

Currently, a series of stories regarding Russell's viper are getting viral on social media as the snake has reportedly spread alarmingly in the country. Some people even announced a bounty for killing the reptile.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 26

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-17
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-57	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

TENDER NOTICE

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar hereby announces the launch of the following tenders:

TENDER REFERENCE NUMBER	ITEM DESCRIPTION
ITB/HCR/CXB/2024/004	FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FRAME AGREEMENTS FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF BORAK AND MULI BAMBOO
ONLINE PRE-BID CONFERENCE	Date and time: 01 July 2024 at 11:00 hrs BST.

Interested and bona fide vendors are invited to participate in this Invitation To Bid (ITB) by accessing and downloading the tender documents at the following web link:
https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/237933

Bids to be submitted:
Bids should be submitted as per the guidance in section 2.6 of the ITB document via the URL below:
http://etenderbox.unhcr.org
Bid submission deadline: 14 July 2024 – 14:00 hrs BST. Bangladesh time.

Kindly note that no hard copy is acceptable. The offer will be acceptable who submit only in the above link.

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) NOTICE

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar hereby announces the launch of the following Request For Information (RFI):

RFI REFERENCE NUMBER	ITEM DESCRIPTION
RFI/HCR/CXB/2024/001	FOR THE PROVISION OF LIQUID PETROLEUM GAS (LPG & CYLINDER)

Interested and bona fide vendors are invited to participate in this RFI by accessing and downloading the RFI documents at the following web link:
https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/238038

RFI to be submitted:
RFI should be submitted as per the guidance in section 3 of the RFI document by email to bgdcosup@unhcr.org copy tarekm@unhcr.org and mansaray@unhcr.org.

RFI submission deadline: Wednesday, 07 July 2024 – 14:00hrs BST. Bangladesh time.

Kindly note that no hard copy is acceptable. The offer will be acceptable who submit only in the above link.

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

TENDER NOTICE

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar hereby announces the launch of the following tenders:

TENDER REFERENCE NUMBER	ITEM DESCRIPTION
RFP/HCR/CXB/2024/009	For the establishment of Frame Agreement(s) for maintenance and repairs of air conditioning Systems (ACs), spare parts and consumables.

Interested and bona fide vendors are invited to participate in this Invitation To Bid (ITB) by accessing and downloading the tender documents at the following web link:
https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/23777

Bids to be submitted:
Bids should be submitted as per the guidance in section 2.6 of the RFP document via the URL below:
http://etenderbox.unhcr.org
Bid submission deadline: 14 July 2024 – 12:00 hrs BST. Bangladesh time.

Kindly note that no hard copy is acceptable. The offer will be acceptable who submit only in the above link.

Request for Proposals (RFPs)

ILO

International Labour Organization (ILO) Dhaka invites proposals from interested Firms/ Organizations for the following tenders:

Tender Title: Hiring firm/organization to provide implementation support related to the tourism sector enterprises component of the ILO program Leaving No One Behind: Improving Skills and Economic Opportunities for the Women & Youths in Cox's Bazar (ISEC). Tender No. rfx_574_ROAP

The bidding documents can be downloaded from the ILO Dhaka website under ***Procurement Notices*** at **https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/238560**

The deadline for submission of the proposal is **Sunday, July 21, 2024, by 04:30 PM (BST time)**.

World Health Organization
Bangladesh

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

The World Health Organization in Bangladesh invites proposals/bids from the interested Companies in Bangladesh for the following service:

1. **RFP/BAN/2024/024 (Addendum-1):** To provide support on "Vulnerability and adaptation assessment of climate change impact on nutrition in Bangladesh".
Deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 30 June 2024 (Dhaka time).**
2. **RFP/BAN/2024/025:** Piloting antimicrobial stewardship in different tiers of hospitals in two districts of Bangladesh to reduce antimicrobial use in healthcare facilities.
Deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 10 July 2024 (Dhaka time).**

Interested Companies can view and download the relevant RFP documents from:
https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/procurement-notice.

Interested bidders are requested to submit their financial and technical proposals in two separate sealed envelopes as per the instructions provided in the RFP documents at the Reception of WHO Bangladesh, House-SW(I)1/A, Road-8, Gulshan-1, Dhaka.

PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION (PSI)

This is for information of all concerned that Credit Rating Agency of Bangladesh Limited (CRAB) vide its letter Ref. no.: AGL/RCM/240626/2024-8662 dated June 25, 2024 announced the Surveillance Credit Rating Report of Trust Bank Limited based on the Audited Financial Statements of the Bank for the year ended on December 31, 2023 as well as other relevant quantitative and qualitative information up to the date of declaration of the rating. The details of the particulars are as follows:

Long Term	Short Term	Outlook	Rating Date	Rating Validity
AA_1	ST-1	Stable	25 June 2024	30 June 2025

This information is being disseminated in pursuant to the BSEC's Notification No. BSEC/CMRRC/2009-193/37/Admin/132 dated May 12, 2022.

Dated: Dhaka
June 25, 2024

Sd/-
Md. Mizanur Rahman, FCS
Company Secretary

Trust Bank
A Bank for Financial Inclusion

BRIDGES OVER HALDIA CANAL

Seven collapsed, 5 more unfit for use

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

In Barguna's Amtali upazila, there used to be a total 12 bridges in different areas on the 25-kilometre-long Haldia canal.

Of those, seven have already collapsed while the rest five are in a dilapidated condition and largely unfit for use by vehicles and pedestrians.

The bridge adjacent to Haldia Bazar collapsed on June 22, leaving at least nine people dead.

The locals have long been calling upon the authorities concerned to take steps for repairing the existing bridges and construction of new bridges in place of the collapsed ones. However, no step has yet been made to this end.

The Local Government Engineering Department constructed the bridges on the canal in different areas under the upazila between 2002 and 2010 to allow movement of light vehicles like rickshaws and motorcycles as well as to pedestrians.

About one lakh people from Haldia, Chwara and Amtali Sadar unions use these bridges to travel to the upazila town and to neighbouring Patuakhali district headquarters.

The bridges that have collapsed so far are: one in Haldia Bazar, one near Haldia Hat Government Primary School, one in Chawra village, one near Hafezia Madrasa in Lodha area, one near Ibrahim Academy, and one each in Chila and Rari Bari areas.

"We have been communicating to different departments in this regard, urging for initiative to repair the bridges, but no step has been taken yet," said Asaduzzaman Mintu Mallick, chairman of Haldia union parishad.

Contacted, Abdullah Al Mamun, LGED engineer in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Out of 12 bridges in different areas on the 25-kilometre-long Haldia canal, seven have already collapsed while the rest five are in a dilapidated condition. On June 22, the bridge adjacent to Haldia Bazar collapsed, leaving at least nine people dead.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Student loses eyesight after being 'caned' by teacher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A seven-year-old madrasa student has reportedly lost vision in one of his eyes after allegedly being caned by a female teacher in Soroatoli union of Chattogram.

The incident, which occurred on May 25 at Tahfizul Quran Ideal Madrasa, came to light yesterday after victim Ayatul Islam's mother, Spana Akhter, lodged a complaint with the upazila nirbahi officer's office.

According to Spana Akhter, her son was beaten for failing to prepare his lesson, resulting in severe injury to his left eye.

After the victim was taken to Pahartali Eye Hospital on May 29, doctors diagnosed extensive damage to his cornea, leading to irreversible loss of vision.

The family has expressed their inability to afford treatment in India, which

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

JAMUNA EROSION

A village on verge of disappearance

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

At least 50 families residing in Char Poulee village under Tangail Sadar upazila are passing sleepless nights as the Jamuna river's erosion worsened this monsoon.

Previously, more than half the village was lost to the river's erosion.

Locals alleged that delay in necessary river bank protection efforts by the authorities gave way to this situation.

"Many houses were lost to the river last Tuesday," said Belal Hossain, member of a local social organisation that helps erosion victims relocate to safety.

Abdul Kader, a villager, said, "Earlier, our ancestral house was lost to the river. On Tuesday, the house we built later was also devoured. How will we survive with no place to live?"

Hunufa Begum, another villager, said her homestead was lost to the river right before her eyes. "We don't want relief. We want a permanent solution," she said.

Local Mohammad Hasan said, "Despite repeated assurances from public representatives, no durable embankment has been constructed yet. Around 1,600 metres of the river bank still lies unprotected. We demand urgent measures to provide protection from erosion."

Sources at Bangladesh Water Development Board said geo-bags have been dumped on the river bank from Nagarpur upazila to Char Poulee in Sadar upazila, while there is an embankment from Patharghat in Kalihati to Alipur.

But in between, at least 1,625 metres of the river bank lies unprotected.

Nazrul Islam, a Kakua union parishad member, said, "At least 35 families lost their houses in a single day, and a 1.5-kilometre stretch of the village was lost to erosion. Construction of an embankment is urgently needed to save the village."

Contacted, Sazzad Hossain, executive engineer of BWDB in Tangail, said emergency works are ongoing to protect erosion-affected areas.

"New projects have been approved for constructing 1,625 metres of embankment in Char Poulee, as well as Bhairabbari and Alipur areas of Kalihati upazila. It will be implemented in the next dry season," he added.

KURIGRAM SADAR UPAZILA

Dharla devours homesteads, land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

Erosion caused by the Dharla river has taken a severe turn at Satkaluya village of Holokhana union in Kurigram Sadar upazila. Around 14 homesteads, three fruit orchards, two bamboo clusters, 100 bighas of arable lands and around 200 metres of paved road were devoured in the last couple of days.

Some 80 families and over 400 bighas of arable land are still at risk of river erosion.

Holokhana Union Parishad member Abul Kalam and Chairman Rezaul Karim confirmed the information to The Daily Star.

Locals have now taken refuge on a Water Development Board dyke. They have no means of earning and are merely surviving with their families.

One such victim of river erosion, Shefali Begum said their homestead and two bighas of land were consumed by the Dharla before their own eyes. They were only able to save the tin-sheets from two out of their three homes and have now had to settle on the WDB dyke.

They have not received any government support as of yet, she said.

Another victim, Majibur Rahman said he her lost three bighas of arable land and homestead. Last year, he lost four bighas of arable land as well.

UP Member Abul Kalam said there used to be around 250 families in Satkaluya village. For the last three years, the village has been severely impacted by river erosion.

Currently, there are only 80 families living there. They are under serious threat if the erosion is not stopped on an urgent basis. Otherwise, the village will disappear into the womb of the Dharla.

UP Chairman Rezaul Karim said a list of erosion-hit families has been prepared and sent to the upazila nirbahi officer for government assistance. An application has also been made to the WDB authorities to take urgent measures to stop the erosion, he said.

Sub-divisional engineer of WDB in Kurigram Ismat Toha said a project has been taken up to permanently solve the river erosion at Satkaluya village.

It will be started by appointing a contractor within the next three months. So, no allocation is available to prevent erosion on an emergency basis, he added.

Kurigram Sadar UNO said he visited the affected area and measures will be taken to rehabilitate the affected families soon.

26,181 illegal river bank structures removed in 10yrs

Says state minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

From 2014-2024, 26,181 illegal structures have been removed nationwide, recovering approximately 1,160.62 acres of river land, State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury told parliament yesterday.

He said the total length of the circular waterway around the capital Dhaka is 110km -- surrounded by Buriganga, Turag, Balu, Dhaleswari and Shitalakshya rivers.

There are four inland river ports at Dhaka, Narayanganj, Tongi and Mirkadim on the banks of these rivers for the transportation of passengers and goods by inland waterways.

A World Bank study on river restoration has led to a proposed Umbrella Investment Program involving all stakeholders. A national committee has been formed to implement this proposal, aiming to eliminate pollution and promote sustainable development of Dhaka's surrounding rivers, he said.

The state minister also said Chattogram port handles about 92 percent of the country's import-export trade and 98 percent of containerised goods.

PADMA BRIDGE

Tk 1,648cr in tolls collected in 2yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said a total of 1.27 crore vehicles used the Padma Bridge in the past two years.

The bridge authority has earned Tk 1,648 crore from tolls since the bridge's inauguration on June 25, 2022, he said. Quader made the remarks following a board meeting of Bangladesh Bridge Authority at Setu Bhaban. The BBA, the project's implementing agency, has repaid Tk 948 crore to the Finance Division in six installments.

"Today is a historic day. On this day in 2022, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opened the bridge."

He said three crore people in 21 districts in the southwestern region are benefiting from the bridge.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Chattogram City Corporation
Tigerpass, Chattogram
www.ccc.gov.bd

আপনার শহরকে পরিচ্ছন্ন ও সবুজ রাখুন

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.11.1600.002.39.24.0183
Dated: 24/6/2024

e-Tender Notice-CCC/Rev/COS/2023-24/06

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following works:

Sl No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID	Tender document last selling/ downloading date and time	Tender closing & opening date and time
1	CCC/COS/458/20	Supplying of Drugs for Matrisadan Hospital, Nagar Sashtho Kendro & Emergency patients (FY 2022-2023) under Chattogram City Corporation.	1000137	10-Jul-2024 13:30	10-Jul-2024 15:00

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of following packages from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to particular date and time specified on the tender notice.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (http://www.helpdesk.eprocure.gov.bd).

CCC/PRD-180/23-24 (5×4)

Md Rezaul Bari Bhuiyan
Executive Engineer (Electrical),
& Controller of Stores
Chattogram City Corporation

GD-1038

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Climate Resilient Livelihoods Improvement and Watershed Management in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CRLIWM-CHT)Sector Project
Rangamati.

Memo № Four-3/CRLIWM-CHT/2024/101;
Date: 24/06/2024

Corrigendum Notice

Tender/Proposal: Invitation of Tender No. CRLIWM/Outsourcing/01/2024(Re)
Package No. : CRLIWM/SD-01
Description : Deployment of Manpower through Outsourcing for CRLIWM-CHT Sector Project

Existing:	Amended as:
ITT 32.1 The deadline for the submission of Tenders is: Time & Date: **27 June 2024, till 12:00 pm**	**ITT 32.1** The deadline for the submission of Tenders is: Time & Date: **01 July 2024, till 12:00 pm**
ITT 37.1 Date and time of opening of Tender: **27 June 2024, till 12:30 pm**	**ITT 37.1** Date and time of opening of Tender: **1 July 2024, till 12:30 pm**

Other terms and conditions of the tender schedule will remain all the same.

24/6/24
(Paban Kumar Chakma)
Project Director
Phone:01556511231
Email: pd.crliwmcht@gmail.com

GD- 1033

Preparing for Modi to visit Russia

Says Kremlin

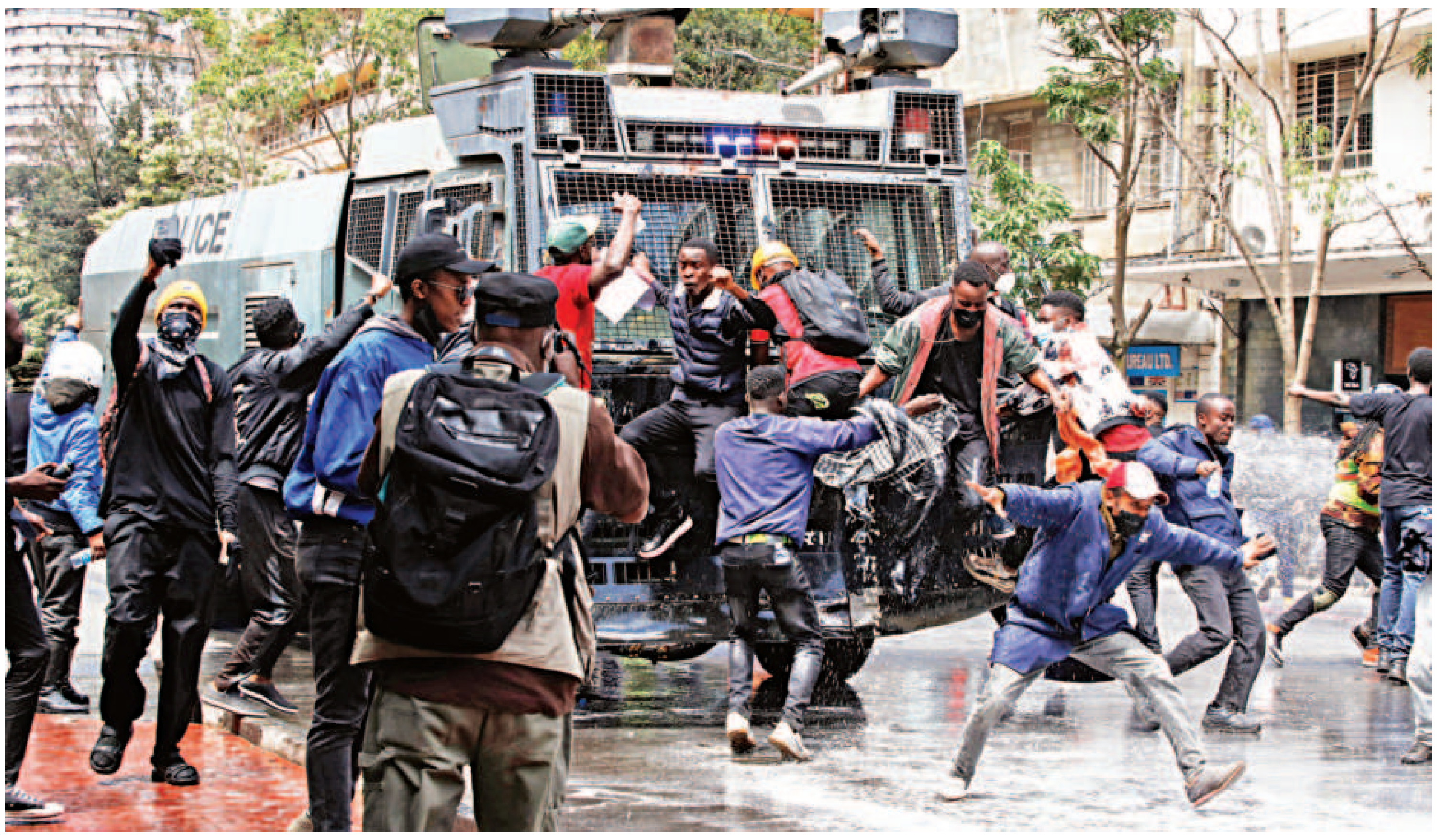
AFP, *Moscow*

The Kremlin yesterday said it was "preparing" for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Russia in the near future, but declined to give a specific date.

The trip would be Modi's first to Russia since Moscow launched its full-scale military offensive on Ukraine more than two years ago, a conflict which has tested relations between Moscow and New Delhi.

"We are preparing for the visit. We will inform you in a timely manner," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters when asked about earlier reports in Indian and Russian media that Modi was planning to visit Moscow in early July.

Putin sees India and Modi as a potential diplomatic and economic ally.



Demonstrators try to obstruct a police vehicle as police use water cannons to disperse protesters during a demonstration against Kenya's proposed finance bill 2024-2025 in Nairobi, Kenya yesterday. At least ten people were shot dead in the Kenyan capital, a paramedic said, as protests against tax legislation turned into violent clashes with police. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

CORRUPTION CASE

India court blocks Kejriwal's release from prison

AFP, *New Delhi*

An Indian court yesterday stopped the release from jail of one of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's chief opponents, a day after he was granted bail in a long-running corruption case, reports said.

Arvind Kejriwal, the chief minister of Delhi and the leader of the opposition Aam Aadmi party, denies the charges as a "political conspiracy" by Modi and his Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

He was released from detention to campaign partway through India's weeks-long general election but returned to jail after voting ended this month.

A trial court ordered his release late Thursday, but before he could walk out of jail on Friday the country's top economic crimes investigative agency, the Enforcement Directorate (ED), appealed to the Delhi High Court.

It suspended his release until it could decide on the appeal, local media reported. The decision could come in "two-three days", legal news portal Live Law posted on social media platform X.

ICC issues arrest warrants for Russia army chief, former minister

AFP, *The Hague*

The International Criminal Court yesterday said it had issued arrest warrants for Russia's top army chief and former defence minister over strikes on Ukrainian infrastructure that constituted alleged war crimes.

The ICC warrants are the latest in a series of actions by the court over the Ukraine war, including an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The warrants concerned the Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov, and former defence minister Sergei Shoigu. The pair are accused of the war crimes of directing attacks at civilian targets, as well as the crime against humanity of "inhumane acts" in Ukraine, the ICC said in a statement.

ICC judges said there were "reasonable grounds to believe that the two suspects bear responsibility for missile strikes carried out by the Russian armed forces against the Ukrainian infrastructure from at least 10 October 2022 until at least 9 March 2023."

OCEAN WATER

Antarctic faces melting 'tipping point'

AFP, *Paris*

Scientists have discovered a new tipping point toward "runaway melting" of Antarctic ice sheets, caused by warm ocean water intruding between the ice and the land it sits on, according to a study published yesterday.

While this type of melting has been previously studied, models used by the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to project the impact of global warming on the Antarctic have yet to factor in this phenomenon.

They have also systematically underestimated ice loss seen thus far, said the study, published in the journal Nature Geoscience.

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN EUROPE

EU extends refugees' right to stay to 2026

AFP, *Brussels*

The European Union yesterday extended the right of Ukrainian refugees to stay in the bloc for another year to March 2026, as Russia's war ravages their homeland.

Currently some 4.2 million Ukrainians are registered as refugees across the EU, with Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic hosting the biggest numbers.

"Day after day, Russia terrorises the Ukrainian people with its bombing war. These are not safe circumstances," Nicole de Moor, Belgium's secretary of state for asylum and migration, said in a statement on the extension's adoption.

"Those who fled from Russia's aggression can continue to count on our solidarity," added de Moor, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency until the end of the June.

The 27-nation European Union first granted Ukrainians the right to stay in the weeks after Moscow launched its all-out invasion in February 2022. The measure had been due to expire on March 4, 2025.

People benefitting from temporary protection enjoy the same rights across the EU, including a residence permit, access to the labour market and housing, medical assistance, social welfare and access to education.

The latest extension comes as Ukraine's forces struggle to hold the front line.

Meanwhile, Kyiv's ambassador to Berlin yesterday hit back against "populist" calls for Ukrainian refugees in Germany to find a job or go back to their war-torn home country.

Senior conservative politician Alexander Dobrindt on Sunday told the weekly Bild am Sonntag that Ukrainians should "start working or return to safe areas in west Ukraine".

Rahul Gandhi to be leader of opposition in Lok Sabha

NDTV ONLINE

Taking the fight to India's ruling BJP-led NDA, Rahul Gandhi has accepted a decision by the Congress Working Committee and will take up the mantle of the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

The decision comes hours before the first big battle of the 18th Lok Sabha, between a resurgent opposition and a diminished ruling coalition, over the post of Speaker.

Denied an assurance that an opposition member would be given the post of Deputy Speaker, as is the tradition, the Congress and the INDIA bloc decided to force an election for the post of Speaker at the last minute by putting up K Suresh as its candidate against the BJP's pick, Om Birla, who was the Speaker in the last Lok Sabha.

Congress, the key party in a disparate anti-Modi alliance, nearly doubled its parliamentary numbers, its best result since Modi was swept to power a decade ago.

Gandhi, 54, is the scion of a dynasty that dominated Indian politics for decades and is the son, grandson and great-grandson of former prime ministers, beginning with independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru.

'Come, let's have a debate'

FROM PAGE 1

"It's an open secret that Hasina is consumed with jealousy that Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize given her repeated snubs," the article read.

The prime minister opposed the assertion, saying she does not care for any Nobel Prize, nor does she have "sufficient money for appointing lobbyists" to land the prize.

"Sheikh Hasina is not jealous of anyone," she said.

The PM said she is proud that she is the daughter of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. "No one can get this position. I'm proud of it," she said, adding that the prime ministership was temporary.

She said the Grameen Bank was not founded by Yunus; he used to work there as its managing director and drew salaries.

"You might remember that the Grameen Bank was set up during the tenure of General HM Ershad. There was a position for MD, and Dr Yunus was made the MD of the bank."

The Grameen Bank is a statutory body and the money and salaries were all paid by the government, she said, adding, "During his service, he [Yunus] portrayed the bank in a way as if he founded the bank."

Hasina said he attempted to float a party in 2007.

"So why did he fail to float the political party? If he has given so much to the rural people, then why did those people not come forward? It was because they were under the huge burden of interest," she said.

Hasina said Yunus got benefits from her the most, and now he is running a propaganda against her.

"It is true, we promoted him a lot."

Hasina said, "I helped him the most in getting to the place where he is today."

She said she promoted microcredit at home and abroad, thinking it was good for poverty alleviation.

"His microcredit was not much credible globally. I participated as a co-chair [in Microcredit Summit], brought a proposal before the United Nations and explained it to everyone because I thought it was a good move to lift people out of poverty."

She said she eventually realised that microcredit was nurturing poverty instead, and the poor people after working day and night needed to pay high interests.

Stating that she gave Yunus the business of Grameenphone, the premier said she helped the Grameen Bank survive by giving it Tk 400 crore in the 90s.

But he did not give a single penny to the bank from the business of Grameenphone, she added.

The prime minister said Grameen Telecom received a lot of donations from abroad, but how much of it went into the Grameen Bank? "Every time, he started a new business with the money," she said.

Hasina blasted Yunus also for failing to pay taxes. She said whenever cases were lodged against him for dodging taxes, Yunus paid some money and proved he had indeed evaded tax.

She said Yunus had not paid any money to the labour welfare fund since 2006. So, the Grameen Bank employees filed a case against him at the labour court, and he was convicted in the case.

"What is my fault here?" she said.

The prime minister said that whenever the labourers placed their demands or wanted promotion, they were sacked.

"[So] they [labourers] filed a case. I didn't even know this. And he was convicted in the Labour Court. Don't the labourers have any right? Those who talk about labour and human rights, where are they now? Why are they silent? Have they stood beside the labourers? They did not."

She wanted to know the source of money that Yunus invested abroad.

"There was so much investment abroad. Where did the money come from? Whose money was it, and how was the money earned? No one is asking these questions. Let him answer it."

Hasina said she always protects the interests of the country. "I never sell the country or the interests of the country [to anyone]. And that's why I could not come to power many times."

She said she always works to protect the country's independence and sovereignty, and for the people so that they can move ahead raising their heads high.

এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস্ কোম্পানী লিমিটেড
ঠনঠনিয়া, বগুড়া

সূত্র নং- ইডিসিএল/বগুড়া/ক্রয়/২০২৪/৪০৮ তারিখঃ ২৫/০৬/২০২৪ ইং

পুরাতন/অকেজো স্ক্র্যাপ মালামাল বিক্রয় ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের পুণঃদরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস্ কোম্পানী লিমিটেড (ইডিসিএল), বগুড়া কারখানার ০৯(নয়)টি অব্যবহৃত পুরাতন/অকেজো স্ক্র্যাপ মালামাল তালিকা অনুযায়ী বিক্রয়ের জন্য "পুরাতন/অকেজো স্ক্র্যাপ মালামাল বিক্রয়" ঠিকাদার নিয়োগ করার লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ীদের নিকট থেকে পুণঃদরপত্র আহবান করা হচ্ছে। বিস্তারিত নিয়মাবলীসহ পুরাতন/অকেজো মালামাল/স্ক্র্যাপ তালিকা সম্বলিত দরপত্র শিডিউল ইডিসিএল, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ৩৯৫-৩৯৭, শি/এ, তেজগাঁও ঢাকা-১২০৮ হিসাব বিভাগ ও ইডিসিএল, ঠনঠনিয়া, বগুড়া'র হিসাব বিভাগের ক্যাশ কাউন্টার হতে নগদ ২,৫০০.০০ (দুই হাজার পাঁচশত) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) মূল্যে আগামী ৩০/০৬/২০২৪ ইং তারিখ থেকে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে ক্রয় করা যাবে। আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহকে আগামী ১৫/০৭/২০২৪ইং তারিখে বেলা ১২:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে শুধুমাত্র ইডিসিএল, বগুড়া'র ক্রয় বিভাগে রক্ষিত সিলমোহরকৃত টেন্ডার বক্সে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে এবং ঐ দিনই বেলা ১২:১৫ ঘটিকায় দরদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি থাকে) ইডিসিএল, ঠনঠনিয়া, বগুড়ায় খোলা হবে। উল্লেখ্য যে, দরপত্র দাখিলের দিন দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয় করা হবে না।

সকল আগ্রহী দরদাতাকে আগামী ০৮/০৭/২০২৪ ইং তারিখে বেলা ১১:৩০ ঘটিকায় ইডিসিএল, বগুড়া অফিসে প্রি-বিড মিটিং এ উপস্থিত থাকার জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

কোন প্রকার কারন দর্শানো ব্যাতিরেকে ইডিসিএল কর্তৃপক্ষ এই টেন্ডার প্রক্রিয়া যে কোন পর্যায়ে বাতিল করার পূর্ণ ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

উপ-ব্যবস্থাপক ক্রয়
পক্ষেঃ উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক ও প্লান্ট প্রধান, বগুড়া

GD-1034

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web: www.jb.com.bd

Ref No: JB/ED/DGM/MMR/KHULNA/V EXT./24/316 Date: 25/06/2024

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of the following items. Interested tenderers are advised to visit the site and read each terms and conditions of tender schedule thoroughly before submitting tender.

Serial No.	Tender ID	Description of Works	Online (e-GP System) Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Document Last Selling Date and Time	Tender/Proposal Closing and Opening Date and Time
1	**1000140**	CONSTRUCTION OF THE 3RD FLOOR (VERTICAL EXTENSION) OVER EXISTING 3-STORIED BUILDING WITH 10-STORIED FOUNDATION AT BANK'S OWN PLOT LOCATED AT 8, KDA, KHULNA, HOLDING NUMBER 1048/2, JANATA BANK PLC. **(Re-Tender)**	25/06/2024 15:00	14/07/2024 18:00	15/07/2024 15:00

This is an Online Tender, Where only e-Tender will be accepted in national e-GP portal and no official hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-tender, Registration in the national e-GP system Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fee for downloading the e-tender document from national e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP Help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

25.06.2024
Md. Monzurul Alam
Deputy General Manager

GD-1037

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গ্রন্থাগার

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গ্রন্থাগারের পাঠকসেবা ভবন ও বিজ্ঞান শাখায় বিদ্যমান ২টি Access Control গেটে ৪টি নতুন RFID গেট স্থাপনে আগ্রহী দরদাতা প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১. দরপত্র প্রাপ্তির স্থান: প্রশাসন শাখা, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গ্রন্থাগার
২. দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের তারিখ ও সময়: ২৬ জুন হতে ১০ জুলাই ২০২৪, সকাল ০৯:০০ টা থেকে বিকাল ০৫:০০ টা (সরকারি ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত)
৩. দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়: ১০ জুলাই ২০২৪, সকাল ১১:০০ টা
৪. দরপত্র উন্মুক্তকরণের সময়: ১০ জুলাই ২০২৪, বেলা ১২:০০ টা
৫. দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য: ৩,০০০/- (তিন হাজার টাকা মাত্র) অফেরতযোগ্য
৬. দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত যে কোন বিষয়ে জানার জন্য ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গ্রন্থাগারের তথ্য প্রযুক্তি শাখায় যোগযোগ করা যেতে পারে
৭. যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিলের পূর্ণ ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।

২৫/০৬/২০২৪
গ্রন্থাগারিক
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

GD- 1031

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ (স্রেডা)
৯ম, ১০ম ফ্লোর, আইইবি ভবন, রমনা, ঢাকা
SREDA
Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority

আলোক বাতির জ্বালানি সাশ্রয়ী পরিচালনা ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণের অনুসরণীয় বিষয়সমূহ

নং	বিষয়	বিদ্যুৎ সাশ্রয়ের উপায়
১	প্রাকৃতিক আলো ব্যবহার	জানালা, স্কাইলাইট এবং লাইট সেলফ প্রযুক্তি ব্যবহার করে প্রাকৃতিক আলোর ব্যবহার বৃদ্ধি।
২	জ্বালানি দক্ষ প্রযুক্তি ব্যবহার	ইনক্যান্ডেসেন্ট বাতির পরিবর্তে এলইডি (LED)সহ অন্যান্য জ্বালানি দক্ষ বিকল্প প্রযুক্তির বাতি ব্যবহার। বাতির আলো কমে গেলে বাতি পরিবর্তন করে ফেলা।
৩	কৃত্রিম আলোর ব্যবহার নিয়ন্ত্রণ	লাইট সেন্সর এবং স্বয়ংক্রিয় পর্দা ব্যবস্থাপনার সাহায্যে প্রাকৃতিক আলো প্রবাহের মাধ্যমে কৃত্রিম আলোর ব্যবহার নিয়ন্ত্রণ।
৪	আলোর নিয়ন্ত্রিত ব্যবহার	মোশন সেন্সর, টাইমার এবং ডিমার ব্যবহার করে প্রয়োজনীয় আলোর পরিমাণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ। প্রাকৃতিক আলোর উপর ভিত্তি করে এ সকল যন্ত্রাদি পরিচালনা করা। মাত্রাতিরিক্ত আলোর ব্যবহার বন্ধ করা।
৫	লাইটিং ডিজাইন	প্রতিটি এলাকার বা কক্ষের জন্য নির্দিষ্ট ও প্রয়োজন অনুসারে লাইটিং ডিজাইন করা। জ্বালানির প্রতিফলন বৃদ্ধি করতে হালকা রং-এর পেইন্ট ব্যবহার করা।
৬	লাইটিং-এর এলাকা বিভক্তিকরণ	আলো ব্যবহারের প্যাটার্ন, ব্যবহারের সময় ও ব্যবহারকারীর উপর ভিত্তি করে প্রয়োজনীয় পরিমান ও আরামদায়ক আলোর ব্যবস্থা করা।
৭	টেবিল ল্যাম্প/টাস্ক লাইটিং ব্যবহার	কর্মস্থলে বা পড়াশোনার সময় প্রয়োজনে টেবিল ল্যাম্প/টাস্ক লাইটিং ব্যবহার করা। কর্মীদের প্রয়োজন অনুযায়ী লাইটিং-এর ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ।
৮	জ্বালানি ব্যবস্থাপনার জন্য স্বয়ংক্রিয় ব্যবস্থা	লাইটিং সহ অন্যান্য জ্বালানি ব্যবহারকারী যন্ত্র নিয়ন্ত্রণ ও পরিবীক্ষণের জন্য Energy Management System স্থাপন।

নিয়মিত আলোক বাতি পরিদর্শন করতে হবে। পরিদর্শনের সময় লক্ষণীয় বিষয়সমূহ-

বিষয়	কখন দেখতে হবে	কী দেখতে হবে
কোনো বাতি নষ্ট হয়েছে কিনা	মাসে ১ বার	বাতি স্বয়ংক্রিয়ভাবে জ্বলা নেভা বা সুইচ চালুর পর বাতি জ্বলছে কিনা/স্বাভাবিক কিনা?
কোনো বাতির আলো কমে গিয়েছে কিনা	ছয় মাসে ১ বার	এলইডি বাতি সাধারণত নষ্ট না হলেও সময়ের সাথে সাথে আলো কমে যেতে থাকে। । পুরোনো বাতির সাথে নতুন লাগানো বাতির তুলনা করে আলোর কতটুকু কমে গিয়েছে তা পর্যবেক্ষণ।
বাতিতে ময়লা হয়েছে কিনা	৬ মাসে ১ বার	পরিষ্কার কিনা/ অপারেশন স্বাভাবিক কিনা ?
ভবনের কোনো স্থানে ইনক্যান্ডেসেন্ট বাতি বা কম জ্বালানি দক্ষতার বাতি লাগানো আছে কিনা	এককালীন বা বছরে ১ বার	পরিদর্শিত স্থানে এলইডি বাতি ব্যাতিরেকে অন্য কোনো বাতির প্রয়োজন রয়েছে কিনা ?
সেন্সরযুক্ত বাতির কার্যক্রম সঠিক রয়েছে কিনা	বছরে ১ বার	সেন্সর নষ্ট হয়েছে কিনা/ কার্যক্রম স্বাভাবিক কিনা ?
অপ্রয়োজনে কোনো বাতি জ্বলে রয়েছে কিনা	মাসে ১ বার	মোশন সেন্সর বা অন্য কোনো সেন্সর এর প্রয়োজন রয়েছে কিনা ?
দিনের আলোয় আলোকিত স্থানে বাতি জ্বলছে কিনা	মাসে ১ বার	

জনসচেতনতায়-
টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ (স্রেডা), ফোন- ০২-৫৫১১০৩৪০ (এক্সট-১০৩)

GD-1036

GAZA OFFENSIVE

Int'l probe highlights 'attack on press freedom'

AFP, *Paris*

A collaborative investigation by international media outlets yesterday shed light on the circumstances behind more than 100 Palestinian journalists and media workers being killed in the Gaza offensive, some while wearing a press vest.

A consortium led by investigative outlet Forbidden Stories and involving around 50 journalists from 13 organisations including AFP and The Guardian took part in the probe.

It looked into strikes involving journalists and media infrastructure since Israel launched a devastating offensive in the Gaza Strip on October 7.

"More than 100 journalists and media workers have been killed," Forbidden Stories' Laurent Richard said in an editorial accompanying the Gaza Project's publication.

People gather to fill up their water containers from a truck loaded with water cisterns in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. Ten children on average per day in Gaza are losing one or both of their legs in the offensive raging in the besieged territory, the head of the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees said.

PHOTO: **AFP**

'RETALIATORY' MOVE

Moscow to block access to 81 EU media outlets

AFP, *Moscow*

Russia said that yesterday it would block access to 81 EU media outlets, including AFP's websites, as a "retaliatory measure" after Brussels imposed broadcasting bans on several Russian state media outlets.

The European Union in May said it had decided to block access to four Kremlin-controlled media for being "instrumental in bringing forward and supporting" Moscow's Ukraine offensive.

Moscow said it was responding to that move. "Counter-restrictions are being introduced on the access from Russian territory of broadcast resources of media outlets from EU member states," Moscow's foreign ministry said in a statement, publishing a list of media outlets and blaming Brussels for the restrictions.

The list included AFP's homepage afp.com and its client portal afpforum.com. France's Le Monde, Germany's Der Spiegel and Spain's El Mundo were also among the media outlets named on the list.

Russia denounced the EU sanctions as "politically motivated" and said the bloc's decisions were "forcing Moscow to take mirror and proportionate countermeasures".

It said it would "revise" the restrictions if sanctions on Russian media were lifted. Russia has already blocked access to much of the Western media since sending troops to Ukraine.

High risk of famine persists across Gaza

Says global hunger monitor as Israeli offensive in the Palestinian enclave continues

AGENCIES

A high risk of famine persists across the whole of the Gaza Strip as long as Israeli offensive in the Palestinian enclave continues and humanitarian access is restricted, according to an assessment by a global hunger monitor.

More than 495,000 people, or more than one fifth of Gaza's population, are facing the most severe, catastrophic level of food insecurity, an update from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) said, a copy of which was seen by Reuters ahead of its release yesterday.

The IPC said increased deliveries of food and nutrition services to northern Gaza in March and April appeared to have reduced the severity of hunger in the area, where the UN-backed body had previously projected that famine was likely, reports Reuters.

But it also said improvements seen in April could rapidly be reversed.

"The humanitarian space in the Gaza Strip continues to shrink and the ability to safely deliver assistance to populations is dwindling. The recent trajectory is negative and highly unstable," the IPC update said.

French President Emmanuel Macron and King Abdullah II of Jordan Monday called on Israel to lift all land-based "restrictions" on the delivery of aid to Gaza, the presidency said.

UN agencies have repeatedly warned of severe shortages of vital supplies in Gaza, exacerbated by restrictions on access by land and the closure of the key Rafah crossing with Egypt since Israeli forces seized the Palestinian side in early May.

Over lunch at the Elysee Palace, Macron and Abdullah II reiterated the need for an "immediate and lasting ceasefire in Gaza" and called for the release of all hostages -- including two French nationals.

The leaders also "expressed their deep concern about the situation in the West Bank and strongly condemned the violence committed by settlers", the Elysee Palace said in a statement.

Over 495,000 Palestinians are facing the most severe, catastrophic level of food insecurity.

They agreed to continue to work together on a "lasting and credible solution" to the offensive based on the "two-state solution" and welcomed reforms undertaken by the Palestinian government and called for them to be continued, reports AFP.

Referring to the intensification of tensions on the Israeli-Lebanese border, Macron and Abdullah II warned against a "conflagration that would be catastrophic for the region", and reiterated their calls to all parties for "responsibility and restraint".

Meanwhile, the US State Department on Monday said a video of a wounded Palestinian man strapped on a military jeep by Israeli forces was "shocking" and urged a swift investigation to hold those responsible to account.

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স্মারক নংঃ ৪৬.৪২.৩৩০০.০০২.০০৪.১২.১৯-৭৭৭ তারিখঃ ২৫-০৬-২০২৪খ্রিঃ

ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স নবায়ন ও নতুন ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল ঠিকাদার/ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরের গাজীপুর জেলা পরিষদের ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের লাইসেন্স বহি নবায়ন এবং নতুন ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের তালিকাভুক্তির দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। নতুন ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য ০১/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ হতে ২৯/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ পর্যন্ত জেলা পরিষদের নির্ধারিত ফরমে আবেদন করা যাবে। আবেদন ফরম (শর্তাবলীসহ) ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) নগদ মূল্যে অত্র জেলা পরিষদ কার্যালয় হতে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। জেলা পরিষদের তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদারগণকে লাইসেন্স নবায়নের জন্য হালনাগাদ আয়কর সনদপত্র, ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন, ট্রেড লাইসেন্স ও জেলা পরিষদের ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স বহিসহ নিম্নে উল্লেখিত ফি "প্রধান নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তা, জেলা পরিষদ, গাজীপুর" এর অনুকূলে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডারের মাধ্যমে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তরে জমা দিতে হবে। নির্ধারিত তারিখের পরে নিম্নে উল্লেখিত হারে জরিমানাসহ লাইসেন্স বহি নবায়ন করা যাবে। নতুন ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের তালিকাভুক্তির ক্ষেত্রে জেলা পরিষদ কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।

শর্তাবলীঃ
(ক) নতুন ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের তালিকাভুক্তির ক্ষেত্রে ০১/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ হতে ২৯/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ পর্যন্ত জেলা পরিষদ হতে নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম সংগ্রহ ও জমা প্রদান করা যাবে।
(খ) ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স বহি নবায়নের ক্ষেত্রে ০১/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ হতে ২৯/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ পর্যন্ত ২০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা ফি এবং ফি'র উপর ১৫% হারে ভ্যাট প্রদান করে লাইসেন্স নবায়ন করা যাবে।
(গ) উক্ত ফি'র উপর ৫০% জরিমানাসহ ০১/০৯/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ হতে ৩০/০৯/২০২৪খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত নবায়ন করা যাবে।
(ঘ) ৩০/০৯/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখের পরবর্তী সময় হতে ১০০% হারে জরিমানা প্রদানপূর্বক ৩০/০৬/২০২৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ পর্যন্ত লাইসেন্স বহি নবায়ন করা যাবে।
(ঙ) ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স বহি নবায়ন ও নতুন ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তির বিষয়ে পিপিআর-২০০৮ এবং এর সর্বশেষ সংশোধনীর শর্তাবলী প্রযোজ্য হবে।

25.06.2024
মোঃ মনির হোসেন
সহকারী প্রকৌশলী
জেলা পরিষদ, গাজীপুর
ফোনঃ ০২৯২৬১৬৮৭

GD-1035

GAMBLING PROBE

UK Conservatives drop support for candidates

REUTERS, *London*

Britain's Conservative Party said yesterday it had withdrawn support from two parliamentary candidates who are being investigated over alleged bets placed on the timing of next month's national election.

The escalating scandal, a blow to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in the run up to a July 4 vote his Conservatives are forecast to lose, has also embroiled party's campaign director and a London police officer.

"As a result of ongoing internal enquiries, we have concluded that we can no longer support Craig Williams or Laura Saunders as parliamentary candidates at the forthcoming general election," a spokesperson for the party said.

Earlier this month Williams, a close aide to Sunak, apologised for a "huge error of judgment" in placing a bet on when the election would happen.

Media then reported last week the country's betting regulator, the Gambling Commission, was looking into allegations of improper betting by a second candidate, Saunders, and her husband Tony Lee, the party's campaign director.

Reuters was unable to reach Saunders or Lee to seek comment. The party said at the time it had been contacted by the Commission "about a small number of individuals". It also said Lee had taken a leave of absence from his role.

The Conservative spokesperson said the party had checked with the Gambling Commission to ensure its decision to withdraw support did not compromise its inquiries. The Commission has not named anyone in relation to its investigation.

British bookmakers allow bets on politics, and the timing of an election is a popular bet. But placing bets with insider knowledge is a crime. Sunak, who took most lawmakers and voters by surprise when he announced election date, has said he was "incredibly angry" to hear about the allegations.

IRAN PRESIDENTIAL VOTE

Khamenei urges 'high participation'

AFP, *Tehran*

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei yesterday called for "high participation" in Friday's presidential election to replace Ebrahim Raisi, who died last month in a helicopter crash.

"We emphasise the importance of high participation (in the election) because it is the pride of the Islamic republic," Khamenei declared in a televised speech three days ahead of the vote.

"In every election where the turnout was low, the enemies of the Islamic republic have denounced us," he added.

Voters have the choice between six candidates, who were selected by the Guardian Council -- an unelected body dominated by conservatives -- from the 80 hopefuls who had filed their candidacy.

The three frontrunners are considered to be conservative parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, ultraconservative former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili and reformist lawmaker Massoud Pezeshkian.

During the last presidential election, in 2021, the government invalidated many reformists and moderates, which allowed Raisi, the candidate of the conservative camp, to be easily elected and succeed moderate president Hassan Rouhani.

Turnout was at 49 percent, the lowest rate for a presidential election since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

POST-COUP CRISIS IN MYANMAR

Ethnic armed groups battle junta in west, north

AFP, *Yangon*

Myanmar ethnic armed groups seized a popular beach resort town in the west of the country and launched dawn attacks on junta positions in the north, a military source and residents told AFP yesterday.

Fighting is raging across swathes of the Southeast Asian nation as ethnic armed groups and pro-democracy "People's Defence Forces" battle the military, which seized power in a 2021 coup.

In western Rakhine state, Arakan Army (AA) fighters have battled security forces for days around Ngapali beach, home to upmarket hotels and resorts owned by military-backed businesses.

Junta troops and police had retreated to an airport in the town of Thandwe, around two kilometres (more than a mile) away, a military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP.

Hundreds of kilometres away in northern Shan state, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) launched dawn attacks on the military in the town of Kyaukme, the group and residents said.

One resident of the town, which sits on a vital highway to China, said they had heard artillery and gunfire around the town since the morning.

"Most people from the town are hiding inside their houses," another Kyaukme resident who works for a volunteer rescue team told AFP.

The TNLA had restricted travel around Kyaukme, they said, requesting anonymity for security reasons.

The AA and TNLA are members of the so-called "Three Brotherhood Alliance" that launched a surprise offensive against the junta last October across northern Shan state.

Their fighters seized swathes of territory and several lucrative trade crossings with China, dealing the junta its biggest blow since it seized power.

In January, China brokered a ceasefire that allowed the alliance to hold on to territory it had captured, but both sides have recently accused each other of breaking the truce.

The town of Thandwe, a few kilometres from Rakhine's Ngapali beach and home to the local airport, was largely deserted as of Monday, a resident who fled that day told AFP. "Almost everyone in the town has fled... Very few people are now in Thandwe," said the resident, who requested anonymity for security reasons.

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স্মারক নং-৬৪৭৫
তারিখঃ ০৮ আষাঢ়, ১৪৩১
২২ জুন, ২০২৪

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

রাজশাহী প্রকৌশল ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের রাজস্ব খাতের নিম্নলিখিত পদসমূহ পূরণের নিমিত্তে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত এবং স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে নির্ধারিত ফরমেটে Online Portal (www.jobs.ruet.ac.bd)-এর মাধ্যমে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম ও বেতন স্কেল (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল, ২০১৫ অনুযায়ী)	ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম ও বেতন স্কেল (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল, ২০১৫ অনুযায়ী)
১।	অধ্যাপকঃ ইটিই বিভাগ-১টি বেতন স্কেল: টাঃ ৫৬৫০০ - ৭৪৪০০/-	৩।	সহকারী অধ্যাপকঃ (ক) পুরকৌশল বিভাগ- ২টি (খ) যন্ত্রকৌশল বিভাগ- ১টি বেতন স্কেল: টাঃ ৩৫৫০০ - ৬৭০১০/-
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বিজ্ঞাপিত পদসমূহের যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা, শর্তাবলী এবং আবেদনপত্রের নির্ধারিত ফরমেট রুয়েট ওয়েবসাইট (www.ruet.ac.bd) হতে স্মারক নং ৬৪৭৫, তারিখঃ ২২/০৬/২০২৪খ্রিঃ এর বিজ্ঞপ্তি থেকে জানানো হবে। Online এ আবেদনপত্র পূরণপূর্বক হার্ড কপি সংস্থাপন শাখায় আগামী ০৬/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখে বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে জমা দিতে হবে। উল্লেখ্য যে, আগামী ০৯/০৭/২০২৪ তারিখ সকাল ১০-০০ ঘটিকায় সহকারী অধ্যাপক, পুরকৌশল বিভাগ পদে এবং একই তারিখ সকাল ১১-০০ ঘটিকায় সহকারী অধ্যাপক, যন্ত্রকৌশল বিভাগ পদে নির্বাচনী পরীক্ষা রাজশাহী প্রকৌশল ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদালয়ের মাননীয় ভাইস-চ্যান্সেলর মহোদয়ের অফিস কক্ষে (প্রশাসনিক ভবনের ২য় তলায়) অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। এতদ্সংক্রান্ত পৃথকভাবে কোন ইন্টারভিউ কার্ড ইস্যু করা হবে না।

আদেশক্রমে,

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রেজিষ্ট্রার (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)
রাজশাহী প্রকৌশল ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

GD-1032

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Khulna must resist unplanned growth

Illegal housing projects could jeopardise the future of the region

For a region prone to natural disasters because of its low elevation, Khulna really cannot afford unplanned development any more than a highly congested and polluted Dhaka, or Chattogram, can. The region is yet to recover from the devastations of Cyclone Remal that struck a month ago. Extreme events like this serve as a wake-up call for what must be done or changed. But the region seems to have been set in the opposite direction as, far from reducing its vulnerabilities, ongoing developments in Khulna city and adjoining areas could set them up for more challenges in the future.

According to a recent report by this daily, as many as 153 housing projects are operating illegally without necessary approvals from the Khulna Development Authority (KDA) and Department of Environment (DOE)—encroaching upon government khas lands, waterbodies, arable lands, tidal floodplains, etc. Clearly, the negligence of the authorities, both in enforcing regulations and in overseeing the approval process, has allowed these projects to proliferate unchecked. Partly responsible for this situation is the proposed expansion of the Khulna City Corporation's boundaries in 2007, which ignited a frantic wave of housing initiatives. These areas fall under the jurisdiction of the KDA, so it must take responsibility for this situation.

Of particular concern here is the encroachment of waterbodies and tidal floodplains. These serve as crucial natural buffers against floods, and their transformation will only increase the risk of flooding in the future, which is really disturbing. Reportedly, thousands of plots have been developed and sold by filling up such low-lying areas. As well as the natural risks that it poses, this unplanned sprawl also threatens to overwhelm Khulna's urban infrastructure, making it increasingly difficult for the city corporation to manage waste, develop necessary roads, and provide other essential services. Experts have, therefore, alluded to the grim prospect of these unauthorised and unplanned areas devolving into concrete slums eventually. Already, in a sign of the crisis that is about to unfold, the lack of land approvals has left over 30,000 plot owners facing legal issues with building construction.

The situation demands a critical intervention from the authorities. Going forward, they must ensure that no more arable lands and tidal floodplains are encroached. We cannot continue to allow the destruction of such crucial lands and waterbodies and hope to get away without any consequences. Moreover, the authorities should enforce stringent compliance with the Real Estate Development and Management Act, 2010 and other regulations in all housing projects. That means each project must adhere to the stipulated requirements including adequate acreage, specified road widths, and essential civic facilities.

Online gambling is spreading unchecked

Multi-faceted actions necessary to prevent this crime

The recent disclosure that about 50 lakh people in Bangladesh are engaged in online gambling has come as a shock to many people. Its proliferation is concerning for several reasons. Besides this activity being illegal, its addictive nature, inherent monetary risks, and potential connection to criminal activities and platforms also make this a social threat, especially for the young people who are most vulnerable to it.

One may even argue that the prevalence of online gambling is more disturbing than casino-based or other traditional gambling activities because anyone with a smartphone or digital device can access betting and gaming websites, take part in this illegal activity, and complete monetary transactions using mobile financial services (MFS)—without the knowledge of their family members and well-wishers. In fact, the daily Manobjamin quoted the ICT state minister on the popularity of online gambling among young people as well as retired persons.

Although the minister told the media that gambling websites are being shut down regularly, the circulation of surrogate advertisements by betting companies on social media platforms, YouTube, and even television channels during sports events remains a concern. According to a *Prothom Alo* report, several Bangladesh government websites too are riddled with betting pages/advertisements. There have been reports of the involvement of celebrities in the promotion of these illegal activities. Fake videos of celebrities were also used to lure the audience towards online gambling.

It is, therefore, pertinent that the government takes a stricter stance against online gambling. Existing legal provisions must be updated to better address this threat, and relevant authorities must coordinate with social media platforms to regulate access to online betting pages. Those promoting gambling must also be monitored and regulated. Awareness campaigns targeting different age groups are also required to educate people about this social ill. Recently, the state minister for finance remarked about the involvement of personal MFS accounts in money laundering through online gambling and betting, further highlighting the danger. Clearly, strict interventions are required from the authorities. In the long run, the government should also focus on improving people's financial security so that economic desperation does not push anyone towards risky activities like gambling.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Opening of CN Tower

CN Tower in Toronto, Canada, which opened to the public on this day in 1976, was—at 1,815 feet (553 metres)—the world's tallest freestanding structure until being surpassed in 2007 by the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, UAE.

Why we must rethink university faculty recruitment

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ARIFUZZAMAN KHAN

The Global Innovation Index (GII) ranks world economies based on their innovation capabilities, using approximately 80 indicators to capture the complex nature of innovation. In the 2023 GII, Bangladesh ranked 105th out of 132 economies. A crucial component of GII, as well as other science, technology, and innovation (STI) indicators, is the performance of tertiary educational institutions.

Unfortunately, Bangladeshi universities are underperforming compared to other countries at similar development levels. Patent statistics from the Department of Patents, Designs, and Trademarks (DPDT) further highlight this issue. Over the past three decades, Bangladesh has seen approximately 100-400 patent applications annually, with 320 applications in 2023. In stark contrast, India filed over 77,000 patent applications, while emerging Asian countries such as Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines filed over 8,600, 8,700, and 4,700, respectively, in 2023. South American countries also file thousands of patents each year. Thus, when adjusted for population, our patent per capita ratio is dismal.

Bangladesh's research article production also remains modest compared to other Asian countries. In 2023, as many as 12,879 citable research documents were published from Bangladesh. This number is significantly lower than in several neighbouring countries. For instance, India produced 269,183 documents, while 37,937 documents were published from Pakistan in the same year. Countries like Thailand and Vietnam also outperform Bangladesh, with Thailand contributing approximately 25,430 citable documents and Vietnam producing around 18,290 documents annually. China leads Asia as well as the whole world with an astounding 1,018,423 citable research papers, showcasing its robust investment in research and development. Meanwhile, Japan has about 124,330 publications, and South Korea and Taiwan contribute approximately 97,487 and 41,654 citable documents, respectively.

VISUAL: **SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR**

Several factors contribute to this difference. One major issue is the limited focus on research at universities in Bangladesh. Additionally, there is a lack of adequate funding and infrastructure to support extensive research programmes. Other Asian countries have invested heavily in research and development, fostering a robust research culture within their academic institutions.

The Triple Helix model, which describes the interaction between universities, industries, and government, is essential for fostering a robust STI ecosystem. However, this collaborative framework is still largely absent in Bangladesh. To address this, we must focus on introducing reforms that can catalyse broader collaboration. Universities in Bangladesh primarily function as teaching institutions, particularly at the undergraduate level, where teachers act as facilitators between textbooks and students. Here, a good teacher is often defined as someone who delivers lectures well and explains concepts clearly, typically from textbooks. This approach, akin to training rather than teaching, may suffice for undergraduate education, but is inadequate for postgraduate studies.

In the developed and many developing countries, university faculty are primarily researchers, and some do not teach at all. Their value lies in their research contributions, which directly impact the STI ecosystem. In contrast, the current faculty recruitment process in Bangladesh rewards academic diligence during undergraduate and graduate studies, sometimes resulting in faculty members who do minimal research beyond the required publications for promotion.

To transform universities into hubs of knowledge creation, we must overhaul the faculty recruitment process at universities in the country. Universities are meant to generate new knowledge, not merely disseminate existing information. The University Grants Commission's decision to allow private universities to offer PhD degrees is a right step to this end. A robust PhD programme is crucial for fostering a research culture and improving faculty quality. Pursuing PhD transforms individuals from knowledge users to knowledge creators, enabling them to think independently and contribute to knowledge production. Further, understanding a subject deeply enough to challenge existing ideas or create new ones enhances the capacity for innovation and critical thinking.

There are several ways to bring in this transformation. For one, only PhD-qualified faculty members should be recruited to lead research projects. To attract high-quality candidates with advanced degrees, they should be offered extra incentives compared to other jobs that only require aaa bachelor's or master's degree. Departments at universities should start PhD programmes funded by the government or private sector, allowing universities to produce knowledge and establish strong industry ties. If PhD researchers receive substantial scholarships, it will attract strong candidates to pursue PhDs and eventually transition into teaching roles. Additionally, these researchers can take on roles as teaching and research assistants, further enhancing the academic environment.

Universities should also emphasise research at the master's level. Elite and established universities can pilot this model. Finally, undergraduate education needs to be redefined with a focus on research.

Implementing these changes can position Bangladeshi universities as key players in the global innovation landscape, fostering a vibrant ecosystem of knowledge creation and application.

Bigger isn't always better

Our appetite for more is killing the planet

Debra Efroymson
is executive director of the Institute of Wellbeing, Bangladesh.

DEBRA EFROYMSON

Big banks, big stores, big corporations. Some politicians and economists would have us believe that bigger is always better, and that modernisation means replacement of local vendors, small shops, and other small independent businesses with giant global chains. We, the consumers, are meant to go along passively with the trend, even to celebrate the availability of a range of global, heavily advertised—and thus seemingly glamorous—products and services.

But despite what we are told, there are options. It is possible to resist the trend towards ever-bigger corporations, ever-more billionaires, and the ongoing entrenched poverty. It is possible to create a movement that is powerful enough to shift the economy away from the big and powerful and back to the local, in a way that supports our livelihoods and our well-being—both individual and planetary.

There are two clear and divergent paths into the future. One involves constant hurry, ever-more movement at ever-greater speeds and sizes, including financial transactions which can collapse an entire economy. It involves becoming even more wrapped up in our technologies, even more dependent on AI to guide us. The other involves slowing down, going local, and reconnecting to our communities, our values, and to the environment that sustains us.

The belief shared by corporate and government leaders that bigger is always better is founded on the false assumption that humanity is somehow divorced from nature, that technology can replace finite resources, and that we can live without a healthy environment. This belief also promotes competition at the expense of cooperation, of living in harmony with our neighbours and our ecosystems.

The belief shared by corporate and government leaders that bigger is always better is founded on the false assumption that humanity is somehow divorced from nature, that technology can replace finite resources, and that we can live without a healthy environment. This belief also promotes competition at the expense of cooperation, of living in harmony with our neighbours and our ecosystems.

In order to pursue our false dream of "sustainable development," where development means ever-increasing mobility and consumption rather than guaranteeing that the basic needs of all are met, we must extract even more resources and create more pollution, thereby contributing to the climate emergency. Not only our air, water, soil, and finite resources are sacrificed, but also vulnerable populations, such as the Indigenous and poor, and recently, the middle classes in industrialised countries.

The results of our pursuit of speed, growth, and wealth include a degraded environment, unbearable heat, ever-more intense storms, and the concentration of wealth and power into the hands of the few. Rather than celebrating local cultures and economies, we see an effort to homogenise people's desires, so that they can be met with mass-produced (and often harmful and unnecessary) items.

But the local, though stifled, has not disappeared. In country after country, people are looking to ancient ways of life to proffer wisdom in these troubled and destructive times. People are seeing and sharing the benefits of strong communities and a close connection to earth. People are allowing "common" sense, intuition, and holistic awareness to guide them towards ways to protect diverse cultures and species, to revitalise healthy food and fibre systems, and to forge or restore human-scale political and economic institutions.

Yes, we are bombarded with messages about the alluring and inevitable march towards the huge and monolithic, even when it means making our air unbreathable and our temperatures unbearable. But people remain roughly the same size, with the same core values, despite the changes around us. People still care deeply about a good education for their children, about living a healthy life, about having access to nature, about having strong social connections, and, vitally, about maintaining a liveable planet. We need voices that highlight the better, brighter path that takes us away from pollution, from AI, from ever-increasing concentration of wealth and power into the hands of the few.

Those of us concerned about terrifying global trends can and must make clear what will, and what won't, bring us closer to those deeper relationships with real people and living places for which we all long. We must continue to speak up, to educate those around us, and to make decisions in our daily lives that support the local. We must also push for local, regional, and national policies that shift subsidies from global corporations to local businesses, that shift wealth from the billionaires to the impoverished, and that seek to restore, rather than continue to destroy, the environment that enables our healthy existence on this cherished but abused planet.

The author has a tiny role in the new film* Closer to Home *(available for free at LocalFutures.org).

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781
EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net
Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Advertisement: 01711623910
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Subscription:
01711623906
thedailystar.net
bangla.thedailystar.net/

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

The Myanmar civil war is the result of decades of non-democratic rule by authoritative, military regimes.

CIVIL WAR IN MYANMAR

Bangladesh should revisit its national security strategy

A CLOSER LOOK

Tasneem Tayeb
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TASNEEM TAYEB

As fighting between the military junta and ethnic groups rages on in war-torn Myanmar, its neighbours Bangladesh, India, China and Thailand are finding it difficult to keep violence off their own borders.

Bangladesh, for instance, is facing major national security challenges at multiple layers as a result of the uncontained and reckless fighting between the Myanmar military and the armed rebel groups.

Intense gun battle along the Naf River, earlier this month, cut off Bangladesh's communications with its only coral island, St Martin's, located about nine kilometres off the mainland, for about a week. As a result, the island, with a population of about 11,000, was exposed to security risk and essential supplies crisis. Around the same time, heavy explosions along the Naf also caused panic among the residents of Shah Porir Dwip, another island situated at the southernmost point of Bangladesh. It was also reported that a Myanmar warship had been spotted opposite the island.

Indeed, these fears and security concerns are not unfounded. Since 2022, Myanmar has continuously violated Bangladesh's territorial integrity, with the former violating the latter's air space as early as in September 2022, with two shells falling inside the Bangladesh territory, and multiple rounds being fired from fighter aircraft.

As fighting between the factions and Myanmar military escalated, multiple killings and injuries were reported inside Bangladesh's territory. In February this year, two were killed by a mortar shell fired by Myanmar on Bandarban's Gumdhum border, with a child being injured. As recently as April this year, two Bangladeshi fishermen in Teknaf were injured when Myanmar's Border Guard Police (BGP) opened fire.

The misadventures, if not provocative posturing, by both the Myanmar military and the armed rebel groups around the Bangladesh borders, including in the Bay of Bengal, pose major threat to Bangladesh's national security. The Bangladesh government must be commended for the restraint it has exercised in addressing the situation so far, but it seems that this patience is being misinterpreted by all the factions in Myanmar. While Bangladesh keeps trying to address the situation through meaningful dialogues in a constructive approach, the Myanmar factions have been pushing the nation further to the brink: Bangladesh has now threatened counterfire if Myanmar resumes violent activities along the restive border areas.

However, the security concerns for Bangladesh does not end here. It has been reported by multiple media sources that armed gangs operating inside Rohingya camps inside Bangladesh—Rohingya Salvation Organization (RSO), Arakan Rohingya Army (ARA), and Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA)—are actively and forcefully recruiting Rohingya men and boys (as young as 12) to fight in the civil war. In cases where the refugees are understandably unwilling to join, they are being kidnapped by the gangs. It has even been suggested that the recent arson incidents in the Kutupalong camp have been orchestrated by these gangs to coerce the refugees into joining the civil war. A recent turf war between ARSA and RSO has resulted in the death of three refugees.

What is even more alarming is that many of the refugees who have been forced away from the camps are currently being held inside the Bangladesh territory in the depths of the Bandarban hills, waiting to be pushed into Arakan. Many of the refugees, fearing illegal conscription by the various factions, including the Tatmadaw proxies, are voluntarily fleeing the camps and randomly spreading out across the greater Bandarban region, where it has been alleged that they are trying to assimilate with the locals.

If this is indeed the case, then the local authorities should beef up surveillance to avert internal security risks, given that the refugees are vulnerable to being manipulated by various quarters to serve their vested interests, and there is a high risk that the ones who are fleeing the camps could also potentially be exploited by groups with nefarious intentions.

In addition, Bangladesh has witnessed a new influx of refugees in recent months, as anticipated earlier, in the face of growing violence in the Rakhine state. A Bangladeshi official involved in refugee relief and repatriation told the media that many of the new refugees have been allowed to enter into Bangladesh territory unofficially. While Bangladesh has been generous in opening its doors to the Rohingya refugees, allowing them to do so unofficially or without tracking and accountability is a crisis in the making.

The misadventures, if not provocative posturing, by both the Myanmar military and the armed rebel groups around the Bangladesh borders, including in the Bay of Bengal, pose major threat to Bangladesh's national security. The Bangladesh government must be commended for the restraint it has exercised in addressing the situation so far, but it seems that this patience is being misinterpreted by all the factions in Myanmar.

It is a no-brainer that in a desperate situation such as this, it would be difficult to keep the refugees from crossing over into Bangladesh. Under the current circumstances, without beefing up border security—and if required, ensuring a safe, official passage of the recently displaced Rohingya—infiltration would continue, resulting in the creation of small, sporadic pockets of illegal refugee settlement across the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The people in these pockets, desperate and vulnerable to the lures of various vested groups, can pose national security threats in the medium to long terms.

Bangladesh needs to revisit its national security strategy and adapt it to effectively navigate the shifting landscape. We need a multipronged approach to mitigate the emerging security threats.

First, we must acknowledge that our border security needs immediate attention and should do a thorough risk analysis with the support of defence experts and analysts, and come up with a comprehensive plan to counter these challenges.

Second, instead of hoping that the Rohingya refugees would not cross into Bangladesh, we should take stock of the situation and if required allow them official safe passage with strict monitoring of their whereabouts. This would be better than the refugees illegally infiltrating and then spreading across the greater CHT region, without any sight of their movement.

Third, the government should work in close collaboration with key regional players including India and China, since both have leverage with the Myanmar military and the armed factions in some cases, especially China—earlier this year, China brokered a ceasefire between the Myanmar junta and the armed groups—to convince all the parties to come to a negotiating table and discuss and ink a sustainable permanent ceasefire.

Fourth, Bangladesh should continue using diplomatic channels to convince the international community to increase funding for the desperate Rohingya refugees, whose living conditions have declined over the years with aid dwindling fast.

Finally, the Bangladesh government should negotiate a practical and sustainable repatriation deal for the refugees with the Myanmar authorities with the mediation of China. Once peace is restored in Myanmar, China can play a pivotal role by leveraging their influence to offer the refugees a dignified life in their own homeland with full citizenship, rights and security.

The Myanmar civil war is the result of decades of non-democratic rule by authoritative, military regimes, resulting in the persecution of minority groups, which has inflicted deep wounds within the communities. Its solution lies in the return of democracy and acceptance of all its people. The wounds are deep, but in a true democratic system, with rights and dignity restored to all the ethnic groups and communities, and everyone given their due representation and voice, Myanmar can heal, and prosper even, realising the full potential of the diversity the country is gifted with.

In light of the ongoing situation, it is high time Bangladesh revised its national security strategy and worked in close collaboration with the other key regional players to help Myanmar find peace.

SUDAN CRISIS EXPLAINED

Why wars are not a matter of the past

Aliza Rahman
is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star.

ALIZA RAHMAN

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

To look away from Sudan, at this time, is tantamount to complicity to the ongoing crisis.

After the October 7 Hamas attacks and Israel's genocide in Gaza that followed, much of the world is reckoning with the consequences of persisting imperialism. The nature of the interweaved global politics of modern times has become evident not just through the sales of consumer goods, but also the sale of arms. In this regard, the crisis in Sudan is in many ways similar, with horrific news repeatedly coming out about the state in which the civilians have been living.

Starting in April 2023, well over a year has passed since the eruption of the crisis that is now termed a civil war. The chilling lines from a UNHCR report that the war has turned "homes into cemeteries" provide a glimpse at the terror that now encompasses the lives of those locked by the fight between the Sudanese government forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). According to a UN report, only 16 percent of the target have been met for humanitarian aid allocated for Sudan.

According to Al Jazeera, 10 million people have been displaced in Sudan, a matter only exacerbated by the fact that 2.83 million people were already displaced by "previous conflicts." Of the 48 million people in Sudan, more than a quarter have had to flee, with two million crossing borders in fear of their lives. Many Sudanese civilians have fled to Chad, Uganda, Ethiopia and South Sudan—the exodus may place pressure on these nations and cause another cycle of violence. The overall death toll remains unclear, with some estimates of 150,000 according to Tom Perriello, the US special envoy for Sudan. As per the British Red Cross, 25 million people are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance as of April 2024. By some estimates, the current situation in Sudan could surpass the horrific famines in Ethiopia 40 years ago, which was said to have taken the lives of approximately one million people. At present, it is estimated that 18 million people in Sudan are "acutely hungry" and among children, 3.6 million are "acutely malnourished"—excluding severe injuries, both physical and psychological, that will be carried by the affected population for years, if not decades, to come.

Sudan's history is one that is rife with issues, from its independence from British and Egyptian rule in 1956 to the 22-year conflict in 1983-2005 to the present day, with famine and ethnic cleansing being recurring events over many years. The hope that had come in 2019 with the ousting of Omar al-Bashir, who had ruled Sudan for 30 years, was quickly extinguished in 2021, when the already fragile state of democracy in Sudan was ruptured by a coup organised jointly by army General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, better known as Hemedti.

However, the current conflict occurred when the relationship between the two military leaders festered. Burhan, the commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and Hemedti, the leader of the RSF, were once allies. While Hemedti believed that the dismantling and then reintegration of the RSF into the army would require 10 years, the SAF commander believed it could be done in two. The ensuing crisis that emerged from this conflict has had devastating consequences and a grueling genocide, one which the world has not been ready to tackle, and one which has received far less coverage than the genocide in Gaza.

A line from a 2004 article in *Mother Jones* about the Sudanese civil war stated, "If it has learnt from Rwanda, the West should act to stop mass killings in Sudan."Almost two decades later, the dismal fact of the matter is that the situation has not changed. As Europe lurches to the far-right, with the stoking of Islamophobia and anti-immigration sentiments as one of its most potent tools, we must remember that the sales of weapons from the West has for decades propped up authoritarian regimes in parts of the world called the Global South.

Another recent article in *Le Monde* claims that "some states are actively fuelling the conflict by providing arms and ammunition." From the Russian Wagner group to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), arms have reportedly been supplied to perpetuate the conflict in Sudan, and these groups have reportedly profited from the horrific situation—just as it has been in other conflicts, particularly genocides, throughout modern history.

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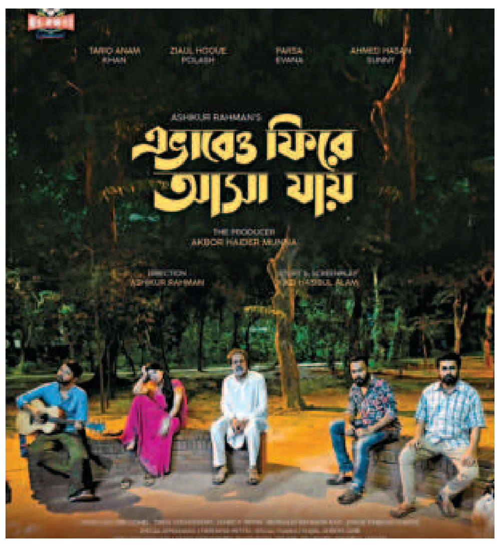
To look away from Sudan, at this time, is tantamount to complicity. Innocent people losing lives and many barely surviving in a conflict created not by nature but by humans should make us pause, because it lays bare one of the cemented beliefs about the 21st century—that war is a matter of the past. In truth, wars, genocides, and the military industrial complex are well and alive. As is frequently seen with conflicts today, it is rarely one country or the forces within the borders of a single nation involved in widespread systemic violence of the kind that is happening in Sudan.

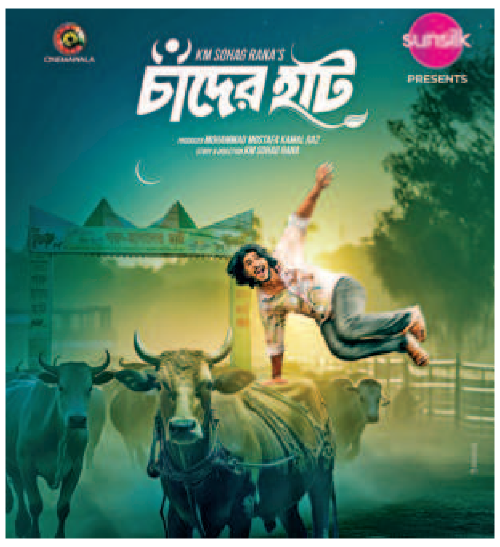
The consequences of such decisions place, as usual, the lives of the innocent in grave danger. Sudan as of now has the largest internally displaced population in the world because of both the current conflict and the others that preceded it. The world has had the chance to bear witness to such atrocities through platforms that are not yet regulated the way traditional media has been—through personal phones and social media accounts broadcasting information and current events at a fraction of the cost it takes for traditional newsrooms to show the world what is occurring. It is what allowed young journalists in Gaza to show what was happening on the ground even as the most powerful countries in the world worked to side with Israel.

Yet, many today feel powerless: the nature of modern world politics, as facilitated by civilian and military technology, prolongs wars that could have perhaps been snuffed out had external influences not existed in the pernicious ways that it does. To counter the immense powerful network that works against the innocent, it is imperative that at the very least we pay attention to conflicts such as the one in Sudan.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Most-talked about Eid dramas with heartfelt stories





তিথিডোর
By Vicky Zahed

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

This Eid-ul-Azha, we witnessed some unique dramas that made us smile, while others moved us to tears with their heartbreaking emotional stories. These dramas featured unconventional plots that captivated audiences, addressing important topics like depression and the sacrifices involved in giving up a beloved animal. As usual, popular actors like Tawsif Mahbub, Musfiq R Farhan, Keya Payel, Ziaul Hoque Polash, and Mehazabien Chowdhury received praise on social media for their fantastic performances in the Eid dramas.

Here's a look at the most talked-about Eid dramas available on YouTube:

Chader Haat

The Eid special drama ***Chander Haat*** has soared to the number one trending spot on YouTube in Bangladesh. This humorous and heartfelt fiction, set in a cattle market, explores themes of love and humanity. The final scene, which reveals the tragedy faced by a poor family, has deeply moved many viewers. The drama stars Tawsif Mahbub and Keya Payel in lead roles.

Directed by KM Sohag, the drama is set against the backdrop of social and contemporary issues. The story features Chand (Tawsif), a young man who works as a broker at the cattle market, tricking farmers into buying cows at rock-bottom prices and selling them for a tidy profit. Chand falls in love with Purnima (Keya Payel) who works with her uncle in an eatery next to the market. From there onwards, complications arise as animosity between their families creates obstacles in their union.

Chander Haat premiered on the YouTube channel Cinemawala at 8:30pm on Eid-ul-Azha (June 17). The drama has gained seven million views so far. It is now trending at number two on YouTube.

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Mastan

Mushfiq R Farhan moved us to tears this Eid with his emotional performance in ***Mastan***. Directed by Rubel Ahsan, the drama tells the heartwarming story of a cattle owner who sacrifices his beloved cow for the sake of his livelihood. The tele-fiction centres around Mushfiq and his cherished cow, Mastan. Their story has captured the hearts of seven million viewers, profoundly moving them.

In addition to Mushfiq R Farhan, the cast includes Tania Brishty, Monira Mithu, and Somu Chowdhury, among others. ***Mastan*** was released on the CMV channel on June 15, and viewers have been commenting on how they cried during the last 10 minutes of the drama.

Tithidor

After a long time, Mehazabien Chowdhury returned to television dramas with Vicky Zahed's ***Tithidor.*** The actress, who is famous for picking scripts with important messages, was hell-bent on portraying the character on the small screen as it echoed an important lesson for adults who suffer from depression.

Vicky Zahed, who is known for showcasing horror and psychological projects, crafted a story that addresses important issues that prey on young adults. Written by Jahan Sultana, the production features Mehazabien in the role of Nishat, a girl grappling with suicidal thoughts. The actress previously stated that the telefilm's plot emphasises the effects of such struggles on society and families.

The drama has sparked much discussion on social media, with Mehazabien's performance receiving widespread acclaim. She even shared a heartfelt post on Facebook, devoting the telefilm to all struggling women.

Tithidor premiered on Channel i on June 20 and is available for streaming on its YouTube channel. It is trending at number 18 on YouTube. Apart from Mehazabien, the drama features stars including Prantar Dastider, and Abul Hayat, among others.

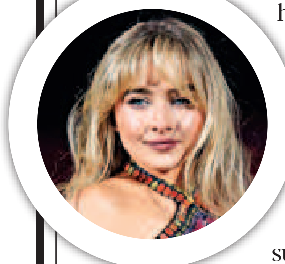
Evabeo Fire Asha Jay

Another story that deals with depression and suicide, ***Evabeo Fire Asha Jay***, is being praised on social media for its impactful content. The drama highlights that suicide is not the only option and that we can overcome any situation as long as we believe in ourselves. The lives, struggles, and conflicts of a hopeless old man, a thief, and a prostitute are portrayed in the drama.

The project stars Tariq Anam Khan, Ziaul Hoque Polash, and Parsa Evana in lead roles. This slice-of-life drama beautifully depicts how each of us experiences different kinds of perils and how we perceive others' difficulties as seemingly insignificant compared to ours.

Evabeo Fire Asha Jay was released on the Club 11 Entertainment channel on June 21 and has already received over one million views on YouTube.

Sabrina Carpenter scores first Billboard Hot 100 No. 1



Sabrina Carpenter's latest summer hit song, ***Please Please Please***, officially reaches the top spot on the Billboard Hot 100.

Last Monday, Billboard revealed the latest top 10 of the Hot 100, announcing that Sabrina Carpenter's recent hit single, ***Please Please Please***, had claimed the top spot, surpassing Post Malone's ***I Had Some Help***.

Carpenter's viral sensation ***Espresso***, which peaked at No. 3 on the chart, is still in the top 10, now occupying the fourth spot.

Maitreyi Ramakrishnan to Join 'Freaky Friday 2' with original leads

Whispers of a new Disney movie starring Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan, reprising their roles from the 2003 comedy ***Freaky Friday***, have materialised. The OG duo was recently seen back on set as Disney unveiled the first sneak peek of ***Freaky Friday 2***.

According to Variety, Lohan and Curtis, reprising their roles as Anna and Tess Coleman, aren't the only original cast members making a comeback in the official sequel.

The returning ensemble cast includes Mark Hammon, Chad Michael Murray, Haley Hudson, Christina Vidal Mitchell, and Lucille Soong among others.

Maitreyi Ramakrishnan, star of Netflix's ***Never Have I Ever***, has newly joined the cast of the 2003 film which grossed USD 160 million worldwide.

Julia Butters, Manny Jacinto, and Sophia Hammons will also join the sequel.

NEWS

Brazil

FROM PAGE 12

injury but was at the stadium as a fan, could not hide his dismay.

The broadcast showed his reaction in the stands when the stadium speaker announced the change, exclaiming "Vini?" repeatedly, with his arms open, looking at his friends in disbelief.

Vinicius arrived at the Copa America as a strong contender to win the Ballon d'Or after a hugely successful season with LaLiga winners Real Madrid.

The 23-year-old netted their second goal against Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League final as Real claimed a record-extending 15th European crown.

The jet-heeled forward torments defences and always seems to come to the fore when the pressure is at its highest, scoring 24 goals for his club last season.

He was rarely substituted by Real manager Carlo Ancelotti, who often said Vinicius was at his most dangerous late on in games and gave the forward the freedom to roam across the front line.

Things are different with Brazil.

Vinicius is deployed as more of an orthodox forward wide on the left and has scored only three goals in 31 games for Brazil.

Dorival's decision to take him off on Monday brought back memories of the 2022 World Cup quarter-finals, when then manager Tite also substituted Vinicius early in the second-half against Croatia, a game Brazil ended up losing on penalties.

On Monday, Vinicius struggled to make an impact from the left wing and exited the game without a shot on target.

Dorival said he tried moving Vinicius around before replacing him with 17-year-old forward Endrick.

"We tried with him on the wing and we didn't succeed. Then put him inside and we couldn't find a way through either ... he was very well marked," Dorival said.

"We had to find a solution, I was trying to make a change. We tried various alternatives, several situations were created, but in the end we were unsuccessful with our finishing."

The challenge for Dorival in Brazil's upcoming games will be finding a way to balance their attack without sacrificing his best player.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12

runs, leaving the qualification hopes of the 2021 champions hanging by a thread, then the Bangladesh bowlers, who deserved all the credit for completely saving the team's blushes, combined to set the stage for a great climax by restricting Afghanistan to a modest total of 115-5.

What initially appeared as only a mathematical equation for the Tigers, the bowlers turned into a reality. But ultimately, Bangladesh's batting once again proved that they lacked the firepower and right mindset to overcome the challenge.

Achieving the target in 12.1 overs to secure the semifinal spot was tough but not impossible. However, it required some clarity in approach, which was missing in the Bangladesh batting unit or the team management throughout the tournament.

As a result, the Tigers had to finish the campaign with the consolation that they won three first-round matches and qualified for the Super 8s. Once the dust settles after a sordid campaign, the team management must realize the obvious: with an amateurish batting approach and mindset, a team cannot succeed in a tournament where the challenges and stakes are so high.

Back to the Saint Lucia classic, what did the Bangladesh team's think-tank want to achieve: a mere win or a place in the semifinals? If the batting order is scrutinized, for instance, where Shanto and Shakib Al Hasan were sent ahead of someone like Soumya Sarkar – an opener by trade and known for his exploits against the pacers in Powerplay – during a chase requiring over 10 runs per over, we can get a grasp of the negative mindset of the team management.

Another contentious decision was not promoting a power hitter in Rishad Hossain ahead of Mahmudullah Riyad, while the asking rate required for a semifinals berth begged for a few lusty blows in quick succession to peg back the Afghans.

It did not reflect well on the team when captain Shanto revealed that they gave up hope after losing three early wickets and focused on winning the match from then on -- quite baffling that in a match of such magnitude, there should not have been any line of thinking other than what ensured a semifinals entry.

Then again, when head coach Chandika Hathurusingha marked his charges' Super 8s entrance as a "bonus" rather than a new challenge, one could not have expected more from this team than what transpired.

At the end of the day, an increased number of wins may save someone's job, but it will not serve the purpose of the team. While Rashid's team, having stunned Australia in the Super 8s, made their people back home happy with "a big achievement," Shanto apologized for letting down their fans.

Unlike his coach and a more decorated senior teammate, the Bangladesh captain was honest enough to admit that as a team they have "disappointed" fans and, as a batting group, they weren't able to deliver, irrespective of the fact that this T20 World Cup churned out their best-ever results.

Bangladesh won three first-round matches, despite firing without the batting cylinder, but their overall performance was nowhere near to showing any improvement as a team.

As the Tigers sign off from another global event, leaving many questions unanswered, will anybody be held accountable? If the past trends are anything to go by, there may not even be a sliver of hope.

Banks, NBFIs asked

FROM PAGE 2

The ACC urged the BFIU and BSEC to freeze all financial transaction-related accounts of the family.

Over the last two days, the finance ministry removed Matiur from the position of director of state-run Sonali Bank PLC.

It also transferred him to the Internal Resources Division from his position as president of the customs, excise, and VAT appellate tribunal at the National Board of Revenue.

Matiur came into the spotlight after controversy over his wealth and source of income.

The controversy surfaced after Matiur's son, Mushfiqur Rahman Ifat, posted a photo of a sacrificial goat ahead of Eid-ul Azha on social media and claimed to have bought it for Tk 12 lakh.

This raised questions about the income of this official, with a basic monthly salary of Tk 78,000.

Rights activists

FROM PAGE 12

dire situation, and no remediation at all of its victims," he added.

Malaysia's systemic inability to meaningfully combat labour trafficking, ensure remediation of victims and accountability of perpetrators indeed warranted its immediate downgrade today to Tier 3 in the 2024 TIP Report, he said.

"Today's upgrade is therefore disappointing and raises for me genuine concern about the legitimacy and accuracy of the US government's country-based human trafficking assessments."

In April, independent experts said the conditions of Bangladeshi migrants were "unsustainable and undignified" warning that "certain high-level officials" in both Malaysia and Bangladesh "are involved in this business or condoning it".

At the end of May, thousands of migrant workers from Bangladesh rushed to Malaysia to beat a hard deadline of May 31 for them to enter there.

Despite the TIP upgrade, the Malaysian government still has to sort out other "blunders" in how it handles migration, Adrian Pereira of the North-South Initiative in Kuala Lumpur told Channel News Asia.

Successive Malaysian administrations have refused to adopt proposals made by the Independent Committee on the Management of Foreign Workers that was filed by a committee of former judges, lawyers and other experts as early as 2019.

"They refused to adopt the recommendations, meaning either the politicians or the civil servants were conniving to ensure the status quo. [Anwar Ibrahim's administration] has to take it seriously, they can't think that they can do business as usual," Pereira said.

US objects

FROM PAGE 12

In the letters, sent on Friday, the BPSA urged journalists to be more cautious and follow the principles of journalism properly while publishing any report about the police force in the future.

The association described the recent media reports, mainly on graft allegations against some former and current officials, as a "smear campaign" by the media. It claimed the reports being run by print, electronic, and social media outlets are "partial, motivated, exaggerated, and misleading".

Graft taking shine off

FROM PAGE 1

who have illegal incomes can afford to do this."

"A goat was bought for Tk 15 lakh. Who can do it?"

Hanif said salaries of government employees have been hiked on different occasions. Their benefits have been enhanced. "Why do they still indulge in corruption?"

"They [corrupt government officials] are being allowed to keep their jobs paying nominal fines," he said.

He said there are thousands of Matiurs, a former NBR official who is making headlines for alleged corruption.

Hanif said if there is a criminal case against a politician, there is no need to take permission to arrest them. But in similar cases against government officials, permission of higher officials is required.

He said the Government Service Act-2018 is encouraging officials to indulge in corruption. They will not be fired if they are punished for less than a year, which is not conducive for good governance.

Hanif asked for amending the law.

Opposing the proposal to allow legalising black money, Hanif said it was illogical that people pay 30 percent tax on legal earnings while people who make money illegally pay 15 percent.

AL lawmaker Motahar Hossain said bureaucrats say that all politicians are corrupt and do nothing. They only build houses at home and abroad and deposit money with Swiss banks.

Hasina's China visit

FROM PAGE 2

partnership and friendship as both countries are developing fast and both governments are committed to delivering for the people and to the modernisation drive.

"Strong friendship and trust have been developed between the two peoples during their fight for national liberation and independence. The seed of this friendship was planted by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

The Chinese Embassy in Dhaka hosted the dialogue titled "Looking Towards the Future of China-Bangladesh Relations: A Conversation with the CPC Delegation" at the Renaissance Hotel.

In his opening remarks, Jianchao expressed his enthusiasm about the visit to Bangladesh, saying, "I was really excited about this trip even before I came. Not only because I've never been to Bangladesh, but also because in recent years, I've been hearing about the economic miracle of this great country. In the last two-three days, I've been moving around, meeting local people, visiting projects contracted or supported by China, such as the Padma Bridge..."

He also met President Mohammed Shahabuddin, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud.

"I had a strong sense that the China-Bangladesh partnership and friendship have remained very strong. Next year, we're going to celebrate the 50th anniversary, half a century of excellent relationship between our two countries.

"Our relationship has become a paradigm of equality, mutual benefit, mutual respect, and harmonious coexistence between neighbours. The Chinese Dream and the Sonar Bangla dovetail each other and can enable each other's success."

Earlier in the day, during his meeting with the president at Bangabhaban, Jianchao said that China is willing to continue all possible cooperation for the development of Bangladesh.

President Shahabuddin said China's cooperation in implementing various mega projects, including Padma Bridge Rail Link, Karnaphuli Tunnel, and Elevated Expressway, has accelerated economic development in Bangladesh.

'Sharifa's Tale'

FROM PAGE 12

similarities and differences".

This chapter was designed under the new curriculum to raise public awareness about transgender people.

The story drew significant attention after an adjunct faculty member of BRAC University tore out the pages containing it during an event. A video of this incident went viral on social media.

On January 24, the education ministry formed a five-member committee to review "Sharifa's Tale". The committee recommended dropping the story in May.

What to WATCH

T SPORTS AND SONY SPORTS 2,5
Euro
Slovakia vs Romania
Live from 10:00 pm
Ukraine vs Belgium
Live from 10:00 pm
Georgia vs Portugal
Live from 1:00 am
(Thursday)
Czech Republic vs Turkey
Live from 1:00 am
(Thursday)

T SPORTS
Copa America
Chile vs Argentina
Live from 7:00 am
Ecuador vs Jamaica
Live from 4:00 am
(Thursday)

A defeatist mentality, leading nowhere

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

It was a day to seize an opportunity, perhaps the biggest one in Bangladesh's recent history. After their solid effort with the ball against Afghanistan in St. Vincent yesterday, the context and match scenario all pointed to going on an all-out attack in chasing 115. It simply required taking those runs in 12.1 overs to make the T20 World Cup semifinals or fall trying. A defeatist mentality, however, surprisingly turned the whole game away from their grasp.

What was an inspiring challenge and opportunity would leave a big gash on Bangladesh's cricket history as, given the context of Group One of the Super Eights and the game itself, the only thing at stake was having the heart to go for the game for a place in the semis; for winning in itself was not as important, akin to making it a dead rubber final appearance in the marquee event.

But could more be expected when the head coach Chandika Hathurusingha remarked that anything gained from the Super Eights will be a "bonus", or when Shakib Al Hasan jumped to conclusion that they do not have a chance of making the last-four stage anymore following defeat to India?

While it boiled down to a make-or-break situation for the Tigers at the Arnos Vale Stadium, Mahmudullah Riyad played out five dots when the equation was to get 43 off 19 deliveries. It really showed where the confidence level of the batting unit was, given how Bangladesh planned for the chase. Did the Bangladesh think tank not know what kind of game they ought to be preparing for?

Even before the game against Afghanistan, Bangladesh knew they needed a 62-run win if they batted first. Thus, they had to be aware that they needed to chase any target in and around 11 to 13 overs. But skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto said something about winning being the initial plan; as if the equation at hand was an irrelevant burden.

Most importantly, in a game where the batting order had to be shuffled to make the chase in 12.1 overs, Bangladesh resorted to normalcy.

"First of all, we wanted to win the match. That is the initial plan. After the first innings, when we saw 115 on the board, we had a plan that we could win in 12.1 overs," Shanto relayed at yesterday's press conference.

He stated more clearly during the post-match presentations the approach the batting unit carried. "The normal plan was first three wickets we go hard, especially in the first six overs, and if we lose early wickets we play normally," Shanto had said.

Afghanistan, on the other hand, played out of their skin while Bangladesh were humbled by their own abysmal planning. If the idea was to attack in the Powerplay, the first six overs, Bangladesh did the opposite by not taking risks and sending in the likes of Tawhid Hridoy or Soumya Sarkar earlier -- batters who are ready to take advantage of field settings.

Instead, Shanto and Shakib Al Hasan, who have struggled immensely throughout this tournament, came in and departed in back-to-back deliveries, leaving them at 23 for 3 in 2.5 overs. With their plans, Bangladesh looked to be heading neither here nor there.

The Powerplay produced 46 for three and after that, Liton tried for a while, and Hridoy was the only other batter who looked like he wanted something different inside the 12.1 overs. Once the latter departed, along came that pivotal 10th over where veteran Mahmudullah picked up just four off Noor Ahmed -- the epitome of Bangladesh's defeatist mentality -- and they lost the plot from there. Liton at one point stuck to the norm to at least ensure a win, but Afghanistan seized momentum from what intent Bangladesh had lost by not getting more in the Powerplay.

There was no qualification at stake to another tournament, as was the case during the last game Bangladesh played in the 2023 ODI World Cup against Sri Lanka. Only winning would bring nothing of importance. Shanto said that "the whole batting line-up made very bad decisions", but bad decisions started from the very top with the team management, Hathurusingha and Co.

Argentina and Chile set to renew rivalry

REUTERS

Argentina and Chile will write a new chapter in their long-standing rivalry on Tuesday's Copa America Group A clash at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, the same stage where "La Roja" thwarted the reigning world champions in the continental final in 2016.

Argentina boss Lionel Scaloni said that his side has put behind them the painful memory of the second successive Copa final they lost to their bitter rivals, which followed a 2015 final loss in Santiago.

In both cases, Lionel Messi's Argentina lost to Chile on penalties.

"Nothing is left of the 2016 final. Just as we are world champions, what I said the other day, that's over and football is like this," Scaloni told reporters on Monday.

"It goes on, the wheel goes on, the ball doesn't stop and there's absolutely nothing left. Everything else is history, it doesn't make much sense to go back."

Argentine-born Chile coach Ricardo Gareca, appointed earlier this year, has said it is always special for him to face his home country, who beat Brazil in the last Copa America final, in Rio in 2021.

The 66-year-old will be looking for his first win against the defending champions, having recorded two draws and two defeats at the helm of Peru in South American qualifiers between 2015 and 2022.

"It's always special to face Argentina, it's not just any national team," he said. "Beyond the importance of Argentina on its own, of what it represents, for me logically it is always special, these are not common clashes.

"I live it intensely, of course, totally focused on the Chile national team, but they are special matches."

Group A leaders Argentina can clinch a spot in the quarter-finals after their 2-0 win over Canada in their opening match. Chile have one point after a goalless draw against Peru.

Hazlewood doubts 'drastic' changes for Australia

AFP, *Gros-Islet*

Fast bowler Josh Hazlewood believes there is no "drastic" need to cull Australia's ageing squad despite the failure to make the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup.

Australia's 24-run loss to India on Monday pushed them to the brink of elimination from the last-four chase before Afghanistan's dramatic victory against Bangladesh nudged them over the cliff.

By the time the next World Cup rolls around in India and Sri Lanka in 2026, only one of the current 15-man squad -- Cameron Green -- will still be well under 30.

Green, a 24-year-old all-rounder, didn't get to play a game.

"There might be a couple of changes, but a lot of the guys still play in the franchise cricket if they're not playing for Australia, so they're available to be picked," said Hazlewood, himself 33.

"There's some class players in our 15, And we've got a couple on the bench as well. So, you'd think it'd be an actual slow change. I don't think there'd be anything drastic."

What does need drastic attention is Australia's woeful performance in the field at the tournament.

Afghanistan win, so does cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

'Seriously, who writes these scripts!'

Pommie Mbangwa, a Zimbabwean commentator, said this line twice on air yesterday during the final Super Eight match of the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup between Afghanistan and Bangladesh in St. Vincent.

On both occasions, he said this after Afghanistan, while trying to defend a paltry 115, had claimed a wicket at the right time to halt Bangladesh's progress, a match that they eventually won and booked a spot for the semifinals for the very first time.

Mbangwa's genuine reaction at Afghanistan's never-say-die attitude could also be used to describe this team's incredible journey in cricket, which separates it from every other nation that has ever played the game at the highest level.

For a country like Afghanistan, which has been ravaged by wars for decades and is treated as an outcast by most of the world, mere participating in a World Cup should be hailed as an achievement.

Afghanistan, a team first formed with players who learnt the game in refugee camps in Pakistan, could also be referred to as cricket's only refugee team, as they have never played an international game at home and are unlikely to do so in the near future.

Given the lack of infrastructure at home, never getting to experience true home support and having no real cricketing heritage, Afghanistan have no business contesting against top sides in ICC events, let alone beating them.

But Rashid Khan and his team didn't get that memo.

Even with Afghanistan's lethal spin attack, hardly anyone hedged their bets on Afghanistan making it to the semifinals. The reason for that, perhaps, was their poor record in T20 World Cups.

They have featured in every T20 World Cup since the third edition in 2010 but before the ongoing tournament, had only one win over a top side, which came against West Indies in 2016.

This time, the Afghans were pitted in the group of death in the first round, alongside New Zealand, West Indies, Papua New Guinea and Uganda, with only two teams set to move onto the Super Eight.

The Afghans first showed signs that this edition will be different when they crushed the Kiwis by 84 runs, a victory that booked them a place in the next phase.

Afghanistan's challenge got even tougher in the Super Eight, when they got pitted against two tournament favourites in India and Australia along with Bangladesh in Group 1.

A 47-run defeat against India didn't do their qualification chances any favour. However, after Rashid's team sprung a surprise on Australia and India aided the South Asian neighbours with a win over the Aussies, Afghanistan needed just one more win against the Tigers to reach the promised land, which they did.

Afghanistan's incredible rise has been international cricket's biggest feel good story for some years now. Their triumph came on the backs of players like Rashid, Mohammad Nabi, Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Co, all of whom could've easily abandoned the national side and played exclusively in franchise cricket. But this Afghan team has long been on a mission, to bring smiles to their countrymen who don't have much to celebrate. This determination has brought this side into the semis and two matches away from the coveted trophy.

Romelu Lukaku has put the ball at the back of the net three times during the first two games for Belgium in the Euro 2024 but none of those efforts stood. The all-time top-scorer for the Red Devils will need to get his act together as Belgium face a survival clash against Ukraine tonight. PHOTO: **AFP**

Modric wants to carry on

REUTERS, *Leipzig*

Croatia captain Luka Modric said he would look to continue playing on despite his country's likely elimination from the European Championship after conceding a last-gasp goal in a 1-1 draw with Italy in their final Group B game on Monday.

Modric suggested he wanted to carry on even after 178 internationals since his debut in 2006.

"I'd like to keep playing forever but there probably will come a time when I must hang up my boots. I'll keep playing on, but I don't know for how much longer," the 38-year-old midfielder told reporters.

Modric was resigned in his analysis of the game.

"That was very stressful. We kept battling right until the end but, unfortunately, football was merciless with us tonight. It was cruel above all today but also in our last match (a 2-2 draw with Albania) when we also conceded a late goal," said Modric.

Italy forward Mattia Zaccagni celebrates scoring a last-ditch equaliser against Croatia which took the defending champions to the Round of 16 of Euro 2024 in their last Group B match at the Leipzig Stadium on Monday. (Inset) Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma consoles Luka Modric after the result all but ensured Croatia's exit. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Spalletti unhappy with leaks and talk of pacts

REUTERS, *Leipzig*

For Italy's media, the 1-1 draw with Croatia on Monday which sent them through to the last 16 of Euro 2024 was a miracle, but despite the euphoria of a late equaliser, manager Luciano Spalletti appeared far from happy.

The defending champions were 1-0 down going into the final minute of added time before substitute Mattia Zacagni's goal salvaged a draw.

At Spalletti's post-match press conference he responded angrily to one reporter asking if his 3-5-2 formation was the result of a pact with his players.

"In my opinion, this is what you were told," Spalletti said, before asking the reporter his age.

"Fifty-one, you still have 14 years before you get to 65 like me. I speak to the players, I need to hear with their ears and see with their eyes, so I talk to them, what is the problem?"

At the reporter's insistence that nobody had told him about a pact, Spalletti repeated his idea that someone had spoken out of turn.

"But don't claim that this is your poetic licence, this is just a weakness of those who leak things," Spalletti said.

"There is an internal environment and an external one and if in the internal environment there are those who speak of certain things outside, it's someone who harms the national team.

"I did my thesis at Coverciano on the 3-5-2. I'll let you see it later, so it's only natural that I speak to the players."

Italy came into the game with Croatia knowing a draw would guarantee a place in the last 16, and despite leaving it so late to secure qualification, fear is not something which concerns Spalletti.

"What kind of question is it, what if we get knocked out? Am I afraid? What am I afraid of? Otherwise I would have just come here like you guys and watched the games," Spalletti said.

"I would have done another job. I know so many people they would have given me a free ticket. It's only natural that there's pressure and responsibility, but we go out there to play."

La Gazzetta dello Sport went with the headline "Italian Miracle", and said the Azzurri were saved not only by Zaccagni's moment of magic but also keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma's fine saves.

La Stampa went with the same headline, and called Zaccagni "an accidental hero of a bad game", while La Repubblica said the "Azzurri reached the last 16 by the skin of their teeth".

Italy face Switzerland in the last 16 on Saturday.

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Bangladesh's faulty mindset exposed in exit

BISHWAJIT ROY

No shortage of excitement, tension, and twists with the semifinals spot at stake: one could not have expected more drama than what unfolded during an absorbing T20 World Cup Super Eights contest between Bangladesh and Afghanistan at the Arnos Vale Stadium in Saint Vincent yesterday.

Eventually, the Najmul Hossain Shanto-led side were on the wrong side of the outcome as Rashid Khan's Afghanistan secured a famous eight-run victory, booking their semifinals ticket while sending title-aspirants Australia back home.

Bangladesh, however, can only blame themselves for squandering a glorious opportunity to sneak into the last four, especially if they question themselves on whether they truly aimed to achieve the jackpot -- what appeared to be a near-impossible feat following back-to-back heavy defeats against India and Australia in the Super Eights.

If India had set the stage for this drama after beating Australia by 24

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

AFGHANISTAN
BANGLADESH

Afghanistan captain Rashid Khan celebrates after dismissing Rishad Hossain, leaving the Bangladesh tail exposed. The veteran leg-spinner's all-round show was pivotal in his side's eight-run win in an absorbing Super Eights contest of the ICC T20 World Cup in Saint Vincent yesterday, leading to their maiden semifinal berth.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

'Sharifa's Tale' to be removed from textbook

Decides edn ministry upon experts' advice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The education ministry has decided to remove the story titled "Sharifa's Tale" from the seventh-grade history and social science textbook following recommendations of a probe committee.

The ministry wrote to the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) recently instructing it to take necessary steps regarding the decision, Prof Md Moshiuzzaman, acting NCTB chairman, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The education ministry's letter said the controversial story should be replaced by another story," said Prof Moshiuzzaman.

He added that the story would be replaced in the next academic year. The textbook would still have a topic for the same learning outcome, but with a different narrative.

"Sharifa's Tale" was included in the history and social science book for seventh grade in a section on "human

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

ESPIONAGE CHARGE

Assange set to be freed after US plea deal

REUTERS, *Sydney*

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is due to plead guilty today to violating US espionage law, in a deal that will set him free after a 14-year British legal odyssey and allow his return home to Australia.

Assange, 52, has agreed to plead guilty to a single criminal count of conspiring to obtain and disclose classified US national defence documents, according to filings in the US District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands.

The deal marks the end of a legal saga that has seen Assange spend more than five years in a British high-security jail and seven holed up in the Ecuadorean

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Rights activists criticise Malaysia's improved ranking

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT
JUNE 2024

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Rights activists have criticised Malaysia's improved ranking on the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report despite the exploitative conditions faced by hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi migrant workers.

On Monday, the TIP report upgraded Malaysia, which was earlier relegated to the lowest level, Tier 3, in 2021 for widespread migrant labour abuses inside its factories and plantations, to the Tier 2 category. Last year, Malaysia was in the Tier 2 watchlist grouping.

The annual report ranks governments based on their efforts to acknowledge and combat human trafficking and remains one of the few global indices with teeth as it can trigger US sanctions for the worst offending nations.

"Based on years of unsuccessfully engaging the Malaysian government on cases of alleged human trafficking and forced labour, I strongly disagree with today's tier 2 upgrade for the country," said migrant rights activist Andy Hall in a statement.

A failed migrant work management and recruitment system -- that promotes impunity, is devoid of the rule of law and is systemically corrupt -- continues to exist in Malaysia, said the Nepal-based British activist who researches migration in Southeast Asia.

"There is little to no accountability for this

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

PUBLIC UNIVS

Teachers go on half-day work abstention

Call for reinstating pension benefits

DU CORRESPONDENT

No classes were held for at least five hours at 35 public universities yesterday as teachers began their three-day-long half-day work abstention, demanding the reinstatement of the previous pension facilities instead of the newly introduced Universal Pension Scheme (UPS).

The Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) organised the protests at the universities yesterday, just as they reopened after the Eid-ul-Azha holidays.

Its General Secretary Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, during a sit-in in front of Dhaka University's arts faculty, threatened all-out strikes at the campuses for an indefinite period from July 1 if the demands were not met.

As part of the protest, teachers did not take classes from 8:00am to 1:00pm, he

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

ISRAELI STRIKES ON GAZA CITY

Hamas chief's relatives among 24 killed

AGENCIES

Israeli forces killed at least 24 Palestinians in three separate airstrikes on Gaza City early yesterday, and the dead included a sister of Ismail Haniyeh, the chief of the Hamas group, Gaza health officials and medics said.

- Israel bombs two schools, a house in Gaza City
- US urges Israel to avoid Lebanon escalation
- Gaza death toll rises to 37,658

Israeli tanks also pressed deeper into western areas of Rafah in the south of the enclave overnight, blowing up homes, residents said.

Two of the Israeli airstrikes hit two schools in Gaza City, killing at least 14 people, medics said. Another strike on a house in the Shati (Beach) camp, one of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, killed 10 others.

The house in Shati belonged to the extended family of Hamas political chief Haniyeh, who is based in Qatar, killing one of his sisters along with other relatives too, family members and medics said.

Haniyeh, who leads Hamas' diplomacy and is the public face of the group that has been running Gaza, has lost many relatives in Israeli air strikes since October 7, including three sons.

Israel's military said its forces had targeted Hamas fighters overnight in Gaza City who had been involved in the planning of attacks on Israel. The fighters included some involved in holding hostages captive and some who had taken part in Hamas' cross-border attack on October 7.

The Israeli Air Force struck two structures "used by Hamas members in Shati and Daraj Tuffah in the northern Gaza Strip. The terrorists operated inside school compounds that were used by Hamas as a shield for its terrorist activities", the military statement said.

Hamas denies using civilian facilities such as schools and hospitals for military purposes. The group described the attacks on the two schools and the house in Shati camp as "massacres".

BPSA STATEMENT

US objects to 'efforts to intimidate or harass journos'

Says US state dept

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday that his country objects to any efforts to harass or intimidate journalists to prevent them from conducting their important work.

At a department press briefing in Washington, Miller was answering a question over the Bangladesh Police Service Association's (BPSA's) "threatening" statement on recent news about the police force.

"We strongly support the role of a free and independent media in maintaining effective democratic institutions and promoting government transparency. We object to any efforts to harass or intimidate journalists to prevent them from conducting their important work," Miller said in reply.

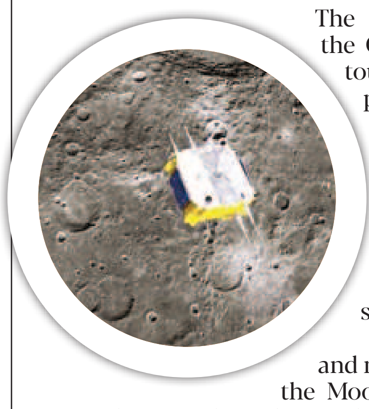
The BPSA sent letters to all media editors, expressing concern, which have been reported by various media outlets.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

China probe returns with samples from far side of Moon

AFP, *Beijing*

A Chinese probe carrying samples from the far side of the Moon returned to Earth yesterday, capping a technically complex 53-day mission heralded as a world first.

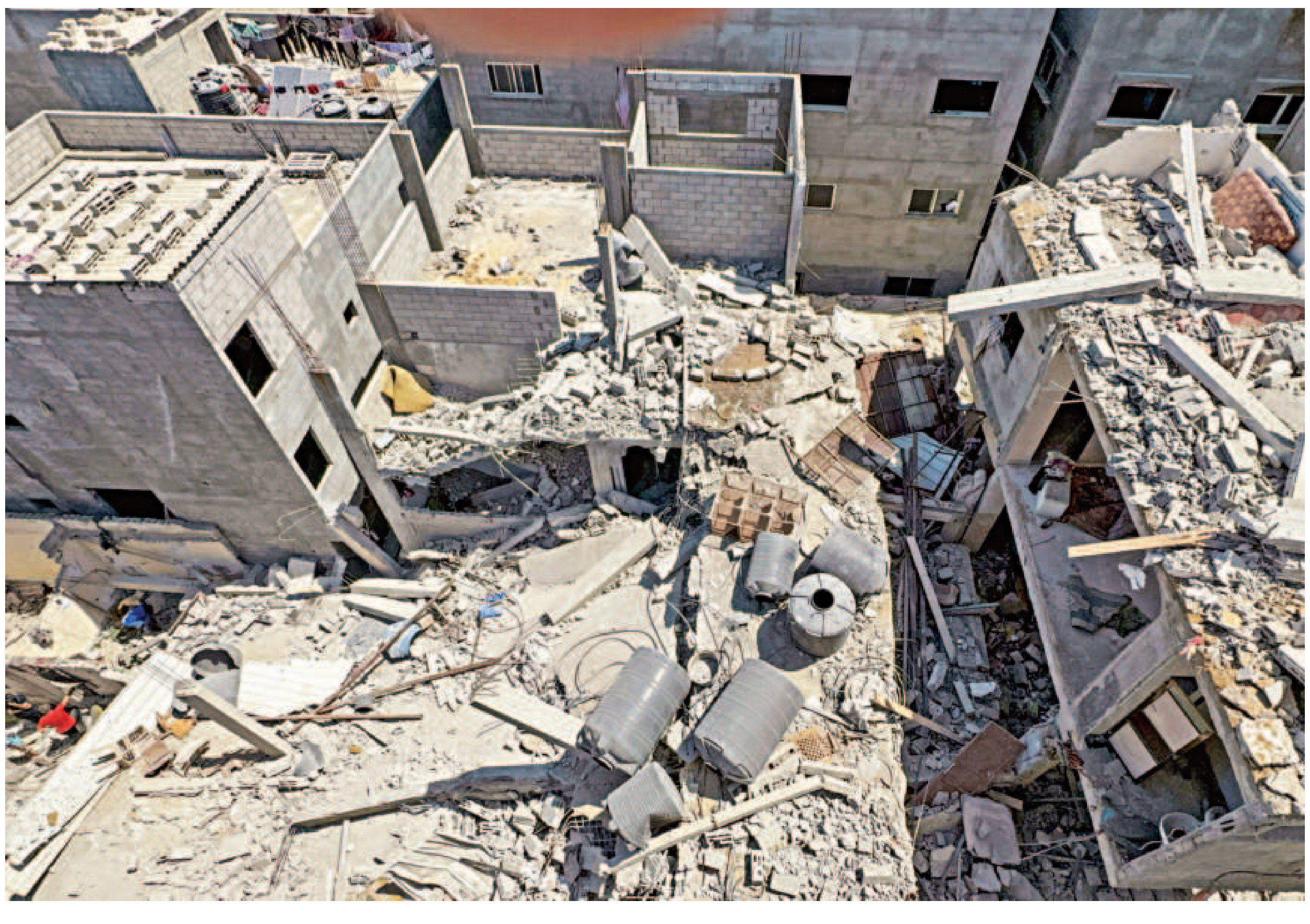


The landing module of the Chang'e-6 spacecraft touched down at a predetermined site in Inner Mongolia at 2:07 pm (0607 GMT), the China National Space Administration said, hailing the mission a "complete success".

It comes bearing soil and rocks from the side of the Moon facing away from Earth, a poorly understood region that scientists say holds great research promise because its rugged features are less smoothed over by ancient lava flows than the near side.

That means the materials harvested there may help us to better understand how the Moon formed and how it has evolved over time.

China's space agency said the probe was "functioning normally, signalling that the Chang'e-6 lunar exploration mission was a complete success".



The photo shows the site of an Israeli strike on a house where Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh's sister and other relatives were killed, at the Shati (Beach) refugee camp in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Brazil challenged with getting best out of Vinicius

REUTERS

Brazil's poor performance in their goalless draw against Costa Rica in their Copa America opener on Monday has dampened the enthusiasm surrounding their new manager and a revamped squad headlined by Vinicius Jr.

After a gritty 1-0 win over England at Wembley and a hard-fought draw 3-3 with Spain at the Bernabeu earlier this year, fans were optimistic that Brazil had turned a corner under Dorival Jr but his side had no answers to Costa Rica's five-man defence in California.

As the clock ticked down and the five-time world champions' frustrations grew, Dorival decided to make his first two substitutions in the 70th minute.

His decision to take Vinicius out of the game came as a huge surprise.

Even Brazil talisman Neymar, who is recovering from a serious knee

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

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Foreign debt costs to spiral

Interest payments to surge 65pc to $2.21b by 2027

REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* **MAHMUDUL HASAN**

Bangladesh's interest payments on external borrowing are projected to soar by 65 percent within three years due to rising global interest rates and an expanded foreign loan portfolio, which will put further pressure on the dwindling foreign currency reserves.

According to a finance ministry report, the interest payments will rise to $2.21 billion or around Tk 26,000 crore by 2027 with the taka losing 35 percent of its value against the greenback over the last two years.

The principal amount is also forecast to jump by 28 percent to $3.17 billion in fiscal 2026-2027, compared to the current fiscal year.

Foreign loan repayments, including interest and principal amount, are projected to reach $3.82 billion in the current fiscal year. Foreign debt servicing already stood at $2.81 billion in the first 10 months of the fiscal year. The amount will rise to $5.38 billion by 2027.

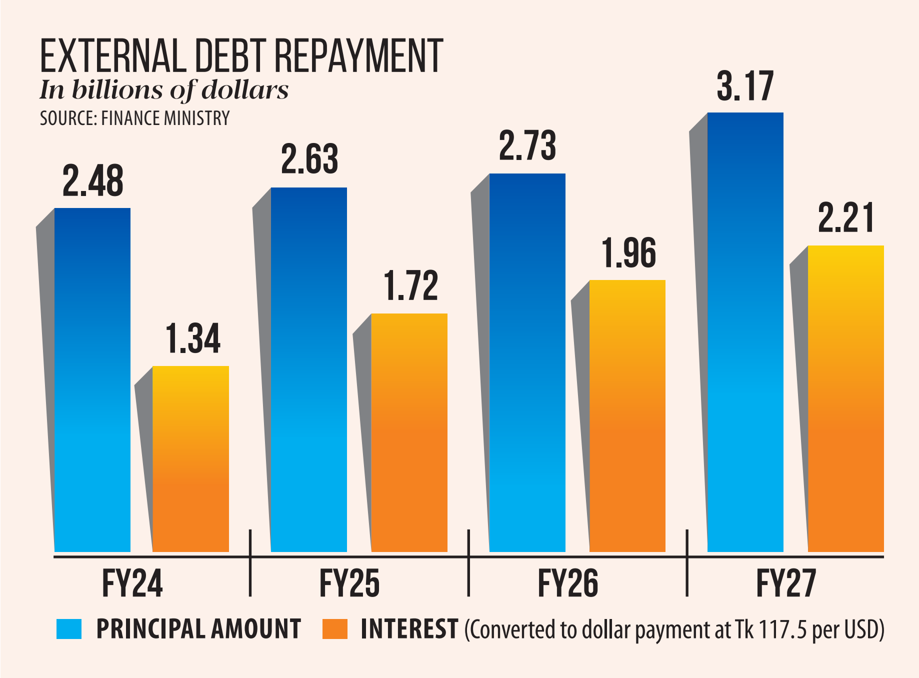
"The impact of currency depreciation on external debt levels underscores the need for careful monitoring and management of external debt risks to maintain economic stability and resilience," said the report titled Medium-Term Macroeconomic Policy Statement (MTMPS).

The proportion of external interest payments in the budget is also expected

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange upon his arrival at Canberra Airport in Australia yesterday. He returned home to restart his life as a free man after admitting he revealed US defence secrets in a deal that unlocked the door to his London prison cell. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**



IMF for stronger asset disclosure process for civil servants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Monetary Fund has urged Bangladesh to strengthen the asset declaration process for public officials in order to combat high-level corruption effectively.

The Washington-based lender made the suggestion in its document released on Tuesday. It also outlined measures to restore macroeconomic stability and end the balance of payments crisis.

The suggestions have to be followed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

A moronic end to a daring jailbreak

4 death row convicts dig a hole for 20 days to escape Bogura jail, get caught after an hour and half

MOSTAFA SHABUJ, *Bogura*

Sentenced to death in separate cases, four convicts were housed together in a condemned cell in Bogura District Jail on June 1.

Over the next 25 days, the four -- Nazrul Islam, 60, of Kurigram; Amir Hamza, 38, of Narsingdi; Md Zakaria, 31, and Farid Sheikh, 28, of Bogura -- hatched an escape plan and worked accordingly.

After managing a screwdriver and an iron-sheet scrap from outside sources, they used those to make a hole in the ceiling. They also tied several bedsheets together to use as a rope.

Then early yesterday, they climbed out of the cell one by one and scaled down the building.

However, their taste of freedom lasted just an hour and half, as police rounded them up from Chashi Bazar, a few blocks from the jail.

Bogura Superintendent of Police Sudip Kumar Chakraborty described the incident at a press briefing at his office yesterday.

The jail has three condemned cells, housing 13 death row inmates. The four escapees were shifted to one of the cells on June 1, according to jail sources.

They said the building was built in the British era, and no iron rods were used in the construction of the roof.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

Professional bodies siding with corrupt officials

AL MP Nasim tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League MP AFM Bahauddin Nasim yesterday in parliament blasted professional bodies for issuing statements in favour of corrupt government officials.

"By issuing statements in favour of corrupt persons, those associations are taking the responsibility for the corruption," he said while participating in the general discussion on the proposed national budget for 2024-25 fiscal.

The AL leader also stressed identifying the other corrupt government officialsand urged the government bodies concerned to take appropriate actions.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bangladeshi women being sold in China

Gangs use elaborate ruse of marriage to traffic them

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Fooled by a gang, a widow in Chuadanga got her daughter married to a Chinese national named Cui Po Wei on July 1 last year, hoping that she would rise out of poverty.

The family was led to believe that the Chinese man had converted to Islam, worked at a factory in Gazipur, and would settle in Bangladesh permanently.

But six months later, Lovely, not her real name, was taken to China by the man and forced into prostitution, according to a case filed by the mother with a Dhaka tribunal on March 31 this year.

On March 11, Lovely managed to call her mother using an app and told she was seriously ill because of the torture she was facing. She added that Bangladeshi traffickers had sold her to Cui Po Wei for Tk 10 lakh.

Lovely's mother told The Daily Star that she personally knew four other poor women who were duped into marrying Chinese nationals. The same group of local people who had duped her were involved in arranging those marriages.

Requesting anonymity, a resident of the capital's Uttara, who works for a Chinese firm, said he personally knew two groups of locals who actively

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

> **On March 11, Lovely managed to call her mother using an app and said she was seriously ill because of the torture she was facing. She added that Bangladeshi traffickers had sold her to Cui Po Wei for Tk 10 lakh.**

Workers cleaning and drying plastic sheets under the sun in Razanagar area of Rangunia, Chattogram city, before sending these to facilities in Dhaka for recycling. The sheets used by brick kilns to protect clay from rains in monsoon become unusable due to wear and tear after a season. Recycling keeps these from adding to the plastic waste. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**

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জয় বঙ্গবন্ধু
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সুস্থ, সচল ও আধুনিক ঢাকা
বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের
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উদযাপন এবং সুস্থ, সচল ও আধুনিক ঢাকা গড়ার লক্ষ্যে
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টি-শার্ট ফ্রি
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করতে স্ক্যান করুন
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Legal issues delaying Tarique's repatriation

Hasina tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some legal issues were delaying the process of bringing home BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman from the UK, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told parliament yesterday.

Tarique has been convicted in multiple cases, including the August 21 grenade attack case.

The government is determined to bring the BNP leader back home after resolving all pending legal issues to make him face the punishment, Hasina said in response to a query from Farida Yasmin, an Awami League lawmaker from a reserved seat for women.

The questions to the PM and her answers were tabled in the House, with Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair.

The premier said strong diplomatic and legal initiatives have been taken to bring Tarique back home.

A total of 15 convicts in the August 21 grenade attack case, including Tarique, are absconding.

Hasina, also the Leader of the House, said an Interpol red notice was issued against the absconding convicts, including Maulana Tajuddin, Md Harish Chaudhary and Ratul Ahmed Babu.

She informed parliament that she sent several letters to the heads of state and governments of the countries concerned at different times seeking cooperation from them in bringing the murderers back home.

The PM said she raised the issue with some government leaders at international forums.

Hasina, however, said the progress in bringing the convicts back home has not been satisfactory.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

An array of solar panels at the Sirajganj 68MW Solar Park in Soydabad near Bangabandhu Bridge. A total of 1.56 lakh solar panels have been set up there. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Another solar farm to go online in days

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, *Pabna*

Commercial operation of another solar power plant may start on June 30 on the bank of Jamuna in Sirajganj.

The "Sirajganj 68MW Solar Park," which was financed by Bangladesh and China companies, will be the 12th operational commercial solar plants in the country.

Eleven such plants now generate 536 megawatts of electricity, according to the national database of renewable energy.

When the Sirajganj plant supplies power to the national grid, the total production will be over 600 megawatts from renewable energy, said sources.

The solar park has been constructed in Soydabad area near Bangabandhu Bridge at a cost of Tk 880 crore. Bangladesh and China Renewable Energy Company Ltd (BCRECL) and North-West Power Generation Company Ltd (NWPGCL) funded the project, whose construction work began on January 9, 2023.

Following power purchase and implementation agreements, NWPGCL and China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation (CMC) started implementing the project, Tanvir Rahman, project director of Sirajganj solar park, told The Daily Star.

> **"We have already completed construction work of the plant. Now we are working for commissioning the plant."**
> **TANVIR RAHMAN,**
> project director

A total of 1.56 lakh solar panels have been set up to produce 68MW of power.

"We have already completed construction work of the plant. Now we are working for commissioning the plant," Tanvir said.

Line commissioning and other work for the commercial operation have successfully been completed, the PD said, adding that they are hopeful of starting the commercial operation on June 30.

"We will supply power to the national grid at a cost of Tk 11.20per unit," said Tanvir.

Talking to this correspondent, Khandakar Mokammel Hossain, a member of Bangladesh Power Development Board, said the government is determined to increase solar power generation.

"We are getting only 536 megawatts of power from renewable energy sources, but we want to get a significant amount of power from this sector. So, the government is patronising solar plants," he said.

Principal secy's tenure extended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday extended the contract of Tofazzel Hossain Miah, the principal secretary to the prime minister, by another year.

The contractual appointment will be effective from July 5, according to a gazette notification from the ministry of public administration.

The government appointed Miah on a year's contract when his regular service age expired on July 4 last year. The contract expires on July 4 this year.

Meanwhile, the government also extended the tenure of service of ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of road transport and highways division, for another year.

Nuri has been reappointed on a contractual basis in continuation of his previous contract with the government and under the same conditions from July 1 or the day of his joining the office, according to a public administration order yesterday.

In another notification, additional secretary Gautam Chandra Pal was appointed the chairman of the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority. Pal is currently serving as the personal secretary to Obaidul Quader, the minister of road transport and bridges.

Postal officials embezzled Tk 55cr: Palak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Postal officials have embezzled Tk 55 crore from people and the department, Zunaid Ahmed Palak, state minister for posts, telecommunications, and information technology, said yesterday.

"We have found that Tk 55 crore was misappropriated by postal officials nationwide, and I have already written to the ACC chairman, urging him to take action," he said.

Most of the fraudulent activities involve postal officials embezzling people's deposits without issuing official documentation for the purchase of government savings certificates.

The state minister made the remarks while speaking to reporters after a workshop jointly organised by a2i (Aspire to Innovate) platform of Information and Communication Technology Division, and the International Telecommunication Union at a city hotel.

Palak said they recently noticed the financial irregularities at post offices when a woman of Rajshahi's Tanore attempted to commit suicide after failing to recover Tk 2 lakh from the local postmaster.

The official did not provide her with any official documents even though she bought savings certificates, he added.

Professional bodies

FROM PAGE 1

Nasim said that politicians do not take sides when allegations of corruption or misdeeds are raised against a fellow politician.

"Rather, they raise their voice for taking political and legal actions. That's the greatness of honest politicians. But whenever allegations of corruption are raised against a particular person of a government, private, or semi-government organisation or a law enforcement agency, a statement is issued in favour of that corrupt person," he said.

He said the associations concerned will have to get out of this practice.

The lawmaker from Dhaka-8 said initiatives should be taken to implement Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's zero-tolerance policy against corruption by taking strict actions against corrupt persons and institutions.

Talking about defaulted loans, Nasim said such loans should be reduced by taking strict measures against the defaulters.

He called for identifying the loan defaulters, money launderers, bank robbers, and those who hike prices of essentials.

"I think that preparing a list of those people and presenting the list before the nation are necessary."

The AL leader said the people should be protected from the corrupt persons by forming a special task force.

On June 21, Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA) issued a statement condemning what it termed a "smear campaign orchestrated by certain media outlets" against current and former members of police.

BPSA termed some recent media reports on retired and serving police officials "ill motivated, sweeping, and exaggerated". It also requested the media to be more cautious while publishing reports on the force.

The statement came at a time when the Anti-Corruption Commission is conducting an investigation into the allegations of accumulating huge illegal wealth by former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed and his family members.

Former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia also hogged the headlines recently over allegations of amassing illegal wealth.

Matiur Rahman, president of the National Board of Revenue's (NBR) Customs, Excise and VAT Appellate Tribunal, has been transferred to the Internal Resources Division of the finance ministry following a controversy over his wealth.

The ACC is investigating accusations of accumulating assets by Motiur at home and abroad through illegal means.

Foreign debt costs to spiral

FROM PAGE 1

to rise to 2.6 percent in FY27 from 0.9 percent in FY22, reflecting a growing impact of external debt on the budget, the report mentioned.

It further said two major factors are contributing to the increase in interest payments for foreign loans.

One factor is that the reference rates in advanced countries are expected to stay high, and the other is that Bangladesh's graduation from the category of LDCs will gradually narrow the window for getting concessional loans from external sources.

A reference rate is an interest rate benchmark that is used to set other interest rates. The Fed Funds Rate, the Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR), and the prime rate are among the most common reference rates.

The report said the implicit interest rate on external borrowing exhibits a gradual increase over the period -- from 1 percent in FY21 to 2.6 percent in FY27.

"This increase is attributed to a higher proportion of borrowing through floating and semi-concessional rates, which are more sensitive to market fluctuations compared to fixed-rate financing."

It also mentioned that the depreciation of the taka has elevated the value of external debt when measured in local currency terms.

This highlights the influence of currency fluctuations on the debt portfolio and the importance of managing external debt exposure in the face of exchange rate volatility.

Referring to the gradual increase in foreign loan repayments, the report said that managing these debt service obligations is essential for ensuring financial stability and preventing liquidity crises.

"Despite the increasing amounts of external debt repayment, they are expected to remain within tolerable limits, supported by the government's efforts to diversify funding sources and build up foreign exchange reserves," it added.

Talking to this newspaper, Ahsan H Mansur, executive director at the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, said that given the ongoing forex crisis, Bangladesh has to be judicious about taking loans and choose projects that are of high social and economic importance.

"Many of the investments were good, but many were not, which is why our debt burden is rising. The government's capacity to borrow is decreasing due to the inability to expand revenue growth in line with economic growth."

He said projects such as the Dhaka Metro Rail and even an underground rail line in Dhaka will be beneficial.

However, the huge spending on the train line to Cox's Bazar, the Padma Rail Line, and the nuclear power plant in Rooppur will not yield expected outcome. They will add to the burden of foreign debt repayment, he said.

According to the report, Bangladesh's foreign loans are mostly made up of five currencies. The US dollar remains predominant, constituting 53 percent of the total, followed by the Japanese yen at 20 percent, the euro at 15 percent, the Chinese renminbi at 8 percent, the British pound at 3 percent, and other currencies making up 1 percent of the debt.

Bangladeshi women being sold in China

FROM PAGE 1

look for gullible Bangladeshi women, especially the ones from indigenous communities of the hill tracts, and get them to marry Chinese citizens.

"I often see parties at restaurants in Uttara where Chinese men meet women from the hill districts. Sometimes, I see them preparing marriage registration documents. Some locals are members of the gangs."

He had heard that the local arrangers get from Tk 10-Tk 20 lakh for each woman who agreed to fly to China.

The people accused in the case filed by Lovely's mother are Cui Po Wei; Ji Yixian, a woman who introduced herself to the family as Wei's sister; Abdullah Al Mamun of Bogura, Faruq and Abdul Mannan of Chuadanga; Solaiman of Kashimpur; and Hafizur Rahman Mollah, a marriage registrar from Jatrabari in the capital.

"The accused are organised human traffickers who took advantage of our helplessness... and trafficked my daughter to China for sexual exploitation and forced prostitution," reads the complaint.

The Criminal Investigation Department is investigating the case.

On May 1 in Rangamati, a Chakma woman filed a case with Naniarchar Police Station, stating that a gang of traffickers held her sister captive at an unspecified place in the capital and may soon take her to China.

The complaint said the gang promised to admit the 21-year-old woman to a nursing institute and took her to Dhaka in a microbus. The gang later took indecent photos of her and forced her to marry a Chinese man.

A woman named Rika Chakma was accused in the case as the leader of the gang. Rika, who is from Khagrachhari's Dighinala upazila, lives in the capital's Uttara Sector-14. Seven named and four to five unidentified others were accused in the case.

On April 26, a 21-year-old Marma woman from Khagrachhari filed a case with Laxmichhari Police Station accusing five named and two or three unknown others of attempting to traffic her to China.

She was taken to a house in Uttara Sector-11 and was compelled to marry a Chinese man. Luckily, locals rescued her and caught three of the gang members on April 25 when the men were taking her to a government office in Khagrachhari to get a document for her passport.

The CID is investigating both cases.

In 2018, three women of indigenous communities were brought back from China through diplomatic efforts.

Chandra Dewan, head teacher of Ghagra High School in Kawkhali, Rangamati, said that in the last few months at least three young women from the area were taken to China, and two schoolgirls were recently rescued from traffickers.

Gautam Dewan, president of CHT Citizens Committee, urged the government to ensure that there is monitoring so that underprivileged women are saved from falling victim to human traffickers.

Noor E Alam Mina, deputy inspector general of Chattogram range police, said police were looking into the matter.

The Chinese embassy in Bangladesh in an email said the Chinese government protects the rights and interests of women and children and cracks down on human trafficking. Besides, the embassy is committed to safeguard the rights and interests of the Chinese citizens in Bangladesh.

Regarding Lovely's case, it said the embassy has not received any notification from the Bangladesh government.

[Our Rangamati correspondent Laltanlian Pangkhua contributed to this report.]

IMF for stronger asset

FROM PAGE 1

in order to receive the remaining instalments of the IMF's $4.7 billion loan.

The advice comes hard on the heels of revelations of financial felonies of unprecedented scale involving a number of former and incumbent senior government officials.

The amassing of huge wealth by former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed has particularly taken the nation by surprise.

"To combat high-level corruption effectively, it is essential to reinforce the asset declaration process for public officials by enforcing sanctions for non-compliance and adopting a standardised approach for the usage and regular updating of the declarations," said the IMF.

According to the document, the government told the IMF that it remained committed to strengthening governance and combatting corruption.

2 more suspects held

FROM PAGE 12

"We are bringing to book only those against whom there is clear evidence. No innocent person will be arrested and no one will get a guilty individual released."

Yesterday morning, detectives with the help of divers and fishermen with nets looked in two ponds of Jhenaidah town for three phones with which Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, relief and social welfare affairs secretary of the Jhenaidah Awami League, contacted the assailants, officials said.

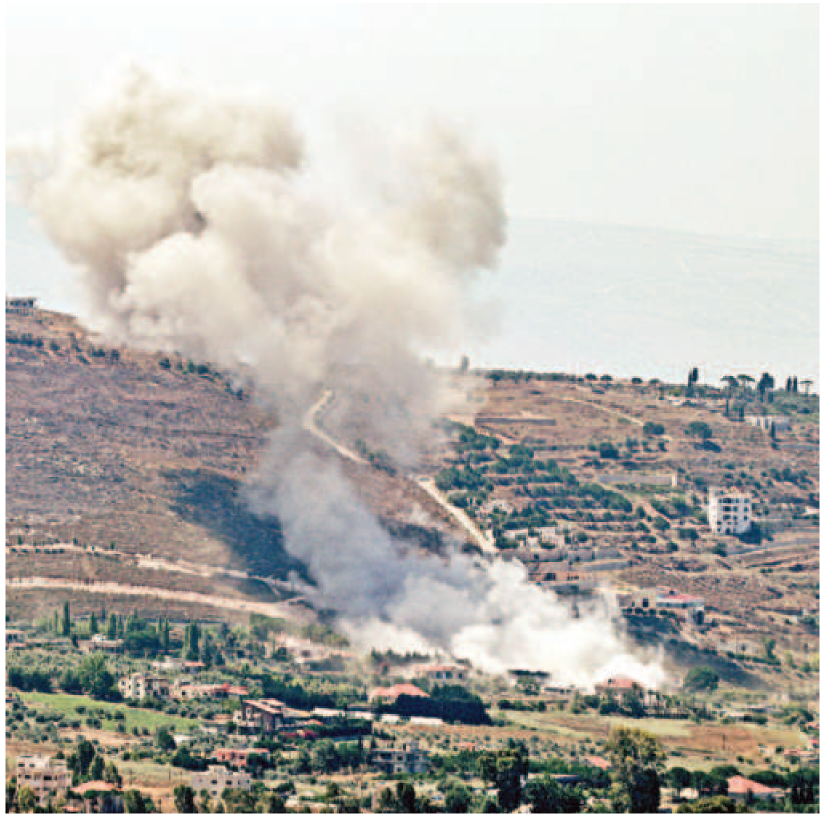
Babu earlier told officers that he threw the phones into two ponds to destroy evidence. On June 25, police took Babu to Jhenaidah jail from Kashimpur jail in Gazipur to find the phones.

Police called off the search for the day after two hours.

DB chief Harun told reporters in the town that some valuable information was on the phones.

Slain lawmaker Azim went to Kolkata on May 12, and on May 22, India and Bangladesh police said he was murdered.

[Our Jhenaidah correspondent contributed to this report.]



A plume of smoke billows during Israeli bombardment on the village of Khiam in south Lebanon near the border with Israel yesterday, amid ongoing cross-border tensions.

PHOTO: AFP

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Will die if I am isolated from people

PM urges SSF not to alienate her from countrymen

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the members of Special Security Force not to alienate her from the people as they are her strength.

"If I become isolated from the people, I would die," she said.

The premier made this remark while addressing a special darbar (gathering) arranged at her office, marking the 38th founding anniversary of the SSF.

She said she does politics for the people and work with them. "I've no other strength except the people. I move forward with the power of people," she added.

"So, you will have to pay attention so that I won't be isolated," she said, adding that SSF needs to deal with these matters sensibly.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina cuts a cake on the occasion of the 38th founding anniversary of the Special Security Force at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

PHOTO: **PID**

DU allocates only 2.12pc for research

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University authorities yesterday approved a Tk 945.15 crore budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year, while setting aside only Tk 20.05 crore as research grants.

The research budget was approved against 2,000 teachers of the university, meaning only Tk 1 lakh has been allocated per teacher. The allocation for research grants is only 2.12 percent of the total outlay.

More than half of the budget will be spent on the salaries and pensions of teachers and staffers.

There are 60 research centres at the university. If the amount of grants is divided among them, each would get Tk 33.41 lakh for research work for a year.

Of the total outlay, around Tk 299.19 crore (31.65 percent) was allocated for salaries, Tk 218.43 crore (23.12 percent) for gratuity, and Tk 112.95 crore (11.95 percent) for pensions and retirement, according to the DU budget book.

Educationists have expressed dissatisfaction over such a paltry allocation for research grants.

Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury said, "Teachers are losing interest in research. Society and the state's disinterest in creating new knowledge is responsible for this, as the allocation is very low. It is not only at Dhaka University. It is the same in all universities."

"Research requires concerted initiative. We lack that too. This is an ominous sign for society and the state. The interest in creating new knowledge should be increased among teachers, and the state should take initiatives for this," he added.

> **Society and the state's disinterest in creating new knowledge is responsible for this, as the allocation is very low. It is not only at Dhaka University. It is the same in all universities.**
>
> **SERAJUL ISLAM CHOUDHURY**
> Professor Emeritus at DU

Put an end to custodial torture and mistreatment

Amnesty urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amnesty International yesterday called upon the Bangladesh government to end impunity for torture and other ill-treatment by police and security forces, urging authorities to hold perpetrators accountable and ensure reparations for victims.

In a statement marking International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the global rights group said impunity continues to prevail for police and security forces in Bangladesh, despite the country ratifying the UN Convention Against Torture in 1998 and enacting the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act 2013.

There has only been one conviction under the torture law in more than a decade. In September 2023, the Bangladesh government reported to the UN Human Rights Council that 24 cases had been filed under the 2013 torture law so far, reads the statement.

Between January 2013 and May 2024, Bangladesh rights group Ain O Salish Kendra documented 138 deaths that were allegedly caused by physical torture by law enforcement agencies.

It also documented 923 deaths in jail custody that were reported in the media during the same period, reads the statement.

In a recent alleged case of drug possession, on June 2,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

ACTION AGAINST CORRUPT PERSONS

'Role of ACC questionable'

Shahriar Kabir tells event marking 30th death anniv of Jahanara Imam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The role of the Anti-Corruption Commission in taking action against individuals being investigated for graft allegations is questionable, said war crimes researcher Shahriar Kabir yesterday.

He demanded that the ACC be held accountable.

"Why do the ACC's directions come after a person under their investigation flees the country? Why does the announcement of freezing bank accounts come after a person leaves the country?" questioned Shahriar, referring to former IGP Benazir Ahmed and former NBR member Matiur Rahman.

He was addressing a discussion commemorating the 30th death anniversary of Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam.

Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee organised the event at the National Museum in Dhaka.

Slamming the Bangladesh Police Service Association's recent protest

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

> **Why do the ACC's directions come after a person under their investigation flees the country? Why does the announcement of freezing bank accounts come after a person leaves the country?**
>
> **SHAHRIAR KABIR**

YUNUS CASE

2 SC lawyers challenge charge framing order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Supreme Court lawyers have filed a petition with the High Court challenging a Dhaka court order that framed charges against Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and 13 others in a case filed over misappropriation of about Tk 25.22 crore of Grameen Telecom Workers' Profit Participation Fund.

Barrister Md Yousuf Ali and Advocate Jafrul Hasan Sharif, who are among the accused, submitted the petition to the HC on Tuesday.

In the petition, they said they have not committed any offence, but the trial court has delivered the charge framing order using a Google based AI tool, which is not permitted by the law.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

KHALEDA'S RELEASE

BNP to hold rally in Dhaka on Saturday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP will hold a rally on Saturday in front of the party's Nayapaltan headquarters demanding the release of its Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

It will also hold rallies in cities and districts across the country on July 1 and 3 respectively to press home the same demand.

Party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir announced the programme after holding the party's joint meeting with the front and associate bodies at the party's central office yesterday.

"Khaleda Zia is seriously ill and her life is at risk. But she was denied better treatment showing legal excuses. That's why we announced protest programmes," the BNP secretary general said.

Khaleda Zia is undergoing treatment at the capital's Evercare Hospital since Friday. A pacemaker was implanted in her chest.

Earlier, when Khaleda went to Evercare Hospital on May 1 for a regular health check-up, doctors treated her at the CCU for two days.

The former prime minister, 79, has long battled various ailments, including liver cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes, and issues related to the kidney, lung, heart, and eyes.

Since her conditional release from prison in 2020, the BNP chairperson has been receiving medical care repeatedly at the hospital under the supervision of a medical board headed by cardiologist Prof Shahabuddin Talukder.

'Forced into sex work'

Eight members of online racket held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department busted an online sex trade ring led by two medical students who forced women into prostitution under the guise of offering them lucrative jobs, modelling opportunities, and talent-hunting.

The victims, including underage girls, were tricked and coerced into taking inappropriate pictures and videos, which were then shared on social media.

As such, the gang was blackmailing hundreds of young women to participate in explicit activities, CID Chief Mohammad Ali Mia said during a press briefing at the CID Headquarters yesterday.

CID arrested eight individuals in this connection, including the two medical students, from Jashore, Satkhira, Chandpur, and the capital on Tuesday.

The arrestees are -- Mehdi Hasan, 25, a student of International Medical College; his cousin and main cohort, Sheikh Zahid bin Sujan, 26, a student of Ibn Sina Medical College; Zahid Hasan Kankan, 28; Tanveer Ahmed Deepto, 26; Syed Hasibur Rahman, 27; Sadat Al Muiz, 29; Sushmita Akhter Poppy, 27; and Naina Islam, 24.

They have earned crores of taka in the last seven years by creating adult content and providing related services on Telegram, WhatsApp, and Messenger, said the CID chief.

Initially, the racket advertised jobs through Facebook and other social media, posing as modelling agents or organising "talent hunt" competitions.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

হযরত শাহজালাল
مطار حضرة شاه جلال الدولي داكا
STAR LINE

Hajj returnees reunite with family members after landing at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Girl raped on moving train, three held

UNB, *Ctg*

A 19-year-old girl was allegedly raped by staffers of a catering company on the Chattogram-bound Udayan Express train yesterday.

The incident took place around 4:30am, said SM Shahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Chattogram Railway Police Station.

Police arrested three employees of SA Corporation, the catering company that supplies food to trains, in connection with the incident, he added.

The arrestees are Jamal, 27, Sharif, 28, and Rashed, 27. The railway authorities suspended Abdur Rahim, a guard on the train.

Police said the girl boarded the train at Bhairab at 10:00pm on Tuesday, to travel to her home in Chattogram. She was in the dining coach when the incident occurred.

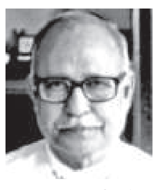
The arrestees were sent to a court with a seven-day remand prayer, said the OC.

No formal complaint has been filed yet.

IT'S A SIX... A boy swings a coconut tree branch bat for a perfect hit. The stumps behind him are wooden planks, overall a rather creative way to play a game of cricket with friends. The photo was taken in Babuganj upazila of Barishal yesterday. PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

Death anniv of Shafiur Rahman

CITY DESK



Today is the thirteenth death anniversary of Shafiur Rahman, a pioneer of the movement for promotion of classical music in the country.

He was the founding general secretary of the "Shuddha Sangeet Proshar Goshthi".

Shafiur dedicated his life to the cause of classical music.

Forced into sex

FROM PAGE 3

Those who responded were added to different Telegram groups. The gang then developed relationships with these women and coerced them into taking inappropriate photos, claiming that these were needed for foreign buyers.

Under the threat of these images being leaked, the women were forced to participate in explicit video calls and eventually coerced into sexual services, the CID said.

The gang members used their illegal earnings to purchase significant amounts of land and build luxurious houses in Jashore, Satkhira, Khulna, and Dhaka.

Additionally, substantial amounts of money were found in the bank accounts of their relatives, the CID chief said.

They used hundreds of mobile SIM cards, none of which were registered under their real national IDs. The gang used Telegram premium accounts and various paid cloud services for content sharing and subscriptions.

The CID seized 12 mobile phones, 20 SIM cards, one laptop, ATM cards, and chequebooks from various banks.

Around one lakh pictures and 20,000 videos were found on mobile phones and laptops of the accused.

A case was filed against the arrestees with Paltan Police Station.

Amend tobacco control law

Demand women MPs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Anti-Tobacco Parliamentary Women's Forum yesterday called for the swift passage of amendments to the Tobacco Control Act proposed by the Ministry of Health, in line with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's vision of a tobacco-free Bangladesh by 2040.

They made the remarks at an event titled, "Achieving Tobacco-Free Bangladesh: Amendment of the Existing Tobacco Control Law and Way Forward", organised by Nari Maitree at the capital's Krishibid Institute yesterday.

The event was presided over by lawmaker Shabnam Jahan Shila, convener of the forum. She, along with other women parliamentarians, emphasised the urgency of the amendment. Highlighting the forum's activities, she stressed that 1,61,000 people die annually due to tobacco use in Bangladesh.

They also highlighted the need for grassroots level social movements to support the anti-tobacco initiative.

Other participants included lawmakers Mahfuza Sultana, Zara Jabin Mahbub, Masuda Siddique Rozy, Najma Akhter, Anima Mukti Gomez, Sheikh Anar Koli Putul, Ashrafun Nesa, Kanan Ara Begum, Laila Parveen, Sanjida Khanam, Farida Yasmin and Hasina Bari Chowdhury. The meeting also featured representatives from Bloomberg Philanthropies, the South Asian programme of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, and Nari Maitree president Masuma Alam.

Former BCL leader

FROM PAGE 5

(ADC-Prosecution) Md Mafiz Uddin told The Daily Star, "The court sent the two to jail after rejecting their bail prayers."

Akbar Shah police and locals said everyone in the teen gang who committed the murder is known in the area as followers of Nissan.

The police and Rapid Action Battalion in Chattogram listed more than 200 active juvenile gangs in the city. Each gang consists of five to 20 members, according to them.

Increase agriculture

FROM PAGE 5

"But the new budget does not support farmers in raising food grain production. The country's development is not possible if the agriculture sector is not prioritised," he added.

Jahangir Alam, director of Dhaka School of Economics, read out a written statement urging the government to increase investment in agriculture.

"To ensure food safety, more funds need to be allocated for research. The sector has been repeatedly affected by natural disasters, requiring special attention," he said.

He also highlighted the need for the government to reduce the prices of agricultural products for farmers.

Sadia Islam, assistant professor at the institution, recommended that the government reduce the operational budget and increase the development budget to better support the agriculture sector.

70pc incidents

FROM PAGE 5

land-related disputes, destruction of properties and religious sites.

Political violence also remains a big concern for religious minorities in Bangladesh, especially during the election time.

The ASK in a report highlighted that people from Hindu community were disproportionately affected by violence following the elections on January 5, 2014.

Role of ACC

FROM PAGE 3

against the media, Shahriar said the police force or the government should not bear the responsibility for alleged corruption of former IGP and some other police personnel.

"The state cannot bear the responsibility of the corruption of an individual," he said, denouncing the police department for not taking any departmental actions against their former IGP.

Kabir, also the president of the advisory committee of Nirmul Committee, criticised the passport department and said it was not possible for Benazir to get nine passports without the help of the department. "The home ministry will have to take this responsibility as well."

"These people are harming the nation. Then why is there a dilly-dally over taking actions against them?" he asked.

Prof Mahfuza Khanam, president of Federation of World Teachers' Association, said as long as the nation lives, it will remain grateful to Jahanara Imam.

Prof Mizanur Rahman, former chairman of National Human Rights Commission, said his organisation, Empowerment through Law of the Common People (ELCOP), will take initiatives to bring the Pakistanis who committed war crimes to the fore and hold mock trials if needed.

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan was supposed to give the "Jahanara Imam Memorial Lecture" on the political vision of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the trial of war criminals. As he was not present at the programme, Barrister Tapas Baul read out the written speech on his behalf.

Prof Mahfuza and Prof Mizanur's ELCOP were given "Jahanara Imam Smrity Padak" at the programme for their contributions to the trial of war criminals and in the movement of establishing the spirit of the Liberation War.

Educationist Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, president of the Nirmul Committee, chaired the discussion.

Attorney General Advocate Abu Mohammad Amin Uddin spoke, among others.

Take measures to mitigate pilot shortage

Minister asks Biman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil Aviation Minister Muhammad Faruk Khan yesterday asked Biman Bangladesh Airlines to take necessary measures to overcome its pilot shortage.

The minister came up with the directives while holding a meeting with the Biman authorities at its headquarters at Kurmitola.

Faruk Khan also directed to recruit cockpit and cabin crews soon by maintaining existing recruitment policies and transparency.

He said the national carrier needs more cockpit and cabin crew as Biman started flight operations in several new international destinations in the last few years.

The minister also stressed passenger service quality and asked officials to make sure that the Biman's call centre remains open for 24 hours.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 27

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-17
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-57	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Recognise women's household work

Recommends JS body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday recommended that the government recognise women's domestic work as an economic activity.

The parliamentary standing committee on the women and children affairs ministry made the recommendation at its meeting at parliament.

Awami League MP from Munshiganj-2 and chairperson of the committee Sagufta Yasmin presided over the meeting. The parliamentary watchdog recommended taking necessary steps to empower women entrepreneurs at the grassroots.

In the meeting, it was recommended to strengthen the monitoring system to keep all the activities undertaken by the National Women's Organization in 64 districts and 50 upazilas of the country.

Put an end

FROM PAGE 3

Afroza Begum, 40, died in police custody following her arrest in Abhaynagar.

"Torture and other ill-treatment are abhorrent and never justified," said Taqbir Huda, Amnesty International's regional researcher for South Asia.

Bangladesh's authorities must ensure that allegations of torture and other ill-treatment by law enforcement personnel are impartially and independently investigated, and suspected officers are brought to justice through fair trials, he said.

Bangladesh must establish a compensation fund for torture victims and also ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture so that victims can file complaints directly to the UN Committee against Torture, he added.

Blasts heard across

FROM PAGE 5

No more Myanmar nationals will be allowed to enter Bangladesh, said Adnan Chawdhury, upazila nirbahi officer of Teknaf, clearing the government's stance on this issue.

He also confirmed that the sound of explosions across the Myanmar border is being heard from Teknaf.

Haji Mohammad Islam, mayor of Teknaf municipality, echoed him.

Kamal Hossain, chairman of Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals Representative Committee, said around 50,000 Rohingyas living in Maungdaw downtown gathered in ward 5 of the township amid an intense war between Arakan Army and Junta forces in the area.

2 SC lawyers

FROM PAGE 3

The entire amount of Tk 25.22 core was part of the entitlement of the listed 164 individual employees of Grameen Telecom, who contributed to their trade union to pay the expenses including lawyers' fees.

The trade union representative paid the fees to them (lawyers Yousuf and Jafrul) out of that amount and the same does not constitute any offence, and therefore, the instant proceedings are liable to be quashed to ensure the ends of justice, the petitioners stated in the petition.

Yesterday, petitioners' lawyer Barrister Aneek R Haque placed the petition before the HC bench of Justice Md Ruhul Quddus and Justice Md Ali Reza for its hearing.

But the bench adjourned the hearing for this week.

Lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan appeared for the ACC during the hearing yesterday.

Gulshan Anwar Prodhan, a deputy director of the ACC, filed the case with the ACC's integrated district office in Dhaka on May 30 last year.

On June 12, Judge Syed Arafat Hossain of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka framed charges. On May 2, the court granted them bail.

Will die if I am isolated

FROM PAGE 3

The PM said when she was not in power, her party's men and the country's people were beside her. "You'll have to keep that in mind," she added.

On June 15, 1986, the Presidential Security Force was formed, which was later renamed as SSF in 1991 following the restoration of the parliamentary government system in the country.

Now the primary function of the force is to protect the president, the prime minister and other VIPs.

বসুন্ধরায় বারিধারায় প্লট বিক্রয়

বসুন্ধরা বারিধারা আবাসিক এলাকায় এন-ব্লকে ১০কাঠা, প্লট নং- ৭৮৪২, পি-ব্লকে ৬কাঠা, প্লট নং- ৪০১৫, পি-এক্সটেনশনে ২০কাঠা কমার্শিয়াল, প্লট নং- ৬০৫, ৬০৬, সবগুলো প্লটই বিক্রয় করা হইবে। প্লটগুলো রেজিস্ট্রেশন, মিউটেশন এবং বাউন্ডারী সম্পন্ন করা আছে।

যোগাযোগ: ০১৭১১ ৫৪৬৬৮৭, ০১৭১১ ৫৪৯৫৩১

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

TENDER NOTICE

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Bangladesh is hereby announces the launch of the following tender:

TENDER REFERENCE NUMBER	ITEM DESCRIPTION
RFP/HCR/CXB/2024/006	FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FRAME AGREEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF CUSTOMS CLEARANCE, AND FREIGHT FORWARDING/TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR UNHCR OPERATIONS IN BANGLADESH
VIRTUAL PRE-BID CONFERENCE	Date and time: 07 July 2024 at 11:00 AM hrs. BST

Interested and bona fide vendors are invited to participate in this Invitation To Bid (ITB) by accessing and downloading the tender documents at the following web link:
https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/238685

Bids to be submitted:
Bids should be submitted as per the guidance in section 2.6 of the ITB document via the URL below:

http://etenderbox.unhcr.org

Bid submission deadline: 21 July 2023 – 14:00 hrs. (BST) Bangladesh time.
Kindly note that no hard copy is acceptable. The offer will be acceptable who submit only in the above link.

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়: বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় অন্যান্য ভাতাদিসহ টাঃ ২২,০০০-৫৩০৬০/-বেতন স্কেলে (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল-২০১৫) ব্যবসায় গবেষণা ব্যুরোর ১টি শূন্য সচিব পদ পূরণের জন্য ৫০/-(পঞ্চাশ) টাকার বিনিময়ে রেজিস্ট্রারের দপ্তরে প্রাপ্তব্য নির্ধারিত ফরমে বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। প্রার্থীকে এস.এস.সি. ও এইচ.এস.সি/সমমানের পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম ২য় বিভাগ/জিপিএ ৫ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.৫ অথবা সিজিপিএ ৪ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.০০সহ স্নাতকোত্তর পাশ হতে হবে। সরকারি বা সরকার অনুমোদিত প্রতিষ্ঠান থেকে কমপক্ষে ০৬ (ছয়) মাসের কম্পিউটার প্রশিক্ষণসহ কম্পিউটার পরিচালনায় দক্ষ হতে হবে। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, কম্পিউটার প্রশিক্ষণ ও অন্যান্য যোগ্যতার (যদি থাকে) সনদসমূহ আবেদনের সঙ্গে সংযুক্তি করতে হবে। অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রার্থীর গোপনীয় প্রতিবেদন সন্তোষজনক সাপেক্ষে চাকরির অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীকে অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া যেতে পারে। চাকরিরত প্রার্থীকে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে। প্রার্থীর বয়স অনূর্ধ্ব ৩০ (ত্রিশ) বছর হতে হবে।

রেজিস্ট্রারের অনুকূলে প্রদেয় ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা মূল্যের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এবং সকল সার্টিফিকেট ও প্রশংসাপত্রের সত্যায়িত প্রতিলিপিসহ ৮(আট) প্রস্থ দরখাস্ত আগামী ১৬-০৭-২০২৪ তারিখের মধ্যে রেজিস্ট্রারের নিকট পৌঁছাতে হবে।

GD- 1041

পরিসংখ্যান গবেষণা ও শিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় অন্যান্য ভাতাদিসহ টাঃ ২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/- বেতন স্কেলে (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল-২০১৫) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের পরিসংখ্যান গবেষণা ও শিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট-এর ১(এক)টি স্থায়ী সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (কম্পিউটার) শূন্য পদ পূরণের নিমিত্তে ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকার বিনিময়ে রেজিস্ট্রারের দপ্তরে প্রাপ্তব্য নির্ধারিত ফরমে বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হইতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাইতেছে। প্রার্থীকে এস.এস.সি ও বিজ্ঞানে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ/জিপিএ ৫ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.৫ অথবা সিজিপিএ ৪ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.০০ সহ সরকারী বা সরকার অনুমোদিত প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে ৪ বছর মেয়াদী বি.এসসি অনার্স ইন কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স/কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স অ্যান্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/ইলেক্ট্রিক্যাল অ্যান্ড ইলেকট্রনিক্স ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ও সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে জিপিএ ৫ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.৫ অথবা ৪ স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.০০ থাকিতে হইবে। প্রার্থীকে UNIX ভিত্তিক সার্ভার ইনস্টলেসন ও ব্যবস্থাপনা, কম্পিউটার ল্যাব ব্যবস্থাপনা, নেটওয়ার্ক ইনস্টলেসন, user credential ব্যবস্থাপনা ও পরিচালনা, সফটওয়্যার ইনস্টলেসন, ক্লাউড কম্পিউটিং পরিসেবা ইনস্টলেসন, ওয়েব সাইট ব্যবস্থাপনা, গ্রন্থাগার অটোমেসন, ই-নথি প্রস্তুতকরণ ব্যবস্থাপনা ও পরিচালনায় দক্ষ হইতে হইবে। চাকরিরত প্রার্থীকে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করিতে হইবে। চাকরির অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রার্থীর গোপনীয় প্রতিবেদন সন্তোষজনক সাপেক্ষে অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া যাইতে পারে। প্রার্থীর বয়স অনূর্ধ্ব ৩০ বৎসর হইতে হইবে।

রেজিস্ট্রারের অনুকূলে প্রদেয় ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা মূল্যের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এবং সকল সার্টিফিকেট, মার্কসিট ও প্রশংসাপত্র এবং অভিজ্ঞতার (যদি থাকে) প্রমাণপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপিসহ ৮(আট) প্রস্থ দরখাস্ত আগামী ১৮-০৭-২০২৪ তারিখের মধ্যে পরিচালক, পরিসংখ্যান গবেষণা ও শিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট (আইএসআরটি), ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়-এর নিকট পৌঁছাইতে হইবে।

GD- 1040

এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস্ কোম্পানী লিমিটেড
ঠনঠনিয়া, বগুড়া

সূত্র নং- ইডিসিএল/বগুড়া/ক্রয়/২০২৪/৪১৩ তারিখঃ ২৬/০৬/২০২৪ ইং

পুরাতন/অকেজো স্ক্র্যাপ মালামাল বিক্রয় ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের পুণঃদরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস্ কোম্পানী লিমিটেড(ইডিসিএল), বগুড়া কারখানার ২২(বাইশ)টি অব্যবহৃত পুরাতন/অকেজো স্ক্র্যাপ মালামাল তালিকা অনুযায়ী বিক্রয়ের জন্য "পুরাতন/অকেজো স্ক্র্যাপ মালামাল বিক্রয়" ঠিকাদার নিয়োগকরার লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ীদের নিকট থেকে পুণঃদরপত্র আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে। বিস্তারিত নিয়মাবলীসহ পুরাতন/অকেজো মালামাল/স্ক্র্যাপ তালিকা সম্বলিত দরপত্র সিডিউল ইডিসিএল, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ৩৯৫-৩৯৭, শি/এ, তেজগাঁও ঢাকা-১২০৮ হিসাব বিভাগ ও ইডিসিএল, ঠনঠনিয়া, বগুড়া'র হিসাব বিভাগের ক্যাশ কাউন্টার হতে নগদ ২,৫০০.০০ (দুই হাজার পাঁচশত) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) মূল্যে আগামী ৩০/০৬/২০২৪ ইং তারিখ থেকে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে ক্রয় করা যাবে। আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহকে আগামী ১৬/০৭/২০২৪ ইং তারিখে বেলা ১২:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে শুধুমাত্র ইডিসিএল, বগুড়া'র ক্রয় বিভাগে রক্ষিত সিলমোহরকৃত টেন্ডার বক্সে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে এবং ঐ দিনই বেলা ১২:১৫ ঘটিকায় দরদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি থাকে) ইডিসিএল, ঠনঠনিয়া, বগুড়ায় খোলা হবে। উল্লেখ্য যে, দরপত্র দাখিলের দিন দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয় করা হবে না।

সকল আগ্রহী দরদাতাকে আগামী ০৮/০৭/২০২৪ ইং তারিখে বেলা ১১:৩০ ঘটিকায় ইডিসিএল, বগুড়া অফিসে প্রি-বিড মিটিং এ উপস্থিত থাকার জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

কোন প্রকার কারন দর্শানো ব্যাতিরেকে ইডিসিএল কর্তৃপক্ষ এই টেন্ডার প্রক্রিয়া যে কোন পর্যায়ে বাতিল করার পূর্ণ ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

উপ-ব্যবস্থাপক ক্রয়
পক্ষেঃ উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক ও প্লান্ট প্রধান, বগুড়া

GD-1043

CONFLICT IN MYANMAR

Blasts heard across Teknaf border

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

The sound of sporadic mortar shell explosions across the border in Rakhine State of Myanmar has been heard in Teknaf and neighbouring areas in Cox's Bazar since Tuesday afternoon.

Due to this, locals have become wary in the upazila, including the areas along the Naf river.

The fighting between the Myanmar Junta and rebel Arakan Army has intensified in recent times, prompting many Rohingyas in Rakhine State to leave their homes behind to look for safety in and around Maungdaw township, said Rohingya leaders living in Cox's Bazar camps.

Many Rohingyas have gathered along the Naf river, trying to flee into Bangladesh, said border sources.

However, Border Guard Bangladesh personnel are on high alert to prevent any intrusion.

BGB men are patrolling different areas, including Chowdhurypara Transit Ghat in Teknaf town, Nightong Para, Keruntali, and Baraitili, said locals.

No one is being allowed near the border areas, they added.

Around five lakh Rohingyas live in Maungdaw township in Myanmar, in close vicinity of the warzone.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Increase agriculture budget, subsidies

Economists urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Economists have called on the government to increase subsidies and budget allocations to improve farmers' livelihoods in the proposed budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

The new budget has reduced subsidies by Tk 272 crore compared to the current fiscal year, they said during an event.

"Around 40 percent of the workers are engaged in the agriculture sector, yet the new budget gives it little attention. The prices of agricultural products and machinery have also risen due to the higher dollar rate," said Narayan Chandra Sinha, associate professor at Dhaka School of Economics.

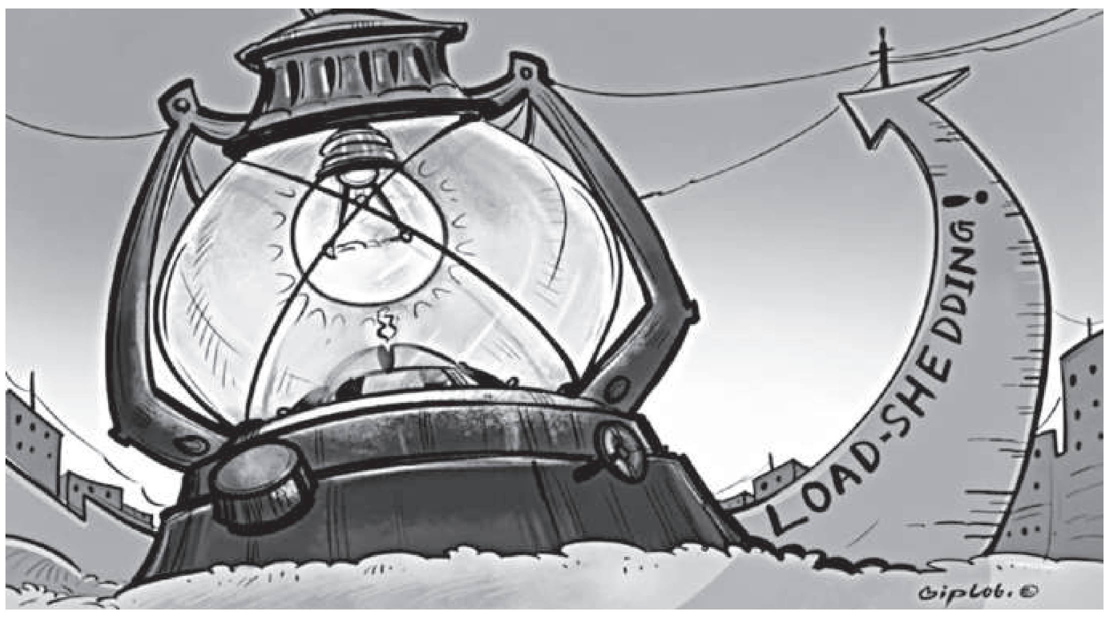
"In this situation, without increased budget and subsidies, how can farmers boost their production?" he asked

A group of teachers and economists discussed these issues at the event organised by the Dhaka School of Economics in the capital yesterday.

Sinha also said, "In the current global situation, every country should prioritise increasing internal production."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Port city grapples with frequent power cuts



ARUN BIKASH DEY

Shuvechha Ghosh, a resident of Askar Dighir Par area in Chattogram city, was finding it hard to put her toddler to sleep on Tuesday night, amid severe heat alongside frequent power cuts.

"Power cuts occurred a total of eight times today, including four times since the evening. This situation has been going on over the last one week. It has become very difficult for us to stay inside in this heat with power outages occurring so many times daily. My father-in-law and my son couldn't sleep the whole night due to discomfort," she said.

Like her, many residents in the port city, including in Askar Dighir Par, Panchlaish, Bakalia, Chawk Bazar, Halishahar, Bahaddarhat, Chandgaon, Agrabad, Pahartoli, Muradpur, Katalganj, Sholoshahar, Mehedibagh, Bibir Hat and Dampara areas, have been suffering due to frequent load shedding, occurring as many as 12 times a day in some areas.

The highest and lowest temperatures recorded in the port city were 33.1 degrees Celsius and 26.4 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, said Mahmudul Alam, officer of Chattogram Met Office.

Abdul Aziz of Panchlaish area said, "Such frequent power cuts are somehow tolerable during daytime, but at night it is unbearable. We could not sleep last night due to this amid the heat."

The officials of Power Development Board, Chattogram said they were compelled to go for load shedding due to a big discrepancy between the local demand for power and its supply.

> **Chattogram city has a daily demand for around 1,200 MW in peak hours and around 1,100 MW in off-peak hours during summer. It gets only 900-1,000 MW power from the national grid on average.**

"Chattogram city has a daily demand for around 1,200 MW in peak hours and around 1,100 MW in off-peak hours during summer. It gets only 900-1,000 MW power from the national grid on average. As such, there is no alternative to load shedding in the present scenario," said Akbar Hossain, assistant director of PDB, Chattogram.

According to PDB sources, the power stations in the greater Chattogram region generate more power compared to the demand.

On Tuesday, the 29 units of 22 power stations in the region produced 2,202 MW power, against a demand for 1,175 MW at 11:00am and 1,217 MW at 7:00pm in the port city.

However, the supply to the port city was 900 MW at 11:00am and 1,084 MW at 7:00pm.

As such, frequent load shedding happened every now and then across the city, causing sufferings to the city dwellers.

Asked, Humayun Kabir, chief engineer of PDB, Chattogram, said the power supply is controlled centrally through the national grid and they had nothing to do with it.

"We have to manage the distribution of power with what we get from the national grid. Due to the discrepancy between demand and supply, load shedding becomes unavoidable," he added.

Contacted, SM Nazer Hossain, central vice president of Consumers' Association of Bangladesh, said the government should set a criterion for distribution of power according to priority.

ATTACK ON MINORITIES

70pc incidents land related

Says Peace Observatory report on 2013-2021

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people from the Hindu community died and 862 were injured in 3,710 incidents of violence against the country's Hindu community between January 2013 and September 2021, said a recent report of Bangladesh Peace Observatory.

The religious minorities have been facing physical, non-physical and gender-based violence, it said, adding that around 2 percent of the incidents are of gender-based violence.

Land grabbing continued to be a threat to religious minority groups during this time, irrespective of the political party in power, the report said.

Citing rights body Ain o Salish Kendra, the report mentioned that at least 26 incidents of land grabbing took place between 2013 and 2021.

As per the report, almost 70 percent of incidents of violence ensued in connection with

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

MURDER OF CTG DENTIST

Former BCL leader among two sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Chattogram court yesterday sent a former leader of Chhatra League and one of his supporters to jail in a case filed over the murder of a physician.

Judge Jebunnesa of Chattogram Metropolitan Session Judge's Court passed the order after Golam Rasul Nissan, former vice-president of BCL's Chittagong University unit, and Arif Ullah Raju surrendered before the court upon completion of their bail in the case.

Police said Korban Ali, a dentist, sustained serious injuries in his head while trying to save his son from a group of teen gang members led by the accused near his residence on April 5 at West Firojshah Colony in Akbar Shah area.

As he died of his injuries, his son filed a murder case accusing Golam Rasul Nissan and seven others.

Chattogram's Additional Deputy Commissioner

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Sudden rain in the capital yesterday forced these bikers to stop at a section of the Mohakhali flyover. Doing this, they also took up a portion of the flyover, leaving only one lane for other vehicles to use. PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Dhaka South City Corporation
Office of the Project Director
Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP)
Level 10, West Block, Room-919
Nagar Bhaban, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 40. 207.014.09.10.282.2004 310

"e-Tender Notice" (Corrigendum-(02)

e-Tender are invited in e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Project Director, DCNUP, Dhaka South City Corporation for the procurement of

SL	Tender ID, Ref No.	Description of items	Start date & time	Last selling date and time		Tender closing date & time	
				Previous	Amended	Previous	Amended
01	**Tender ID: 986-468,** Ref No. 46.207.014.09.10.282 2024, Date: 24.04.2024	**Works:** Improvement and Construction works of Mayor Sheikh Taposh Bridge (Loharpool) Contract Package No. DCNUP/W-03/KAC	27-May-2024 15:00 BST	30-June-2024 11:00 BST	07-July 2024 16:00 BST	30-June-2024 13:00 BST	08-July-2024 13:00 BST

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal and offline hard copy(s) will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

Rajib
26.6.2024

Rajib Khadem
Project Doctor, PU,
Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP)
Dhaka South City Corporation
Tel. 880-2223350461
e-mail: pddcnupdscc24@gmail.com

DSCC/PRD/574/2023-2024

GD-1044

Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company Limited
Road Transport and Highways Division
House No-04, Road No-21, Sector-04
Uttara, Dhaka-1230
www.dhakabrt.gov.bd

DHAKA LINE
TRANSFORMING TRAVEL

Invitation for Tenders

1	Ministry/Division	Road Transport and Highways Division			
2	Agency	Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company Limited (DBRTCL)			
3	Procuring Entity Name	Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company Limited (DBRTCL) represented by General Manager			
4	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka			
5	Invitation for	Supply and Installation of Galvanized Steel Rolling Shutter Gates in Station Front (Docking Locations) of 25 BRT stations.			
6	Invitation Ref No	35.06.0000.010.07.001.24-**506**			
7	Date	26 June 2024			
8	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (NCT)			
9	Budget and Source of Funds	GoB through Project Aid			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
10	Tender Package No.	D GD-2B			
11	Tender Package Name	Supply and Installation of Galvanized Steel Rolling Shutter Gates in Station Front (Docking Locations) of 25 BRT stations.			
12	Tender Publication Date	27 June 2024			
13	Tender Last Selling Date	24 July 2024 (05.00 PM)			
14	Tender Closing Date and Time	25 July 2024	02:00 PM		
15	Tender Opening Date and Time	25 July 2024	02:15 PM		
16	Name & Address of the office(s) *- Selling Tender Document*	Manager (Maintenance), 3rd Floor, Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Com pany Ltd. House:04, Road:21, Sector:04, Uttara, Dhaka-1230			
	- Receiving Tender Document	Conference Room 1st Floor, Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company Ltd. House:04, Road:21, Sector:04, Uttara, Dhaka-1230			
	- Opening Tender Document	Conference Room, 1st Floor, Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company Limited, House:04, Road:21, Sector:04, Uttara, Dhaka-1230			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
17	Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer	The Tenderer shall submit with its Tender the following additional documents: 1. The minimum of years of general experience of the Tenderer in the supply of Goods and related services as Supplier shall be three (3) years. Years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper. 2. The minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of similar Goods of at least one (1) contract successfully completed within the last five (5) years, with a value of at least Tk. 4,20,00,000.00 (Taka forty-two million). 3. The minimum supply and/or production capacity of goods are similar type of metal goods with 5,000 square meter or equivalent quantity supply and/or production capacity per year. 4. The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be Tk. 5,00,00,000.00 (Taka fifty million). 5. Up-to-date valid ABC Category Electrical Contractor and Electrical Supervisory License from Electrical Licensing Board. 6. Other conditions were mentioned in the tender document.			
18	Brief Description of Goods & Related Services	Supply and installation of galvanized steel rolling shutter, including all necessary elements, side rails, shafts, and locking arrangement. The slat's nominal thickness is 1.20mm. The guide rail thickness shall be 3.00mm galvanized steel power coated finish.			
19	Price of Tender Document (Tk.)	3,000.00 (Three Thousand Taka Only)			
20	Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk.)	Completion Time in Weeks / Months
	1	Supply and Installation of Galvanized Steel Rolling Shutter Gates in Station Front (Docking Locations) of 25 BRT stations.	Airport to Gazipur BRT Corridor	15,00,000.00 (Taka One million five hundred thousand)	3 (three) Months
21	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Mohiuddin			
22	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	General Manager			
23	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company Limited			
24	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	02-48957784	E-mail	mohiuddin.dbrt@gmail.com	
25	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings				

SD/-
(Md Kamruzzaman)
DGM (Maintenance)
Dhaka BRT Company Limited

GD-1039

AUSTRALIA
A desired destination for higher education

NAFISA KHAN

Australia has become a popular destination for international students aiming to pursue higher education abroad. It is home to some of the most student-friendly cities in the world. According to the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, over 14,000 Bangladeshi students enrolled to study in Australia in 2023 alone - a 70 percent increase from the previous year and the highest number on record, taking 13th place in student numbers.

More than half a million international students from 192 countries choose to study in Australia for its quality education. Australian universities offer numerous scholarships to support these students. For example, Charles Sturt University offers attractive scholarship opportunities for international students. Each applicant is granted with 10 percent international student support scholarship and there is also a 25 percent international student merit scholarship available.

The Australian Government has a large scholarship programme for international students and invests some AUD 200 million per year in programmes at universities and other tertiary institutions around the country. Among Australia Awards Scholarships alumni surveyed in Bangladesh, 97 percent reported that the skills and knowledge developed through their scholarship would enable them to contribute to the development of Bangladesh. During 2023, a total of 72 Australia Awards Scholarship recipients from Bangladesh (36 women, 36 men) studied at master's degree level at Australia's world-class universities, including three people with disability. One of the most popular scholarships is the Australia Awards Scholarship, which is funded by the Australian government and provides full tuition fees, living expenses, and other allowances to recipients from eligible countries in Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East, and Africa.

Another notable scholarship is the Destination Australia Scholarship, which provides financial support to both domestic and international students studying in regional Australia. Other scholarships available to international students in Australia include the Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships, which provide funding for research or professional development in a range of fields, with business management and information technology being the most preferred subjects.

The country offers three intakes per year: February, July, and November, each with unique benefits and limitations. The major intakes in Australia are in February, followed by July, and finally, November.

The initial step to applying would be shortlisting universities based on the subjects one might want to pursue. Business and Information Technology are currently among the most preferred subjects for international students. Sydney and Melbourne are the popular destinations for Bangladeshi students to pursue their higher studies.

While selecting universities, it is crucial to consider their employment prospects. Among the leading Australian universities Charles Sturt University is considered one of the best for graduate employment. Around 90 percent of its undergraduates secure full-time jobs within four months of graduating. Moreover, the average earning of Charles Sturt University graduates is AUD 64,100 per year.

An aspiring admission seeker should prepare a statement of purpose, letters of recommendation, and academic transcripts as per the requirement of the specific university, standardised test scores (GRE, GMAT, SAT if necessary) and proof of English proficiency.

The new migration policy of Australia has renewed visa policies to increase the minimum score requirements and the score requirement for a student visa from 5.5 to 6.0. Highlighting the interests and relevant experiences in the required essays can complement previous academic performance and increase one's chances of getting into their desired programmes.

Once accepted, students should start preparing the necessary documents for their visa application. To start the application, one needs to provide the letter of offer and confirmation of enrolment they received from the university upon acceptance. Genuine Student requirement consists of an array of information, including the details of a student's current circumstances, ties to family, community, employment and economic circumstances, reasons behind applying to Australian universities, history of study in Australia (if any) and other relevant information for screening.

To meet the requirements for a student visa, one must provide proof of financial savings required to cover the costs and expenses associated. International student visa applicants must provide proof of at least AUD 29,710. International students also need to have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for the duration of their stay. They may also need to undergo a health examination to meet the student visa health requirement. There are also certain character requirements that an international student must meet before coming to study in Australia. In some cases, a student may also need to provide a police background check.

After preparing these documents, a student needs to open an ImmiAccount. The best part of this seemingly complicated process is that a student can also take a professional guidance and advice from any registered expert under any particular university.

The two things international students need the most are information and research. If you are armed with these two, you are ready to dive into this new exciting chapter of studying in Australia.

Charles Sturt University
Sydney | Melbourne
#1 university in Australia for graduate employability*
Scholarships of up to 50%**
→ sydneymelbourne.csu.edu.au
* Good universities guide 2023-24
** sydneymelbourne.csu.edu.au/how-apply/scholarships
Charles Sturt University - TEQSA Provider Identification: PRV12018 (Australian University). CRICOS Provider: 00005F. Under a service agreement with Charles Sturt University ABN 83 878 708 551, the Navitas Group through the College of Business & Technology (NSW) Pty Ltd ABN 72 113 382 684 operates both Charles Sturt University Sydney and Charles Sturt University Melbourne. Courses offered at these locations are accredited by Charles Sturt University, students studying at these locations are enrolled at Charles Sturt University, and operational staff members working at these locations are employed by the Navitas Group.

SPY CHARGES

Russia starts trial for WSJ reporter

REUTERS, *Yekaterinburg*

A shaven-headed Evan Gershkovich went on trial behind closed doors yesterday in a Russian court where the US journalist is facing accusations of espionage.

Prosecutors say the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reporter gathered secret information on the orders of the US Central Intelligence Agency about a company that manufactures tanks for Russia's war in Ukraine. If convicted, he faces a sentence of up to 20 years.

Gershkovich, his newspaper and the US government all reject the allegations and say that he was just doing his job as a reporter accredited by Russia's Foreign Ministry to work there.

"His case is not about evidence, procedural norms, or the rule of law. It is about the Kremlin using American citizens to achieve its political objectives," the US embassy in Moscow said in a statement, calling for Gershkovich's immediate release.

Palestinian children gather to receive food cooked by a charity kitchen, amid food scarcity, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

US seeks deeper ties with Maldives

Blinken tells his Maldivian counterpart

REUTERS, *Washington*

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with his counterpart from the Maldives on Tuesday and said Washington sought a deeper partnership with the Indian Ocean island state and stood with it in ensuring a free-and-open Indo-Pacific region and in dealing with climate change.

Maldives Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer's Washington visit comes two months after the party of President Mohamed Muizzu won a landslide in elections. Muizzu has pivoted ties towards China and away from India, a key US regional partner in standing up to China in the Indo-Pacific.

The US opened an embassy in Male in 2023 to boost engagement with the low-lying archipelago of about half a million people in the face of China's efforts to spread its regional influence.

After the April election, Washington said ties were being strengthened in areas including economic development, education, security cooperation, and climate-crisis response.

"For us, the Maldives is an important partner, and we want to make sure that we're a good partner to the Maldives," Blinken told Zameer. "We stand together in working to make sure that we have a free and open Indo-Pacific region," he said.

PROTESTS IN KENYA

President backs down on tax rises

REUTERS, *Nairobi*

Kenya's president yesterday withdrew planned tax rises, bowing to pressure from protesters who had stormed parliament, launched demonstrations across the country and threatened more action this week.

William Ruto said he would not sign a finance bill including the hikes a day after violent clashes between police and protesters at the assembly and nationwide left at least 23 people dead and scores wounded, according to medics.

"Listening keenly to the people of Kenya who have said loudly that they want nothing to do with this finance bill 2024, I concede. And therefore, I will not sign the 2024 finance bill, and it shall subsequently be withdrawn," he said in a televised address.

'There are no safe centimetres left in Gaza'

UN aid worker narrates trauma of desperate civilians

AFP, *Geneva*

A UN humanitarian worker described the suffering she witnessed first-hand in Gaza, where she saw children mutilated and families bombed out of their homes, in an emotional testimony Tuesday.

Speaking to journalists in Geneva following a three-month stint in the territory, Yasmina Guerda of the UN humanitarian agency OCHA described the desperation from the viewpoint of civilians under the Israeli military's assault.

"You have 10-15 minutes to evacuate your building because it's going to be bombed. Your little kids are sleeping... You wake them up," she said. "You take one last look at your room and say a permanent goodbye, because you know it will be dust."

As horrifying as that sounds, she stressed that this is the "best-case scenario", since many others are not warned before an attack.

Guerda met people whose homes were destroyed by Israel's operation in the Nuseirat refugee camp to secure the release of four hostages earlier this month. Gaza's health ministry said at least 274 Palestinians were killed during the operation.

The next day at a hospital, Guerda met children who lost limbs in the attack. "Many of whom reminded me of my own two little toddlers. They were staring into the void, too shell-shocked to produce a sound or a tear," she said.

For Guerda, there are no "living conditions" there. "What they have... are survival conditions, and barely. They are holding on by a thread."

She said aid workers were trying to "quantify the suffering with figures", looking at the total number of displaced people, the litres of water they get per day, or the truckloads of aid that make it across the border.

"But it doesn't matter," she said. "Those numbers, they're never near enough ... (for) a population that has lost nearly everything."
The fighting has displaced much of Gaza's 2.4 million population. "There are no safe centimetres left in Gaza," Guerda added.

Heavy rains in Nepal kill 20 amid landslides

REUTERS, *Kathmandu*

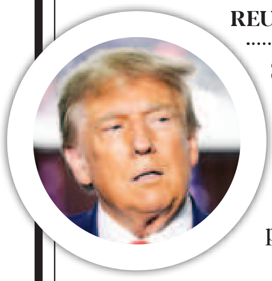
Heavy rainfall triggered landslides and flash floods in Nepal, killing at least 11 people, with another nine killed by lightning strikes over the past two days, officials said yesterday.

Landslides swept away three houses overnight in Lamjung district, about 125 km (80 miles) west of Kathmandu, killing four people including two children, district administrator Buddha Bahadur Gurung said.

In Morang district about 500 km southeast of the Nepali capital, flooding has taken the lives of four people since Tuesday, district official Tek Kumar Regmi said.

Trump policies will fuel inflation

Say 16 Nobel Prize-winning economists



REUTERS

Sixteen Nobel prize-winning economists signed a letter on Tuesday warning that the US and world economy will suffer if Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump wins the US presidential election in November.

The jointly signed letter says the economic agenda of US President Joe Biden, a Democrat, is "vastly superior" to Trump's, the former Republican president seeking a second term. The economists say Trump's economic plans would reignite inflation, in part because of his pledge to impose stiffer tariffs on Chinese imports, which they say will hike prices on many goods bought by US consumers.

"While each of us has different views on the particulars of various economic policies, we all agree that Joe Biden's economic agenda is vastly superior to Donald Trump," the economists state in their letter.

New finalists

FROM PAGE 12

maiden wins in T20Is against both sides -- from the competition this time to reach their first-ever semifinal in an ICC event. The Afghans thrashed the Black Caps by 84 runs in the group-stage and then blew the Super Eight Group 2 wide open with a stunning win over Australia.

An inspired all-round display from Rashid sealed a thrilling win over Bangladesh in Antigua on Tuesday and cemented Afghanistan's spot in the semifinals.

"I think the semifinal is going to be a massive, massive inspiration for the youngsters back home in Afghanistan," said skipper Rashid. "It's an unbelievable feeling. We are capable -- but as long we keep the things very simple."

In the second semifinal, India, who have also won all their matches barring a washout against Ireland, look the part to lift the trophy owing to a formidable run much like their lead-up to the 2023 ODI World Cup final but will take on defending champions England who knocked the Men in Blue out of the semis in the 2022 edition of the tournament.

The two teams have had contrasting pathways to the final four as while India cruised, England laboured through the group stage battling fears of early elimination and finally hit top gear in the Super Eight when they thrashed West Indies. But they were dealt a blow in a narrow defeat at the hands of South Africa.

With Australia out of the picture, if India had to choose between South Africa or England, they probably would've wanted to face Jos Buttler's side who have so far blown hot and cold.

Delhi for early

FROM PAGE 12

"Discussed our deep concern at the impact of continuing violence and instability in Myanmar on our border. India is open to engaging all stakeholders in addressing this situation," Jaishankar wrote on X.

He also said he called for an early return to the path of democratic transition in Myanmar, days after the Indian ambassador to Myanmar met the chief of the junta administration's election commission this week.

A junta spokesman did not respond to calls from Reuters seeking comment.

Assange back home

FROM PAGE 12

husband would one day be pardoned.

Australia Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who has lobbied for years to free Assange, said he had spoken to him by phone after his plane landed.

Assange's arrival ends a saga in which he spent more than five years in a British high-security jail and seven years in asylum at the Ecuadorean embassy in London battling extradition to Sweden on sexual assault allegations and to the US, where he faced 18 criminal charges.

Those charges stemmed from WikiLeaks' release in 2010 of hundreds of thousands of classified US military documents on Washington's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq - one of the largest breaches of secret information in US history.

During a three-hour hearing held earlier in the US territory of Saipan, Assange pleaded guilty to one criminal count of conspiring to obtain and disclose classified national defence documents but said he had believed the US Constitution's First Amendment, which protects free speech, shielded his activities.

"Working as a journalist I encouraged my source to provide information that was said to be classified in order to publish that information," he told the court.

"I believed the First Amendment protected that activity but I accept that it was...a violation of the espionage statute."

Chief US District Judge Ramona V Manglona accepted his guilty plea, noting that the US government indicated there was no personal victim from Assange's actions.

She wished Assange, who turns 53 on July 3, an early happy birthday as she released him due to time already served in a British jail.

While the US government viewed Assange as reckless for putting its agents at risk of harm by publishing their names, his supporters hailed him as a hero for promoting free speech and exposing war crimes.

Assange's British and Australian lawyer Jennifer Robinson thanked the Australian government for securing Assange's release. His father, John Shipton, told Reuters he was relieved.

Assange had agreed to plead guilty to a single criminal count, according to filings in the US District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands.

The US territory in the western Pacific was chosen due to his opposition to travelling to the mainland US and for its proximity to Australia, prosecutors said.

Politicians in Australia who had campaigned for his release raised concern about the guilty plea on US soil, saying he was a journalist who had been convicted for doing his job.

Rahul Gandhi vows MPs

FROM PAGE 12

for his right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), allowing his government to drive laws through parliament with only cursory debate.

"We would like the house to function often and well. It is very important that the voice of the opposition is allowed to be represented in this house," Rahul told veteran BJP lawmaker Om Birla, the Speaker in the previous parliament, who was reelected yesterday to the post.

Modi and Rahul exchanged a polite handshake following the election of Birla as the Lok Sabha Speaker.

The two leaders, along with Union minister Kiren Rijiju, accompanied Birla to the Speaker's chair after a motion moved by Prime Minister was adopted through voice votes, reports TNN.

Legal issues delaying

FROM PAGE 2

Responding to a question from independent MP Md Abdullah, the premier said the government has primarily decided to adopt a policy to recycle e-waste.

"The data collection process [in this regard] is going on and [the policy] will be finalised after taking opinions from the stakeholders."

Plants will be built for recycling e-waste, she added.

Replying to a question from AL MP Ali Azam from Bhola-2, Hasina said that 33,50,274 specially abled people have been identified and given registration and identity cards (Golden Citizen Card). Among them, 13,12,594 are women.

Responding to another query from Farida Yasmin, the PM said that Tk 45.23 crore from the Journalist Welfare Trust has been distributed among 13,582 journalists and journalist families as welfare grants and financial assistance during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A moronic end to a daring jailbreak

FROM PAGE 1

Speaking to The Daily Star, an officer involved in the search and arrest, said the four managed to make a hole in the ceiling using only a small screwdriver and an iron-sheet scrap for 20 days.

During this time, they did not allow any cleaners into their cell, he said, adding that police found the screwdriver and the iron scrap hidden about their person.

About how they may have gotten the tools, Additional Inspector General (Prisons) Col Sheikh Sujaur Rahman, who visited Bogura Jail yesterday, said, "We're currently investigating all the jail personnel and officers here to know if they had any role to play. Once the probe is complete, appropriate actions will be taken."

Bogura SP Sudip Kumar Chakraborty yesterday told reporters that the four inmates managed to escape at 3:05am. "The jail authorities informed us at 3:56am.

"After getting the information, all police outposts and patrol teams were put on high alert, and police managed to find and arrest them from the Chashi Bazar area around 4:30am."

Sub-inspector Khorshed Alam, who led the search, said, "They were planning to cross the Korotoa river through Chelopara bridge."

However, before police could reach the spot, the four convicts were initially apprehended by a group of young men.

Describing the incident, Parimal Chandra Das, councillor of Bogura Municipality Ward-6, told The Daily Star, "Around 3:50am, a group of boys were sitting on the rail tracks near Chashi Bazar, as there was no electricity in their homes and it was very hot last night. Suddenly, they noticed a pack of dogs surrounding four individuals. The boys – Saeed, Rabbi, Kabya, Dukhu, Nayan, Tinku and Bappi – suspected that the four men were criminals and apprehended them then and there. They then called SI Khorshed Alam and informed him."

Police sources said Nazrul Islam and Amir Hamza were sentenced to death on February 16, 2021. Farid Sheikh received the death penalty on July 10, 2023, and Zakaria, son of Kahaloo upazila mayor and upazila BNP's acting president Abdul Mannan, was sentenced to death on January 15, 2017.

Combined, the four had five murder cases and seven other cases on various charges against them, filed at different times in separate districts. They were also brought to Bogura jail at different times, but sent to the condemned cell together on June 1.

Bogura Deputy Commissioner Saiful Islam told The Daily Star that a six-member probe committee, led by the additional district magistrate, has been formed. He also requested the jail authorities to place six more security posts in front of and behind the jail building.

About the jail's vulnerable security system, Additional IG Col Sujaur told this correspondent, "The jail was built in 1833. The security came into question only today [yesterday] after the incident. We will check the system."

Speaking to The Daily Star, Inspector (Investigation) Shahinuzzaman Shaheen, of Bogura Sadar Police Station, said a case was filed yesterday afternoon against the four for escaping.

Bogura Sadar Outpost Inspector Sujan Mia, the investigating officer of the case, told this correspondent that the four were produced before a court and then sent back to jail. "We're thinking about whether they can legally be remanded as they are already death row convicts."

Meanwhile, Bogura jail authorities last night took action against eight prison guards who were on duty during the incident.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Jail Super Anwar Hossain said, "Three prison guards were dismissed while a departmental case was recommended against three others and a show-cause notice was issued to the other two. Further measures will be taken according to the recommendations from higher authorities."

He, however, did not name the guards.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

The price we pay for processed rice

Govt must formulate clear guidelines on rice processing

It is a truth universally acknowledged by now that laws and directives in Bangladesh are meant to be broken. It is no surprise, then, that millers across the country have been defying a 2023 ban on polishing rice and selling it under fake names, such as the popular variety "miniket." This processed rice comes at a steep cost: compromised nutrition, wasted resources, and potentially inflated prices.

The allure of miniket lies in its polished appearance, a characteristic achieved by removing layers of the rice bran, which is rich in essential nutrients: iron, calcium, and B vitamins. Studies reveal that excessive polishing strips rice of up to 70 percent of its zinc content, a crucial mineral for immune function and growth. Furthermore, this excessive polishing leads to significant rice wastage. Experts estimate that 16 lakh tonnes of rice are lost annually due to over-polishing. This not only impacts national food security, but also contributes to potentially higher rice prices for consumers. Alarmingly, as per a recent study by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), over 30 percent of the rice sold in city markets in Bangladesh is refined into a different shape, size, and colour and branded as miniket.

While we laud the government for recognising the harmful impact of over-processing rice, we are at a loss to understand why the ban is yet to be implemented. There are as many as 4,000 automatic rice mills across the country, according to Bangladesh Auto Major and Husking Mills Owners Association (BAMHMOA). Millers say there are no clear guidelines on what an acceptable limit of processing rice is, while food controllers, who should be implementing the ban, say they have received no instructions from the government or high officials on what steps to take. This inaction, which not only undermines the law but also jeopardises the health of Bangladeshi citizens, is simply unacceptable.

The solution lies in swift and decisive action. The government must expedite the issuing of clear rice polishing guidelines, establishing acceptable limits, and outlining enforcement mechanisms. Rice millers also have a role to play here. They must embrace responsible practices and prioritise the well-being of the nation over short-term profit gains. Additionally, public awareness campaigns are crucial to educate consumers about the misleading nature of the miniket label. It is truly mind-boggling that we are allowing our staple to be stripped of its nutrients under the ignorant belief that white, processed rice is better than nutrient-filled coarse rice, and even paying a steeper price for it!

Don't ignore startups in the budget

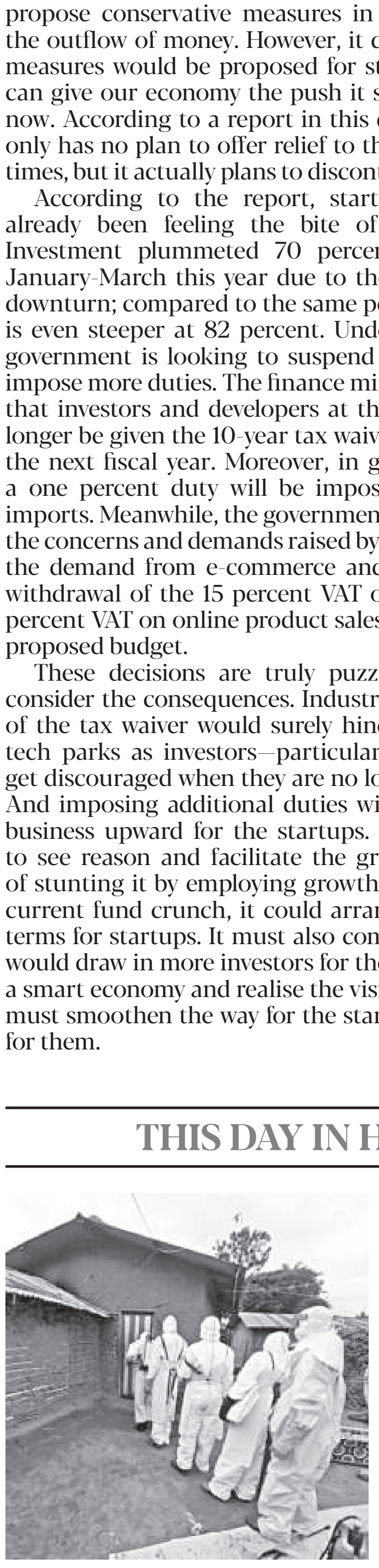
They need govt support now more than ever

When the country is struggling with a number of economic challenges, it is not unexpected that the government would propose conservative measures in the new budget to stem the outflow of money. However, it does not explain why such measures would be proposed for startups—a key sector that can give our economy the push it so desperately needs right now. According to a report in this daily, the government not only has no plan to offer relief to the startups in these trying times, but it actually plans to discontinue the existing benefits.

According to the report, startups in Bangladesh have already been feeling the bite of a declining fund flow. Investment plummeted 70 percent quarter-on-quarter in January-March this year due to the ongoing global funding downturn; compared to the same period last year, the decline is even steeper at 82 percent. Under the circumstances, the government is looking to suspend the existing benefits and impose more duties. The finance minister recently announced that investors and developers at the hi-tech parks would no longer be given the 10-year tax waiver on their earnings come the next fiscal year. Moreover, in government hi-tech parks, a one percent duty will be imposed on capital machinery imports. Meanwhile, the government has not addressed any of the concerns and demands raised by the startups. For example, the demand from e-commerce and logistic startups for the withdrawal of the 15 percent VAT on parcel delivery and five percent VAT on online product sales have not been met in the proposed budget.

These decisions are truly puzzling, especially when we consider the consequences. Industry insiders said withdrawal of the tax waiver would surely hinder the growth of the hi-tech parks as investors—particularly the foreign ones—may get discouraged when they are no longer allowed the benefits. And imposing additional duties will push the cost of doing business upward for the startups. We urge the government to see reason and facilitate the growth of startups, instead of stunting it by employing growth-averse policies. Given the current fund crunch, it could arrange for soft loans on easy terms for startups. It must also come up with incentives that would draw in more investors for the sector. In order to create a smart economy and realise the vision of a smart country, we must smoothen the way for the startups, not create obstacles for them.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Ebola breaks out in Sudan

On this day in 1976, a factory storekeeper in Nzara township, Sudan fell ill and died within five days. This marked the beginning of the world's first recorded Ebola virus epidemic. At the time, the epidemic affected 284 people, half of whom died.

TEESTA MANAGEMENT PROJECT

New challenges before Bangladesh

Kallol Mustafa
is an engineer and writer who focuses on power, energy, environment and development economics. He can be reached at kallol_mustafa@yahoo.com.

KALLOL MUSTAFA

Discussing the Teesta water-sharing agreement has become part of the routine in prime-minister-level meetings between Bangladesh and India. In each meeting, the prime minister of Bangladesh would request the Indian prime minister for the conclusion of the interim agreement on sharing the water of Teesta, as agreed upon by both governments in January 2011. And then the Indian PM would reiterate that his government was working with all the stakeholders in India for an early conclusion of the agreement. This kind of request and assurance can be found in all the recent joint statements, like the joint statements issued during the Bangladesh PM's visit to India in October 2019, and the Indian PM's visit to Bangladesh in March 2021.

However, an exception can be seen in the statement of September 2022, during the Bangladesh PM's visit to India, where she raised the issue of signing the draft Teesta agreement prepared in 2011. That time, there was no assurance from the Indian PM in the statement. Subsequently, neither of the prime ministers mentioned the Teesta water-sharing agreement in the joint statement titled "India-Bangladesh Shared Vision for Future," issued after the latest visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India on June 21-22 this year.

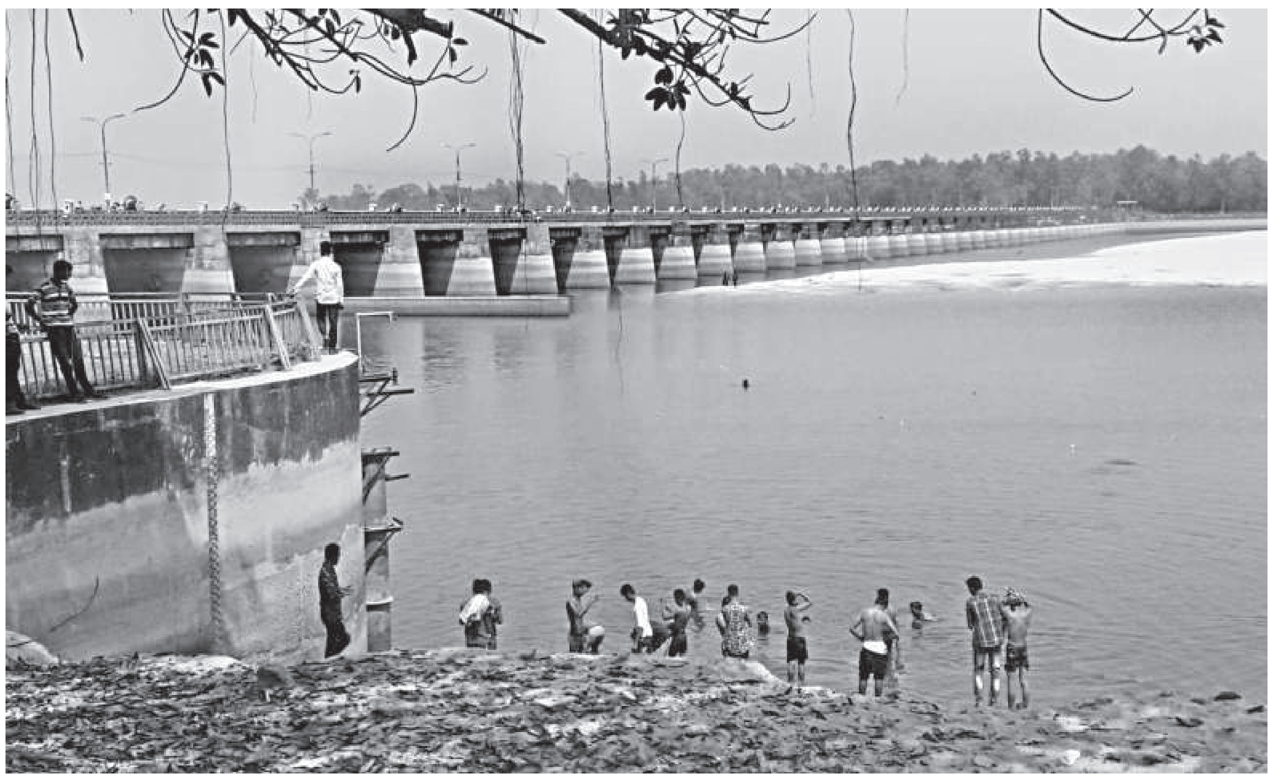
Instead, it was announced that an Indian technical team would soon visit Bangladesh to discuss "conservation and management of the Teesta River inside Bangladesh." What India meant by "conservation and management" was elaborated on by Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra.

"It is less about the water-sharing part, but more about management of water flow within the Teesta River," explained Secretary Kwatra, in a special media briefing.

This omission of the Teesta water-sharing agreement from the joint statement is a significant change. Does this mean that the Teesta water-sharing agenda has been abandoned?

The discussion on the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project (TRCMRP) has been going on in Bangladesh for quite a few years. This megaproject to restore the Teesta is supposed to be implemented with financial and technical assistance from China. Since 2019, China and Bangladesh have been discussing this matter. Now it appears that India has also become seriously interested in the project.

This is because the region where the TRCMRP is to be implemented is deemed strategically important by India. According to a report in the *Hindustan Times* on June 22, besides worries about water flow data and other information on the cross-border river being scooped up by China, India has concerns about Chinese personnel establishing a presence at the project site located near the "chicken's neck"—the narrow strip of land connecting the northeast of India to the rest of the country.



Any discussion on the Teesta management should involve a water-sharing agreement with India. FILE PHOTO: **STAR**

But will the Teesta crisis be solved by conserving and managing the water of the Teesta inside Bangladesh? The main problem of the Teesta River is India's unilateral withdrawal of water from the river by building barrages upstream and the creation of obstacles in river flow by constructing infrastructure projects, including hydroelectric power plants. So, what will be the procedure of involving India, the country which is responsible for drying up the Teesta River and depriving Bangladesh of the fair share of the river's water, in the management of the river inside Bangladesh? Accepting India's technical assistance in an attempt to revitalise the Teesta in its current state, without entering a water-sharing agreement, could mean accepting unilateral withdrawal of water from the Teesta by India.

Another question is, no matter which country implements the TRCMRP project, is it really possible to solve the Teesta water crisis by implementing it inside Bangladesh, without removing all the obstacles to the water flow upstream in India? According to a demonstration by Power China, the project involves reducing the width and increasing the depth of the river by dredging and building embankment on both sides, recovering 170 square kilometres of land on both sides of the river by filling with dredging soil and constructing housing and industrial parks, among other things, on that land. At present, the maximum width of the Teesta River is 5.1 kilometres and the average width is 3.1 kilometres. Under the TRCMRP project, this width will be reduced to 0.7 kilometre to one kilometre, which will cause a serious adverse effect on the velocity and water carrying capacity of the river.

According to a study by Dr Md Khalequzzaman, professor of geology and environmental sciences at the Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania in the US, due to the reduced cross-section of the river, the velocity of the river will increase. As a result, when the flow of water increases greatly during the rainy season, the erosion tendency of the two banks will increase. Due to the embankments on both sides of the river, most of the tributaries and distributaries of the Teesta will likely be cut off from the main river. For this reason, during flooding, the flow in the river will not spread to its tributaries and distributaries, causing the floods to intensify. Even the reclaimed land will be in the active flood-flow zone of the Teesta and will likely be exposed to flood damage.

But after all these, the proposed TRCMRP will not be able to solve the water scarcity issue because without increased water flow from upstream, no additional water can be generated by dredging the river to greater depths. The water that might become available in the river after deepening the riverbed would be shallow groundwater. Using this water for irrigation will lower the groundwater table in the catchment area, reducing the availability of potable water and irrigation water drawn through shallow tube wells.

So, no matter what activities are done under the Teesta megaproject, if Bangladesh cannot get an equitable share of the water from upstream, the Teesta crisis will not be resolved. Even if the Teesta water-sharing agreement is signed between Bangladesh and India over sharing water only at Gajoldoba point, without taking into account the impact of upstream projects in Sikkim, the crisis will not be solved.

Any discussion on the Teesta management should involve a water-sharing agreement with India which will ensure equitable water flow, enforce restrictions on unilateral changes in upstream river flow, keep provisions for mandatory exchange of data regarding any upstream project, and have the option for third-party dispute settlement. Otherwise, Bangladesh will continue to suffer for the Teesta for decades to come.

MICRO-, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES DAY

For shared prosperity, formalisation of work is vital

Gunjan Dallakoti
is small and medium enterprise development specialist at the International Labour Organization (ILO).

GUNJAN DALLAKOTI

Md Bilal Hussain, 73, learnt weaving from his father. Born in a family of weavers, he believes weaving is in his blood, inherited from his ancestors. His last employer confirms that Bilal is the best weaver he ever had. He is excellent at weaving silk sarees and salwar kameez.

Bilal worked for 57 years—42 with his last employer and 15 years with another. At retirement, he earned Tk 6,200 a month on average, being paid Tk 1,400 for each piece of clothing he made. Bilal retired in November 2023. His failing eyesight and aching body compelled him to stop although he did not want to. His low earnings never permitted him to save anything. He is not getting any retirement benefits as his employment was informal. Devoid of benefits, he is now at the mercy of his sons for the rest of his life and believes the Almighty will provide for him.

Ferdous Munsi, the owner (*malik*) of the small saree-making cottage enterprise where Bilal worked, explained the business. He spends Tk 2,000 on raw materials, mostly imported, for each saree and pays workers like Bilal Tk 1,400 to make the saree. This then retails at Tk 4,000. His gross profit does not even cover the rent of the space and the holding cost of inventory for the off season. He is critically aware of the low wages his workers are getting, but can do nothing about it.

This is the reality in the informal sector. The Bangladesh Labour Force Survey 2022 shows that close to six crore (60 million) people, 84.9 percent of total working population in Bangladesh, are in informal employment. It is noteworthy that out of the total employed women in Bangladesh, 96.6 percent are in informal employment. Similarly, 92.7 percent of youth aged 15-27 years are employed informally. Informal employment can be both in formally registered businesses and in the unregistered ones.

Economists opine that some level of informality is expected in a growing economy like Bangladesh, where an effective business governance system and procedures are yet to be established. There are several reasons for the widespread informality in the country. Studies have suggested that the ineffectiveness of public services like registration, licensing and tax processing of businesses are among the main reasons. On the other hand, lack of clear incentives to formalise, limited understanding of the process of formalisation, and limited employment opportunities are other impediments.

The consequences of the high informality are severe: low tax to GDP ratio, widening inequality, stagnant industrial competitiveness in sectors other than ready-made garment (RMG) and low labour productivity, and low product and service quality. Informality also hinders the potential of the industrial sector to participate and benefit from growing international value chains and export market opportunities. These are extremely critical as Bangladesh prepares to graduate from LDC status and enters the global market on the basis of competitiveness and productivity.

While the prioritisation of formalisation in the Industrial Policy 2023 is a welcome step, there is a dearth of studies on the potential positive impact of formalisation and Bangladesh's capacity to formalise to inform policymaking. Furthering the formalisation agenda is imperative for the country if it is to achieve the ambition of economic diversification and modernisation of the private sector to become competitive globally. The implementation of the policy requires an integrated effort from the whole of the government, the private sector, and workers' organisations. The success of ongoing labour sector and social protection reforms are also key to addressing informality.

The informal sector, which comprises cottage, micro-, small and medium enterprises, not only operates closest to local communities, but plays a crucial role in creating local jobs, especially for women and youth in Bangladesh. As we commemorate the Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day today, we recognise that it is a vital sector at the heart of our societies with tremendous potential to accelerate decent job creation and achievement of the SDG goals.

To fully harness its potential, a transition to formalisation is necessary to ensure that the millions of workers in the sector do not end up like Bilal—destitute after a fully productive working life.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781
EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net
Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222
Newsroom: Fax- 58156306
reporting@thedailystar.net
Advertisement: 01711623910
advertisement@thedailystar.net
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Subscription:
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FY2025 budget: Strategic insights on trade policy directions

Dr Zaidi Sattar
is chairman of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI).

ZAIDI SATTAR

VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

While fiscal and monetary policy implications of the FY2024-25 budget are easy to untangle, one needs to drill down deeper to decipher the true stance and direction of trade policy, as immersed in the budget.

As a trade economist, a focus on the government's articulation of trade policy under the rubric of annual budgets has been my *raison d'etre* for a post-budget column for the past several years. This time is no exception. But it took on greater importance this time in light of the fact that the economy is faced with a number of critical challenges that deserve immediate attention. Regrettably, trade policy has often not been on the radar.

It is fair to say that the domestic side of the equation has been adroitly addressed through a combination of fiscal restraint and a constricted fiscal deficit to complement the inflation-reduction stance of the monetary policy already under way. On the external side, restoring stability in the balance of payments was partly addressed in the weeks preceding the budget presentation by moving to a flexible exchange rate regime—the crawling peg—along with a modest depreciation of the taka on top of the massive depreciation already enacted over the previous 18 months. All eyes have been glued to the one salient macroeconomic indicator of external stability: official foreign exchange reserves.

A pivotal step towards stabilising forex reserves was the move by the central bank to launch a regime of exchange rate flexibility (a component of trade policy) shortly before the budget announcement. Technically, Bangladesh has been on a floating exchange rate regime since 2004, when this sort of exchange rate system was officially launched.

A freely floating exchange rate system is the epitome of exchange rate flexibility. If allowed to function, the exchange rate will depreciate when there is an excess demand (via imports) for foreign exchange and will appreciate when there is an excess supply (via exports) of foreign exchange. Thus, this system contains a built-in adjustment process (not instantaneous but over a period) for restoring balance in trade or current account deficits or even the entire balance of payments. Usually, most economies subscribing to the floating exchange rate system adhere to what is called a "managed float." The devil lies in the degree of management of the float. In our case, the managed float became so entrenched over time that the system failed to respond to changes in demand and supply, approaching a fixed exchange rate system around 2020-2022. The exchange rate became significantly overvalued making exports uncompetitive. One indication of this overvaluation was the appreciation of the Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER), a measure of export competitiveness, by over 50 percent compared to 2011.

In FY2022, the dam broke, as it were, and Bangladesh Bank could not avoid letting the exchange rate depreciate a massive 30 percent during 2023, and another six percent in a pre-budget adjustment in May 2024. Such a significant one-time depreciation—rather than gradual depreciation over several years—is disruptive and causes a shock to various parts of the economy. The shock—inflation, depleting forex reserves, import curbs, balance of payments volatility—had to be mollified with bold measures to restore macroeconomic stability. Unfortunately, for the economy, those measures came late in the day, only in the last three to six months, with the finishing touches to be expected from the FY2025 budget. So, it would be fair to commend the budget policymakers, headed by the finance minister, for deftly putting the finishing touches on restoration of macroeconomic stability, both internal and external, in order to move forward on a path of stable and rising growth that was the stock of Bangladesh's economy for three decades.

Yet, in my view, some more proactivity would have been desirable on the trade policy front given that forex reserves had barely stabilised at about three and a half months of import cover whereas the dire need is to restore a comfortable zone for forex reserves at around five or more months of import cover. Aggressive measures are needed to boost reserves by providing impetus for export growth and remittance inflows. This is where trade policy direction becomes vital for providing the right stimulus to exports.

Some more proactivity in the budget would have been desirable on the trade policy front given that forex reserves had barely stabilised at about three and a half months of import cover. Aggressive measures are needed to boost reserves by providing impetus for export growth and remittance inflows. This is where trade policy direction becomes vital for providing the right stimulus to exports.

Already, the first step towards stimulating exports has been taken, with the substantial depreciation of the exchange rate that has pretty much eliminated the past appreciation of REER. But one fundamental policy that favours domestic sales over exports—anti-export bias of tariffs—remained unaddressed, though a rare opportunity was presented by the depreciation-induced tariff spike across the board (36 percent depreciation raised all tariffs by 36 percent). It presented the scope for drastic rationalisation of tariffs without the revenue loss implications that continue to haunt the revenue authority.

The persistence of anti-export bias emerges from the high tariff protection regime intended to prop up domestic import substitution industries (ISIs), which then serves to discourage export activity because they become less profitable relative to domestic sales. There was high expectation that, following so much discussion on the subject over the past year, the budget, which usually lays down the magnitude and direction of tariff adjustments (indicating trade policy direction), would be aggressively moving to purge anti-export bias of tariff protection in a substantial degree. Indeed, there is a hint that this might be in the offing as the finance minister's budget speech highlights the formulation of National Tariff Policy 2023, which, if implemented in whole or in part, could open the doors for export diversification, enhance product competitiveness, and rationalise tariffs for reducing anti-export bias and ensuring balanced development of import substituting industries. As no implementation programme for NTP 2023 was noticeable in the budget speech, perhaps the programme will be undertaken subsequently, as media reports suggest.

If anything, tariff rationalisation was modest as Regulatory Duty (RD) and Supplementary Duty (SD) were withdrawn from 110 tariff lines. The surprising element was the reduction of SD on 172 RMG tariff lines, from 45 percent to 30 percent. Why not completely eliminate SD on RMG imports? Do we really need protective tariff for RMG when we are the second largest apparel exporters in the world? The budget also lays down some feeble tariff rationalisation measures in light of the impending LDC graduation when what was needed was aggressive action. For instance, as 90 percent of SD are applied for protection purposes (higher rates on imports, lower or nil SD on domestic production), this could run afoul of WTO compliance. Though we can hope for some "due restraint" on the part of WTO members following graduation, the prospect of anti-dumping or countervailing duties cannot be ruled out. An opportunity was thus missed to move aggressively on the tariff rationalisation path.

A notable innovation was the promotion of brand Bangladesh through the emphasis on "Made in Bangladesh" strategy for giving stimulus to "domestic industries." What is not clear from the budget is what strand of this strategy the policymakers espouse. There are two strands to this trade policy strategy: (a) MADE IN BANGLADESH, SELL IN BANGLADESH; and (b) MADE IN BANGLADESH, SELL IN THE WORLD MARKET.

My reading of the support measures seems to suggest that the preferred policy is geared to the former dispensation. Although export-oriented sectors are also on the radar, the budget seems to focus on promoting several import substituting industries with protection support—raising output tariffs and lowering input tariffs—in a classic demonstration of raising effective protection and, thereby, discouraging exports of the same products via anti-export incentive bias.

This is where history of trade and development diverges. The first strand of trade policy, by focusing on the domestic market, has never given growth rates of seven to eight percent on a sustained basis anywhere in the world. There is no historical or cross-country evidence of this happening. No matter how large the domestic market is, it is no match to the size and scale of the world market. It is the second strand of trade policy that has the potential to generate seven, eight, nine percent or even higher growth rates by harnessing the demand of the massive global market. China, Vietnam and several other East Asian countries are classic examples of turning around poor economies into high-growth, high-income economies within a few decades. Should Bangladesh not opt for the second orientation of trade policy? Moreover, there is clear evidence that export-oriented industrialisation creates much greater employment than import substituting, domestic market driven industrialisation. In our country, RMG is a case in point.

The budget may not be the place to articulate the entire strategy for trade policy directions as the country moves into the LDC graduation phase of development. This post-budget note is meant to underscore the urgency of the task ahead, lest we reach a cliffhanger on November 24, 2026—the date for graduation out of the LDC status. A crisis always presents opportunities to be seized. In 1990, when the economy faced a macroeconomic and balance-of-payment crisis, the country's policymakers chose to go for radical trade policy reforms, investment liberalisation, and market-oriented reforms. These reforms, though ostensibly incomplete, still gave the impetus for two decades of rapid growth and poverty reduction. Given that the economy is once again faced with heightened degree of macroeconomic and balance-of-payment challenges, and LDC graduation is imminent, one would be looking for another round of structural reforms at least in the long overdue trade and tax policy arenas in order to restore macroeconomic and balance-of-payment stability and resume its long-run rapid growth path.

With regard to a medium-term development strategy, the budget may not be the end game. There are signs of change in trade policy directions, but our hope was for more clarity and aggression in moving forward with change. Maybe that part of the agenda for action has been left for post-budget activities.

It is important to recognise that trade has been the handmaiden of Bangladesh's development. It will remain so for the next decade and beyond. So, adopting the most dynamic trade policy for future progress is a national imperative now.

Assange is free, but justice has not been done

Caitlin Johnstone
is an Australian journalist.

CAITLIN JOHNSTONE

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange arrives at a United States District Court in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, US, on June 26, 2024.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Julian Assange is free. As of this writing, he is en route to Australia from the Northern Mariana Islands, a remote US territory in the western Pacific, after finalising a plea deal with the US government which will see him sentenced to time served in Belmarsh Prison. Importantly, according to experts I've seen commenting on this astonishing new development, it doesn't appear that his plea deal will set any new legal precedents that will be harmful to journalists going forward. Joe Lauria reports the following for Consortium News:

"Bruce Afran, a US constitutional lawyer, told Consortium News that a plea deal does not create a legal precedent. Therefore Assange's deal would not jeopardise journalists in the future of being prosecuted for accepting and publishing classified information from a source because of Assange's agreeing to such a charge."

I've obviously got a lot of big feels about all this, having followed this important case so closely for so long and having put so much work into writing about it. There's so very, very much work to be done in our collective struggle to liberate the world from the talons of the imperial murder machine, but I am overjoyed for Assange and his family, and it feels good to mark a solid win in this fight.

None of this undoes the unforgivable evils the empire inflicted in its persecution of Julian Assange, however, or reverses the worldwide damage that has been done by making a public example of him to show what happens to a journalist who tells inconvenient truths about the world's most powerful government.

So while Assange may be free, we cannot rightly say that justice has been done.

Justice would look like Assange being granted a full and unconditional pardon and receiving millions of dollars in compensation from the US government for the torment they put him through by his imprisonment in Belmarsh beginning in 2019, his de facto imprisonment in the Ecuadorian embassy beginning in 2012, and his jailing and house arrest beginning in 2010.

Justice would look like the US making concrete legal and policy changes guaranteeing that Washington could never again use its globe-spanning power and influence to destroy the life of a foreign journalist for reporting inconvenient facts about it, and issuing a formal apology to Julian Assange and his family.

Justice would look like the arrest and prosecution of the people whose war crimes Assange exposed, and the arrest and prosecution of everyone who helped ruin his life for exposing those crimes. This would include a whole host of government operatives and officials across numerous countries, and multiple US presidents.

Justice would look like a hero's welcome and a hero's honours from Australia upon his arrival, and a serious revision of Canberra's obsequious relationship with Washington.

Justice would look like formal apologies to Assange and his family from the editorial boards of all the mainstream press outlets that manufactured consent for his vicious persecution—including and especially *The Guardian*—and the complete destruction of the reputations of every unscrupulous "presstitute" who helped smear him over the years.

If these things happened, then we could perhaps argue that justice has been served to some extent. As it stands, all we have is the cessation of one single act of depravity by an empire. We all still live under a globe-spanning power structure which has shown the entire world that it will destroy your life if you expose its criminality, and then stand back and proudly call this justice.

So, I personally think I'm just going to take this one small victory in stride. There is still so much to do, and vanishingly little time to do it.

The fight goes on.

LITERARY CURTAINS

'BEGUM'S BLUNDER' shines in Wilde splendour

The director, however, took some poetic licence to appropriate some of the contextual references. She transforms Lady Windermere's titular fan into a shawl for Begum Mumtaz, a gift from her husband. The change is not superficial; it remains pivotal to the plot of societal intrigue.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

Begum's Blunder is a clever adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*. The play transports the Victorian setting to the imaginary Behrampur, the heyday of the Nawabs in India. With Naila Azad Nupur's direction, and Sadaf Saaz working her behind-the-scenes magic as the producer, the production by Kaleidoscope projects lights on the prism of Wilde's 1892 play to find their contemporary refractions and reflections in colonial India.

The play reminds the Dhaka audience that the gossip-mongering Victorian upper class, with their deceitful moral stance, is no different from their own. Human behaviours are uncannily the same across time and space, making Wilde our contemporary. The proximity is further heightened by the choice of location and the ambience created for the staging. The immersive theatrical experience, which was performed at Aloki in the upscale part of town before a select upper-class audience, has a fourth wall effect. The cabaret-style seating at the venue became an extension of the stage where the main action takes place.

The characters join the birthday party of the protagonist, Begum Mumtaz Nizamuddin (i.e., Lady Windermere), through the aisle that divides the audience. The herald announces their names, and the characters enter the stage, interacting with the audience, who, in turn, have become extensions of the attendees. The set design and choreography provide a backdrop against which the drama unfolds. The immediate intimacy between the audience and the characters highlights the central theme of the play: the manipulation of appearances to navigate societal expectations. The plot pivots around a disgraced character, Amirun Nahar Khatun (i.e., Mrs. Erlynne), who is trying to buy her way into her former society through deceptions. Almost all of the characters in the play are unaware of her motives. This irony serves as a piston that propels the narrative story forward.

PHOTOS: **SHADAB SHAHROKH HAI**

The play more of less retains the original dialogue, with changes primarily in the names of characters and places. It would be almost sacrilegious for any script writer to try to tweak Wilde's texts. Wilde's crunchy dialogues often feel like nuts in a nutrient bar that mixes love with betrayal and righteousness with common sense under the masks we wear in society. Naila Azad was smart to leave Wilde's words alone, as they have the reputation of being an omnibus of quotable quotes. However, the script does use vernacular languages to authenticate its adapted location. The play's seamless transition between Hindi, Bangla, and English serves as a reminder of its adopted location. The inclusion of western songs and classical dance, as well as the use of a digital backdrop, creates a party mood that is in contrast to the storm that the central character is facing, thinking that her husband, Nawab Nizamuddin, is having an affair with an older woman, Amirun.

The director, however, took some poetic licence to appropriate some of the contextual references. She transforms Lady Windermere's titular fan into a shawl for Begum Mumtaz, a gift from her husband. The change is not superficial; it remains pivotal to the plot of societal intrigue. Visually, as a stage prop, the shawl is much more effective for the characters dressed in traditional Indian dresses. It is a deft nod to local customs and aesthetics.

The satirical comedy has many private jokes. One such joke involves the characterisation of Nawab Mahiuddin Zafar, who comes from Dhaka. His counterpart in the main text is Mr. Hopper, who comes from Australia. For the snooty society of Grosvenor Square in London, colonised Australia is still a place infested with "flying kangaroos." One only hopes that Dhaka's slighting in this analogy was not deliberate.

The most notable aspect of the play is the professionalism displayed by a group of brilliant amateur performers. Their superb acting and almost flawless enunciation have given the play its elan. The cast delivers their lines with a finesse that captures the cultural and contextual nuances of Wilde's play. The transition between scenes is seamless, a testament to the hard work that has gone into its making.

The producer Sadaf Saaz mentions that Kaleidoscope, a BHN Experiences venture created with Jatrik and with support from Asiatic EXP, is a multidimensional platform that wants to elevate the experience of theatre, the arts, and more. Jatrik, responsible for organising massive events such as Dhaka Lit Fest, has always strived to create a creative space that nurtures local talents. *Begum's Blunder's* actors come from a diverse range of backgrounds, and it was the director's brilliance that brought out the best in the characters by highlighting their uniqueness and peculiarities as part of the drama's overall effect. Jatrik will stage the play for seven more shows at the Mohila Samity in the coming weeks. The grandiose immersive effect that Aloki offered in its premier show is likely to be missed at the other venue. Nevertheless, kudos to Kaleidoscope for bringing Oscar Wilde's wit and wisdom to the Dhaka stage, as well as for offering a delightful evening of theatre that is both thought-provoking and entertaining.

Dr Shamsad Mortuza *is a professor of English at Dhaka University, and former pro-vice-chancellor of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB).*

INTERVIEW

Outliers take centre-stage in Shah Tazrian Ashrafi's debut collection

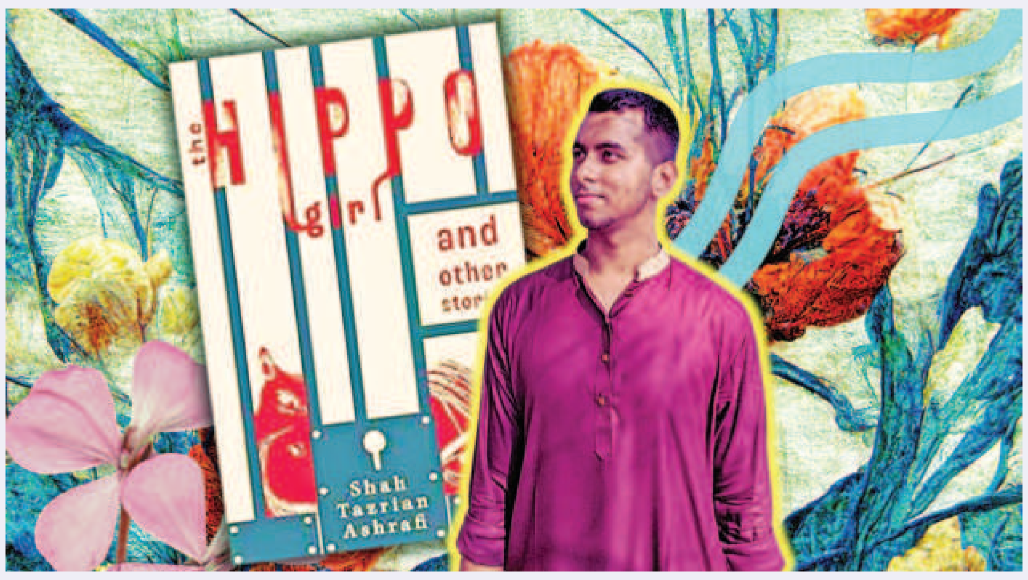
My intention was to explore how certain factors intimidate and ridicule them and further consolidate their marginalised positions, as if to say they (the outliers) do not deserve a shot at life and redemption.

SARAH ANJUM BARI

It's hard not to recall our many conversations about literature as I try to summarise Shah Tazrian Ashrafi's debut collection of short stories. They were always short discussions, opening and closing off in spurts, as happens over text. Exclamations over a new essay collection by Zadie Smith, or a new novel by Isabel Allende.

As an undergraduate student, he majored in International Relations at BUP, but it's his growth as an artist that's been so fulfilling to witness. In 2021, he worked on his short stories under Karan Mahajan in the Write Beyond Borders mentorship programme; in 2023, he was mentored by Sonia Faleiro in the South Asia Speaks fellowship programme. Between working on his debut book and publishing fiction and nonfiction in *Himal South Asian*, *The Diplomat*, *Caravan*, *TRT World*, *The Aleph Review*, *Six Seasons Review*, *Dhaka Tribune*, and *The Daily Star*, Tazrian also got accepted into the MFA in Creative Writing Program at UW Madison, due to start in Fall 2024.

The Hippo Girl and Other Stories (Hachette, 2024) plays with all those themes that have percolated in his essays and reviews over the years. The book stays often in the shadows of war, but illustrates moments of humour, friendship, and bravery between characters who are seldom on the upper end of a hierarchy. We hear from a dog who watches his human suffer through the Liberation War, a housemaid who must abandon her mentally ill sister in the calm streets of a fictionalised Baridhara. The textures of life in Bangladesh appear as they are in this collection, sans nostalgia or elitist gloss. It's a rare joy to recognise our familiar streets, customs, histories, and relationships depicted with such loving attention to detail in a book that will reach readers across South Asia.


the HIPPO girl and other stories
Shah Tazrian Ashrafi

DESIGN: **MAISHA SYEDA**

What inspired these stories? Were you drawing ideas or information from any particular sources?

There was no particular inspiration, but before writing these stories, I was fascinated by Petina Gappah and Jamil Jan Kochai's short stories. Their fictions were etched in my mind because of how they managed to write about hopeless scenarios (often involving wars) in a palatable and light-hearted manner. As such, I actively looked back on their work to learn how they did and did not do certain things, especially in terms of subverting readers' expectations and upending assumptions. This is why I mention them in my synopsis. Besides, I was also inspired by Samanta Schweblin, Mariana Enriquez, and multiple stories from Commonwealth Short Story Prize and Caine Prize shortlists. The one thing they all share in common is their penchant for narrating stories of violence that leave the reader pondering about the characters for a long time. For instance, I got the idea for "Lucky" after reading this brilliant Caine Prize-shortlisted story called "Memories We Lost", which, like "Lucky", is about a pair of siblings in dire straits, ostracised by the society due to the stigma around mental health. Similarly, I was inspired to write "Indira Road" after reading a Commonwealth Short Story Prize-shortlisted story called "Something Happened Here"; in both the stories, the narrators return to their previous homes and revisit the unwanted forces that pushed them away in the first place.

We move through different classes in your book, from slums and working class families to diplomatic residential areas. But in all cases, we're focusing on the outliers in each of these spaces—the bullied, the marginalised. What are your stories trying to accomplish through these gazes?

By giving the outliers the centre stage, I wanted to establish that some people are outliers in a society because of their helpless circumstances. My intention was to explore how certain factors intimidate and ridicule them and further consolidate their marginalised positions, as if to say they (the outliers) do not deserve a shot at life and redemption.

One way in which you do this—and this was my favourite thing about the book—is your choice of narrators. Nearly every narrator in the book comes with a distinct personality, they have their biases, their joys and resentments, even when you're writing a third person omniscient narrator. Some of the more fascinating narrators appear when you write in the first person collective. Tell me about your choice of narrators (the adults, the children, the animals). How did you want them to shape the stories you were telling? And how did you develop their voices?

I had a lot of fun writing in the first-person collective voice. I have always wanted to do that ever since I read NoViolet Bulawayo's story, "Hitting Budapest". I enjoy the limitless fluidity that this mode of narration gives me.

Writing in this as well as other modes of narration, one thing I hoped to accomplish was to give my narration a blend of humour, cynicism, and unreliability with generous doses of unforgiving observations. For example, my narrator in "Brother" was not only someone who constantly groaned about the Pakistani military's occupation, but he was also someone who derived small joys from playing hide and seek with his friends and seeing the physical altercation between two women. I wanted him to be a character who, despite living in gloomy conditions, is in touch with his typical teenage characteristics from before the war. Like him, I wanted my other characters throughout the book to be defined by a myriad of other things besides their cruel fates. Some of them love reading, some love writing, some are academic high achievers, some refuse to let go of their intrinsic generosity even in the face of harshest conditions, and so on.

This is an excerpt. Read the full interview on DS Books and *The Daily Star*'s websites.

Sarah Anjum Bari *is a writer and editor, pursuing an MFA in the Nonfiction Writing Program at the University of Iowa where she also teaches rhetoric and literary publishing.*

What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV
T20 World Cup
South Africa vs Afghanistan
Live from 6:30 am
India vs England
Live from 8:30 pm

T SPORTS
Copa America
Venezuela vs Mexico
Live from 7:00 am
Panama vs USA
Live from 4:00 am (Friday)

South Africa face test of nerves and Afghanistan

REUTERS

South Africa's bid to lift a first major cricket trophy could come down to whether they can finally shed the unwanted tag of "chokers" and the latest test of their nerves will be against Afghanistan in Wednesday's Twenty20 World Cup semifinal.

The Proteas have competed in seven semifinals over both short format World Cups but have never reached a title match, although they will be happy to avoid Australia this time around having lost to them three times in the last four.

The perennial under-achievers of international cricket are on a hot streak, with solid bowling displays helping them power through the group and Super Eight stages.

South Africa will be encouraged by how several players have stepped up in tense situations to keep their 100% record intact after seven matches so far.

"We haven't played our best game of cricket yet," Markram said after his team ended the campaign of co-hosts West Indies in a shootout for a semifinal spot on Sunday. "So we'll try and put our best game of cricket together for that semi-final."

After stunning Australia in their penultimate Super Eight match, the plucky Afghans ensured the 2021 champions were sent packing from the tournament with a dramatic eight-run win over Bangladesh on Monday.

Afghanistan's maiden World Cup semifinal appearance is a sign of how much the sport has grown in the war-torn country and skipper Rashid Khan's side, who also upset New Zealand earlier in the tournament, will target another statement victory.

They failed to register a single win in the last edition of the tournament but were still tipped to make the last four this time around by West Indies great Brian Lara, after whom the Tarouba venue for the semi-final is named.

Rahmanullah Gurbaz has been a key player for Afghanistan, leading the scoring table with 281 runs, while Fazalhaq Farooqi leads the bowling charts with 16 wickets. "Being in the semi is big for us," Rashid added. "But we have to go with a very clear mind and know what we have done so far. Keep things simple for ourselves and make sure we enjoy that big occasion."

- The Afghanistan-South Africa semifinal in Tarouba has a reserve day, on June 28. However, an extra 60-minute will be allocated on the first day and another 190 minutes on the reserve day for an outcome.
- South Africa and India are the only two ICC full-member sides Afghanistan have not beaten in international cricket so far.
- The Proteas have won a total of seven matches so far – most by any team in one edition of the tournament.
- In this T20 World Cup, Afghanistan openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran have starred in four fifty-plus stands -- most for any team in one edition of the tournament -- including three hundred-plus stands -- most by any opening pair in the history of the competition.
- Afghanistan bowlers have dominated the powerplay in this T20 World Cup, taking 20 wickets at an economy rate of 7.19 during this phase.

India's knockout hurdle against holders England

REUTERS

India can take a huge step towards winning their first major title in over a decade and bury any doubts about their backbone in the knockout rounds when they face defending champions England in the Twenty20 World Cup semifinals on Thursday.

Despite being backed by the world's richest cricket board, success on the biggest stage has largely proved elusive for India and their 2013 Champions Trophy triumph is the most recent of their five global titles.

Rohit Sharma's team, however, head into the clash with England in Guyana on a six-match unbeaten streak in the tournament and determined to emulate the title success of the 2007 side in the inaugural edition.

Rohit, who along with fellow stalwart Virat Kohli could be playing at a last World Cup, returned to form with a 41-ball 92 in a thumping win over Australia in the Super Eight stage and said his side would continue being aggressive.

Indian fans will still be anxious given their team's shaky displays in the latter stages of big tournaments.

However, this time India look in fine fettle with both bat and ball. Rohit has scored 191 runs in six matches, while pace bowler Jasprit Bumrah has 11 wickets and spinner Kuldeep Yadav has claimed seven in three games.

England's campaign has stuttered with losses to Australia and South Africa in the group stages and they only made the Super Eights by virtue of having a better net run rate than Scotland.

Now, however, they stand only two victories away from becoming the first team to retain the T20 World Cup trophy.

England's failure to defend the ODI World Cup last year heaped pressure on skipper Jos Buttler and coach Matthew Mott and they will hope West Indies-born pacers Jofra Archer and Chris Jordan can continue their good form in the knockout rounds.

Buttler is England's top scorer with 191 runs while opener Phil Salt has 183 and the pair's form could prove crucial if they are to advance.

Awaiting India or England in the title clash will be the winner of the first semifinal between South Africa and dark horses Afghanistan.

- India are unbeaten in this T20 World Cup, winning six matches with the group-stage game against Canada getting washed out.
- India hold a slender advantage in head-to-head T20I meetings with England, winning 12 of their 23 encounters. England have won 11.
- In T20 World Cups, however, it is all square at 2-2 between the two sides, with England winning by 10 wickets in their recent-most meeting in the 2022 T20 World Cup semifinal.
- No reserve day has been set aside for this semifinal, meaning, if the game in Guyana gets washed out then India would go through to the final -- courtesy of Rohit Sharma's men winning more Super Eight matches than defending champions England.
- However, an extra 250 minutes have been allotted for this game in order to aid an outcome.

Women booters to play Bhutan in July

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team are set to play two more FIFA international friendly matches against Bhutan to utilise the July window and prepare for the upcoming SAFF Women's Championship.

The women in red and green will fly out to Thimphu on July 8 and be in action on July 11 and 14, before returning home on July 15. The decision was made at the meeting of Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF) women's committee yesterday.

"We were supposed to play a four-nation tournament involving hosts Lebanon, Jordan, Nepal and Bangladesh, but the situation in Lebanon did not permit it. So, we wanted to utilise the July window and arranged Bhutan matches following no response from other countries," BFF executive member Mahfuza Akhter Kiron, who presided the meeting, told The Daily Star, adding that they had also proposed Nepal, who, however, expressed their inability to make necessary arrangement within a short time.

"Playing Bhutan will also be a part of preparation ahead of the SAFF Women's Championship [running from October 17-30], but we are also trying to arrange more friendly matches in the September window," she further informed.

Earlier this year, Bangladesh women's team played two home matches against Chinese Taipei in the May-June window, where they suffered 4-0 and 1-0 defeats.

Messi may skip Peru clash

REUTERS

Lionel Messi may sit out Argentina's next Copa America game against Peru to rest a sore thigh with his team already qualified for the next round after two wins.

Messi, who turned 37 this week and has been suffering muscle niggles, required brief medical treatment on his thigh during Argentina's 1-0 victory over Chile at the U.S.-hosted tournament.

But he completed the 90 minutes, shaving the post with one long-range shot and was at the heart of Argentina's attacks.

"It bothers me a bit, but I was able to stay on until the end. I hope it's nothing serious," he said, acknowledging it might be wiser to sit out the Peru game on Saturday.

"Let's see how the next few days go, how I recover. We've taken an important step to qualify and be relaxed," added Messi, saying he had also suffered from a sore throat and fever before the Chile game.

With a 2-0 win over Canada also under their belt, world champions and tournament favourites Argentina are looking comfortable in the early stages of the Copa America. They top Group A with six points, ahead of Canada on three.

Coach Lionel Scaloni would not say whether he would rest Messi against Peru, to keep him fit for the quarterfinals, but Argentine football commentators assumed he would do just that.

Sabitzer puts left foot forward for Austria

REUTERS, *Berlin*

Austria's historic 3-2 win over Netherlands to top Group D at Euro 2024 on Tuesday will go down as one of the greatest moments in the country's sporting history, especially considering the unlikely source of their triumph - Marcel Sabitzer's left foot.

The 30-year-old is well known for his thunderous strikes from distance with his right boot, but Tuesday's winner -- rattled into the roof of the net from a tight angle -- came from his less-heralded left to secure a famous victory.

"I got the ball deep, I looked up to see if someone was free in the middle, but I got the impression that they (the Dutch) had more men there. In the past, the left foot has often helped me, so I thought that was the moment I could give it a try," Sabitzer told reporters.

"As soon as the ball left my foot, I knew it could be good."

The midfielder, who received the man of the match award for his performance, shared the credit with his team mates after a game in which the Dutch pegged them back to 1-1 and 2-2 before he got the winner.

"We are all footballers who want to win games, and that is our objective in every game. And if you have moments where things are a bit more difficult and it goes back and forth, then the question is how does the team react to that," he said.

"You can be proud of the unity we have, the mentality we have on the pitch ... we used our strengths, the goal was very nicely worked. So many Austrians who watch us in the stadium trust us, and we want to give them something back."

Austria will find out their last-16 opponent when the final round of group games is completed.

Slovenia's Jaka Bijol and Vanja Drkusic celebrate with goalkeeper Jan Oblak after qualifying for the Round of 16 of Euro 2024 following a goalless draw against England in their last Group C match at Cologne Stadium on Tuesday. The Central European nation drew all three of their matches and qualified for the knockout rounds for the first time in their history in only their second appearance in the continental competition.

PHOTO: **AFP**

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Assange back home as a free man

REUTERS, *Canberra*

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange landed to an ecstatic welcome in Australia yesterday after pleading guilty to violating US espionage law in a deal that sets him free from a 14-year legal battle.

Assange disembarked from a private jet at Canberra airport just after 7:30 pm (0930 GMT), waving to waiting media and cheering supporters before passionately kissing his wife, Stella, and lifting her off the ground.

He embraced his father before entering the terminal building with his legal team.

Assange has not spoken publicly since being released and did not appear at a Wikileaks press conference at a hotel in Canberra, where Stella Assange said it was too soon to say what her husband would do next.

"Julian needs time to recover, to get used to freedom," she said. "I want Julian to have that space to rediscover that freedom."

She added she believed her

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

Argentina striker Lautaro Martinez celebrates with Lisandro Martinez and Marcos Acuna following his last-gasp winner against Chile in Copa Group A match at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey yesterday. The Inter Milan striker came off the bench to score the decisive goal as the defending champions cruised into the quarterfinals of the 16-team competition. PHOTO: AFP

New finalists on the cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ongoing T20 World Cup of many firsts will get to see another unprecedented case as a new finalist will feature in the grand finale of the showpiece event as South Africa and Afghanistan will face off in the first semifinal in Trinidad and Tobago today.

In the second semifinal later tonight, 2007 champions India will take on two-time winners England in Guyana for a spot in the final.

South Africa, who are often considered favourites going into ICC events, are not strangers to heartbreaks as they don't farewell in such phases of a major tournament, losing in seven consecutive World Cup (T20I/ODI) semis, but will look to finally break their semifinal curse and progress to their first-ever final in a World Cup.

The Proteas, like they most often do prior to the knockout phases, have won all of their matches in the lead-up to the semis and set a record for most consecutive wins (seven) in a T20 World Cup. But teams like Nepal and Bangladesh have pushed the Proteas to the limit and despite the results going their way, Aiden Markram and Co will be wary of not letting the Afghans have a sniff in the game.

Meanwhile, Rashid Khan's Afghanistan are making a habit of creating history in this tournament and wouldn't be much daunted by the task as they have had a direct hand in eliminating Australia and New Zealand -- with

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

2 more suspects held in the hills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A team of detectives from Dhaka yesterday arrested two men suspected of being involved in the murder of Jhenaidah-4 lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar.

Faisal and Mustafiz were arrested in Khagrachhari where they had been masquerading as devotees at a remote Kali Temple for 23 days, said Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (Detective Branch) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

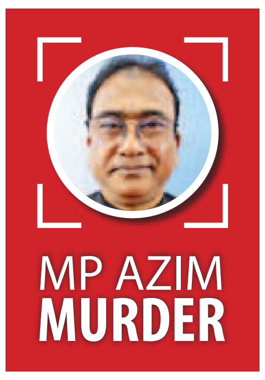
They introduced themselves in Khagrachhari as Palash Roy and Shimul Roy, he added.

They were among the seven people present in the Kolkata flat where Azim was killed in May, he said.

Officers learned their whereabouts on Tuesday, and then caught them in a special drive yesterday.

Harun later flew back to the capital with the suspects in a helicopter and landed in Purbachal.

Officers have information that Faisal used chloroform to make Azim's lose consciousness and Mustafiz later stripped him and tied him to a chair, he told reporters.



On May 19, they came back to Bangladesh from Kolkata after the murder and contacted Aktaruzzaman who planned the murder.

"Aktaruzzaman then gave them Tk 30,000. With the money, they went to the remote hilly area," he said.

A total of nine people have been arrested in Bangladesh, India and Nepal in connection with the killings, he said.

Aktaruzzaman is currently in the US, and the authorities are trying to get him extradited.

Harun reiterated that there was "no pressure" on officers regarding the investigation.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Probe on to unearth wealth of cops: IGP

UNB, *Khulna*

Probe into the wealth of police officials is underway, with authentic information expected to emerge, said Inspector General of Police (IGP) Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun.

He made the statement while addressing reporters at the Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) Lines yesterday afternoon.

The IGP mentioned that a meeting was held between the Police Services Association and journalists to discuss recent media reports on the wealth of police officials and the police headquarters' response.

"The issue will be resolved through discussion," he assured.

Regarding actress Pori Moni issue, IGP Mamun said that Golam Saklain, former Additional Deputy Commissioner of the Detective Branch (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), was sent on compulsory retirement after allegations against him were confirmed. Bangladesh Police adheres to a zero-tolerance policy towards any immoral activity, he said.

60 Palestinians killed as Israeli forces pound Gaza

AGENCIES

Israeli forces pounded several areas in north and south Gaza yesterday, and residents reported fierce fighting between Israeli troops and Hamas fighters in Rafah in the south of the Palestinian enclave.

Residents said fighting intensified in the Tel Al-Sultan neighbourhood in western Rafah, where tanks were also trying to force their way north amid heavy clashes. The armed wings of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad said fighters attacked Israeli forces with anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs.

Since early May, ground fighting has focused on Rafah, abutting Egypt on Gaza's southern edge, where around half of the enclave's 2.3 million people had been sheltering after fleeing other areas. Most have since had to flee again.

Medics said two Palestinians were killed in one Israeli missile strike in Rafah earlier yesterday.

The Israeli military said in a statement its forces killed a Hamas member who had been involved in the smuggling of weapons through the border between Rafah and Egypt. It said jets struck dozens of Hamas targets in Rafah overnight, including fighters, military structures and tunnel shafts, reports Reuters.

In the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya, an Israeli air strike destroyed a house, killing four Palestinians and wounding several others, medics said.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 37,718 people have been killed during more than eight months of offensive. The toll includes at least 60deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

More than eight months into the offensive, international mediation backed by the US has failed to yield a ceasefire agreement. Hamas says any deal must bring an end to the offensive and full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, while Israel says it will accept only temporary pauses in fighting until Hamas is eradicated.

In the northern Gaza Strip, Palestinians complained of a severe lack of food and soaring prices, and health officials said thousands of children were suffering from malnutrition that has already killed at least 30 since October 7.

"There is only flour and canned food, there is nothing else to eat, no vegetables, no meat, and no milk. I have lost over 25 kilos of my weight," said Abu Mustafa, who lives in Gaza City, with his family.

Meanwhile, President Tayyip Erdogan said yestersday that Turkey stood in solidarity with Lebanon in light of growing tensions with Israel and called on regional countries to also support Beirut.

Speaking in parliament, Erdogan said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu planned to spread the Gaza offensive to the region and that this would lead to a "catastrophe", adding the Western support for Israel was "pitiful".

- Severe food shortage in Gaza
- Turkey stands with Lebanon as tensions rises
- Gaza death toll rises to 37,718

BSF shoots Bangladeshi dead near border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

A Bangladeshi man was shot dead by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) near the Lohakuchi border in Kaliganj upazila of Lalmonirhat early yesterday.

According to BGB and locals, the incident occurred early yesterday when a group of eight or nine locals, including the deceased Nurul Islam, 63, tried to enter Indian territory to fetch cattle.

At that time, the BSF, patrolling the West Chamta camp on the Indian side, opened fire on the group injuring Nurul Islam.

Nurul was brought back to Bangladesh by his associates. He later succumbed to his injuries, reports our local correspondent quoting Imtiaz Kabir, officer-in-charge of Kaliganj Police Station.

Police has taken Nurul's body to the police station, said Imtiaz Kabir.

A protest letter has been sent to BSF, said Subedar Manjurul Islam, commander of the Lohakuchi camp of Bangladesh Border Guard (BGB) Lalmonirhat-15 Battalion.

Delhi for early democratic transition in Myanmar

Says Jaishankar

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

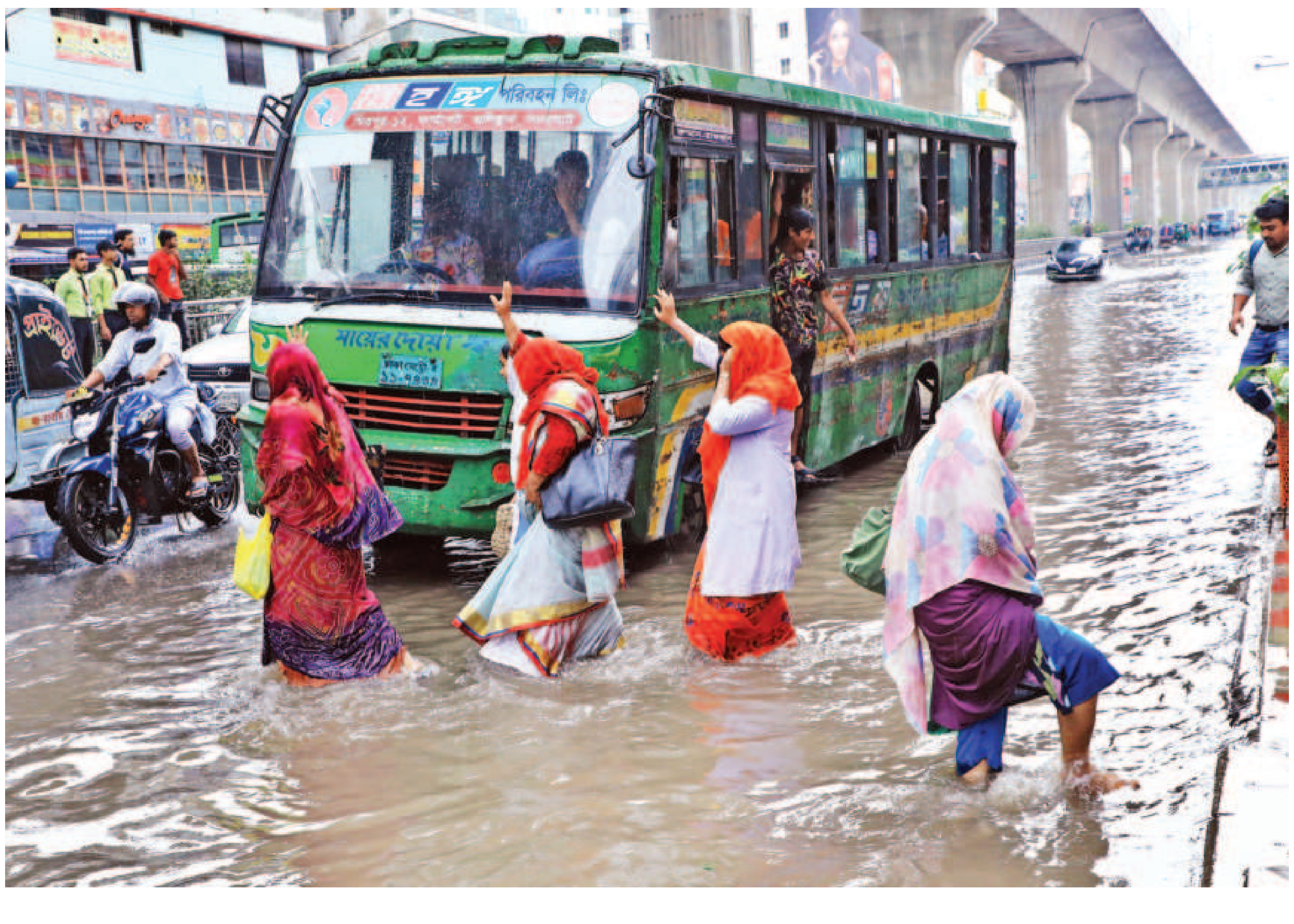
India's foreign minister said he voiced concern about the impact of continuing violence in Myanmar in a meeting with his counterpart from the Southeast Asian nation yesterday.

Myanmar plunged into turmoil after a 2021 military coup seized power from an elected government, sparking a protest movement that has evolved into a full-blown civil war, in which the military has lost control of large swathes of territory.

India has maintained its relationship with the ruling junta, even as armed resistance to the military has expanded, and it has an infrastructure project in Myanmar's western Rakhine state where heavy fighting has raged in recent months.

Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said he sought a commitment to protecting India's ongoing projects in Myanmar in the meeting with counterpart Than Swe.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



Women walking across Begum Rokeya Sarani after an hour of downpour flooded parts of the street yesterday morning. Many other areas in the capital often remain waterlogged in monsoon due to poor drainage. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Rahul Gandhi vows MPs won't be silenced

Modi, Rahul shake hands, escort Om Birla to Speaker's chair

AGENCIES

India's new leader of the opposition Rahul Gandhi said yesterday that his lawmakers would not be silenced, in his first speech since formally taking up a post vacant for a decade.

Rahul, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's chief rival, was appointed by fellow opposition lawmakers to the post in a signal of a reinvigorated challenge to the government.

"The government has political power, but the opposition also represents the voice of India's people," Rahul said in a speech in the lower house of parliament, accompanied by supportive thumps by his party's lawmakers on their desks.

"This time, the opposition represents significantly more voice of the Indian people."

In the past two parliaments, Rahul's once-mighty Congress party did not have enough seats in the legislature to qualify him for the post, reports AFP.

Modi's first two terms in office followed landslide wins

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

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IMF charts path out of farm subsidy

REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* **AM JAHID**

The International Monetary Fund has suggested an alternative to reducing agricultural subsidies -- raising fertiliser prices and providing cash or vouchers for certain farm inputs to support poor farmers.

The global lender also recommended removing incentives for remittance and gradually reducing subsidy on electricity.

The IMF made the suggestions in its programme document as the lender approved $1.15 billion in the third tranche of the $4.7 billion loan to Bangladesh on Monday.

The government has assured the IMF of progressively reducing the subsidy on power by hiking the prices four times a year, but it did not say anything about cutting or withdrawing the subsidies on remittance and agriculture.

"Increases in fertiliser prices could be coupled with cash transfers or vouchers for a range of agricultural inputs (including fertiliser) targeted at small or poor farmers," the IMF said.

It said several options can be considered to lessen the fertiliser subsidy bill.

Raising domestic production of fertiliser by increasing the natural gas supply to existing fertiliser factories could also help cut the reliance on expensive imports. The impact of a reduction in gas supply to other sectors would need to be carefully considered, the IMF said.

In April 2023, the World Bank provided Bangladesh $500 million for agricultural and rural transformation. With the funding, the government will build a comprehensive database of farmers and experiment with e-vouchers for fertilisers and other agricultural inputs.

The IMF said the new database and the findings are expected to yield valuable information that the authorities can use for a rethink of the agricultural subsidy system and put current budget allocations for fertiliser subsidies to more productive uses.

It said the current fixed price system -- under which farmers purchase fertiliser at a set price irrespective of quantity procured or farmer characteristics -- provides a universal and untargeted subsidy that favours the use of fertiliser over other agricultural inputs.

"As a result, farmers may overuse fertilisers while underinvesting in other inputs such as high-yielding seed varieties and precision irrigation systems."

Better agricultural extension services could help lower dependence on fertilisers and achieve the same agricultural output with a smaller amount of fertiliser inputs, the global lender said.

A sharp rise in global prices of these commodities since 2021 has led to a significant increase in subsidy claims in recent years. This is

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Govt's arrear bills for power, fertiliser stand at Tk 52,000cr

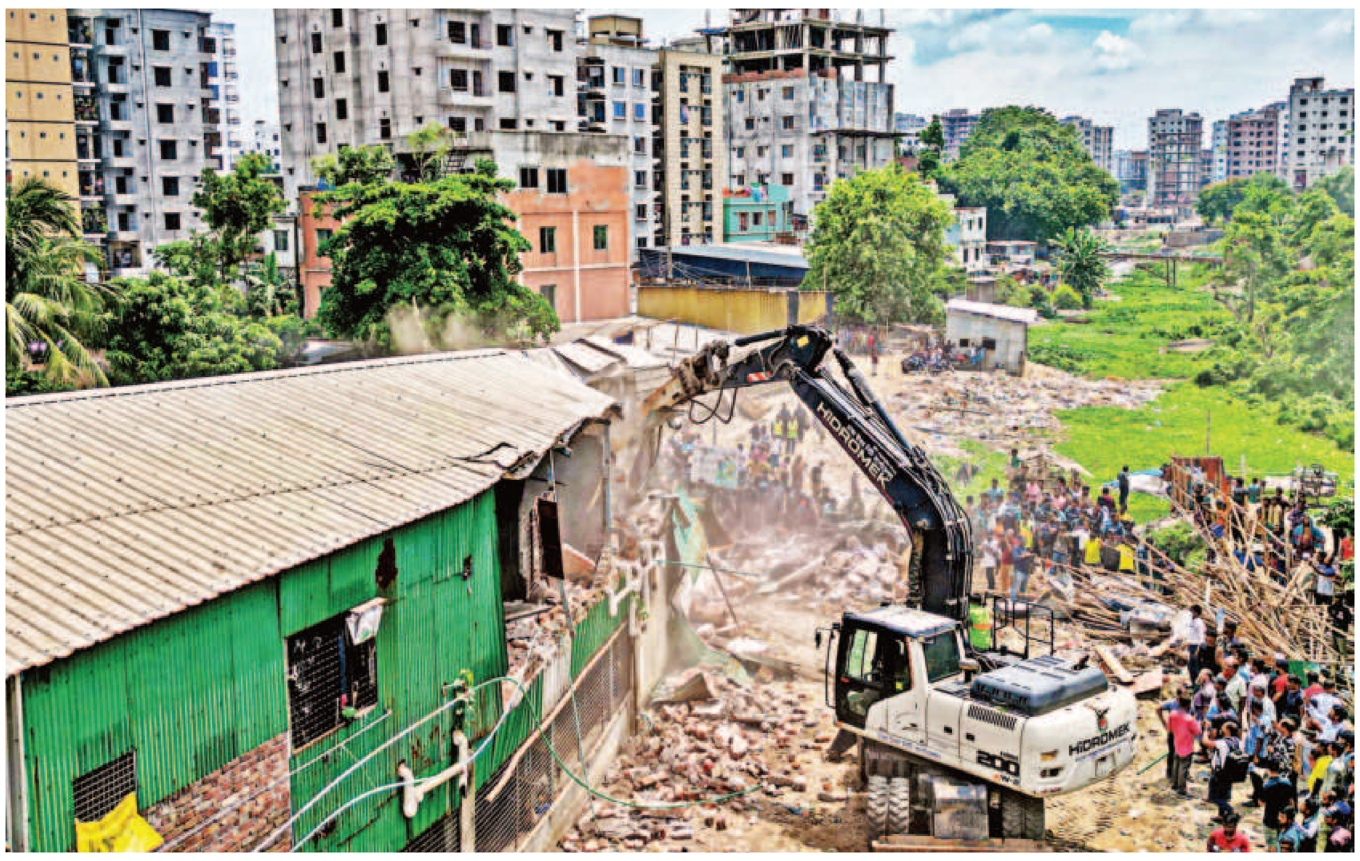
It plans to clear the arrears in the next 5yrs

Govt issued special bonds of Tk 26,200cr for repayment of subsidies

IMF suggests govt discontinue subsidy payment via bond

IMF also recommends removing incentives for remittance

Govt plans to hike power prices four times a year



An excavator knocks down an illegal structure of Sadeeq Agro, set up occupying a part of the Ramchandrapur canal in the capital's Mohammadpur. The Dhaka North City Corporation yesterday afternoon conducted a drive to recover illegally occupied land.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

Forex reserves near $22b as funds arrive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's foreign currency reserves rose to around $22 billion after the International Monetary Fund and other lenders disbursed their loans.

Yesterday, the IMF released $1.15 billion as the third tranche of its $4.7 billion loan programme.

The country also received around $900 million from other sources such as South Korea, the World Bank, and the Islamic Development Bank, said Bangladesh Bank spokesperson Md Mezbaul Haque.

"We are yet to finalise the account. We'll get the final figure on the next [working] day."

As per IMF's calculation, the reserves amounted to $19.47 billion on Wednesday. With the latest injection, the amount stands at $21.89 billion --

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

DNCC tears down parts of Sadeeq Agro

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Dhaka North City Corporation yesterday knocked down a portion of the farm built illegally by Sadeeq Agro on the land of Ramchandrapur canal in the capital's Mohammadpur.

The city corporation also demolished another structure of the farm near Nabinagar Housing in the same area for illegally occupying nearly one bigha of road space.

Sadeeq Agro, owned by Imran Hossain, president of the Bangladesh Dairy Farmers' Association (BDFA), has been the subject of a controversy since it reportedly sold a goat for Tk 12 lakh to Mushfiqur Rahman Ifat, son of former National Board of Revenue member Matiur Rahman, before

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Court orders seizure of NBR official's assets

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate all moveable and immoveable properties of Quazi Abu Mahmud Faisal, first secretary (taxes and legal enforcement) of the National Board of Revenue, his wife Afsana Jasmin, and some of his close relatives over graft allegations.

Abu Mahmud Faisal

Judge Mohammad Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after Md Mostafiz, assistant director of the Anti-Corruption Commission, also the inquiry team head, appealed for this.

He directed the authorities concerned to take initiatives so that Faisal and others could not hand over the properties or launder the money.

The judge ordered them to freeze 87 bank accounts of Faisal, his wife, and relatives.

The court also asked the anti-graft body to publish this order in a Bangla national daily and an English one.

ACC Public Prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kajol confirmed it to The Daily Star.

The properties are: a five-katha plot bought for Tk 75 lakh from East-West Development (Pvt) Ltd by Afsana, a flat bought for Tk 1 crore from Rupayan Housing Estate Ltd in the city's Ramna area by her father Ahmed Ali, a five-katha plot purchased from Jolshiri Housing Project in Khilgaon by Faisal and Afsana, saving certificates worth Tk 2.55 crore, Tk 6.96 crore deposited in bank and non-banking financial institutions, and other moveable properties worth Tk 6.89 crore. The total amount stands at Tk 16.41 crore.

The inquiry official also alleged that Faisal accumulated around Tk 1,000 crore by taking bribes for transferring income tax officials, intimidating taxpayers and resorting to other irregularities. He also tried to launder

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

BOGURA JAILBREAK

It was long time coming

Flaws in infrastructure, security lay unaddressed

MOSTAFA SHABUJ, *Bogura*

In the absence of an outer boundary wall, thieves would often break into the prison guard barracks on the jail premises and steal valuable items, Bogura jail prison guards alleged yesterday.

Despite such breaches in the past, no action was taken to reinforce the jail security system.

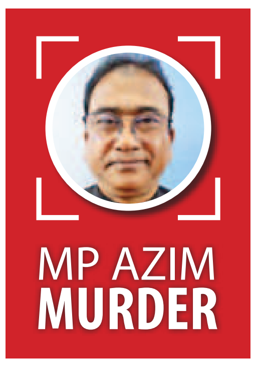
SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Azim sensed danger, tried to leave flat

Says DB report

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER**

As soon as Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim Anar entered the Sanjeeva Gardens flat in Kolkata's New Town on May 13, he realised that the accused had planned to murder him.



As he tried to leave the flat immediately, accused Foysal Ali Sahazi pulled him from behindand covered his mouth with a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

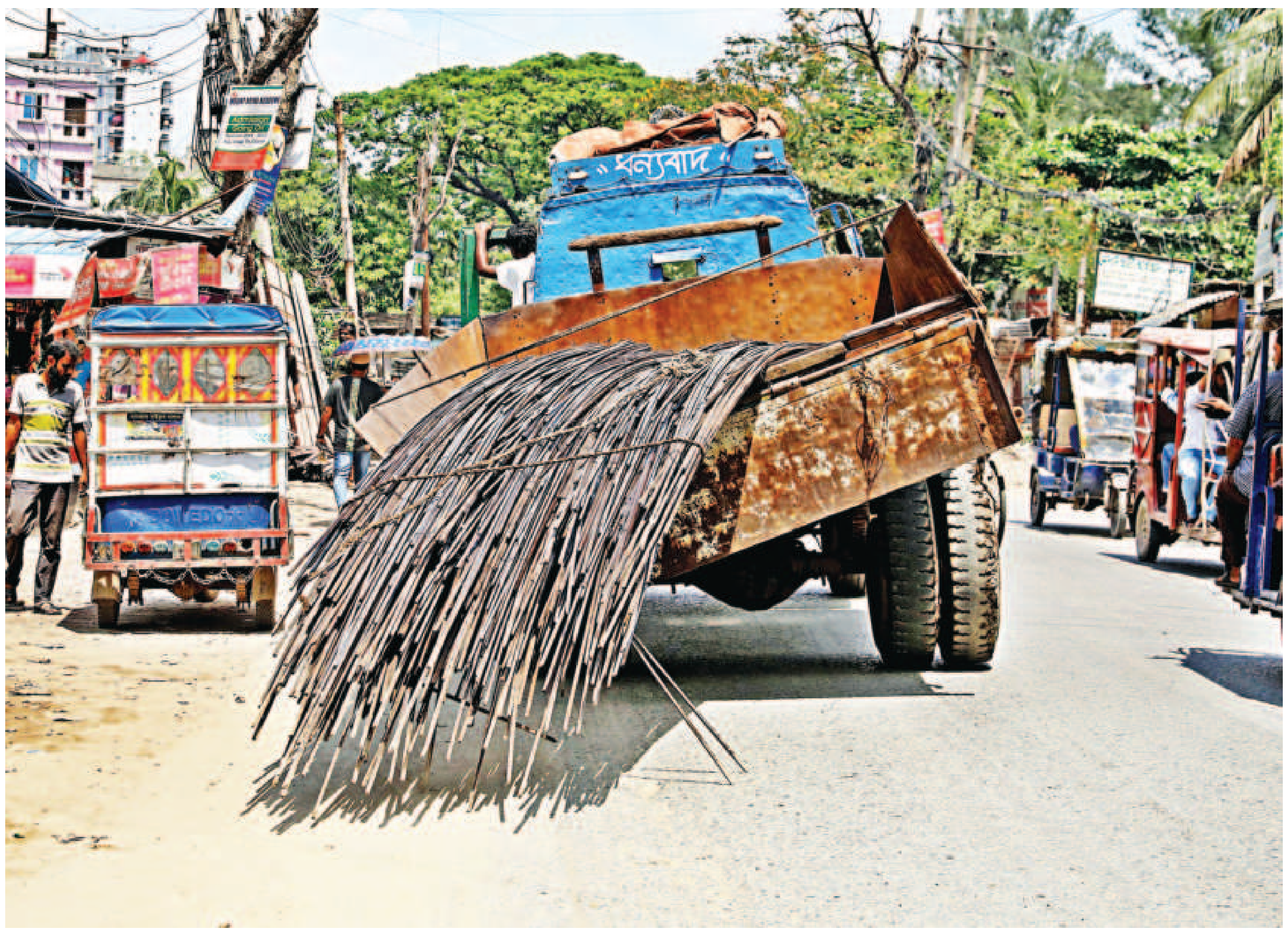


PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

Heaps of rods hanging unbalanced on the rear of a ramshackle truck. Even the rope that is used to tie the rods together is wearing out. If they slip off, several accidents can occur, including ones that injure people. Unfortunately, such a sight is common in the city, as the authorities concerned remain unbothered. The photo was taken yesterday in the capital's Postogola.

DREDGING OLD BRAHMAPUTRA

Tk 2,763cr project crawling along

Only 26pc work completed in 5yrs; deadline for implementation extended till June 2025

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

AMINUL ISLAM, *Mymensingh*

For nearly five years, the BIWTA has been dredging the Old Brahmaputra in Mymensingh to improve its navigability under a Tk 2,763 crore project, but only 26 percent of the project has been completed as of early May this year.

Green activists and civil society members say there has been no visible improvement in navigability since the dredging began.

"Navigability has worsened in some areas where dredging is taking place. The river has become narrower in some places," said Nazrul Islam Chunnu, convener of Janaudyog Mymensingh, a civil society platform.

The river is dying, he said.

The project deadline, which is set to expire this month, has already

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

এসএমই উদ্যোগে সমৃদ্ধ দেশ
স্মার্ট অর্থনীতির বাংলাদেশ
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BR investigating rape incident on moving train

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A probe committee formed by Bangladesh Railway (BR) over the alleged rape of a woman on the Chattogram-bound Udayan Express train on Wednesday started its investigation into the incident yesterday.

On the day, the four-member committee headed by Anisur Rahman, divisional traffic officer of BR's Chattogram Division, interrogated some staffers of BR and SA Corporation--the catering company that supplies food to trains.

After the interrogation, Anisur told reporters that would submit a report by next week.

He, however, declined to disclose any information obtained during the interrogation.

Police have so far arrested four men, all staffers of SA Corporation, in connection to a rape case filed by the victim, said Chattogram Railway Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) SM Shahidul Islam

According to the case statement, the 20-year-old victim was raped inside the train's food carriage around 4:30am on Wednesday.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Palestinians travel in a horse-drawn cart as they flee their homes following an Israeli military operation in Shejaiya in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

5 children drown in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangpur*

Five children, including three in Mithapukur and two in Sadar, died by drowning in Rangpur on Wednesday, said fire service and police officials.

The deceased are Arshi Begum, 12, daughter of Ratan Mia, and her cousin Morshalin Ahmed Zim, 10, son of Anisul Islam, both from the city's Ghagatpara area; Aysha Siddiqa, 9, daughter of Ismail Hossain, and Ayat Khatun, 8, daughter of Mukul Mia, both from Atharokata village in Mthapukur upazila; and Meftahul Jannat Mysha, 2, daughter of Ershadul Haque from Borobala village in Mthapukur upazila.

Rabiul Islam, officer-in-charge of Tazhat Police Station under Rangpur Metropolitan Police, said Arshi and Morshalin drowned when they went to the Ghagat river in the city to bathe with friends.

Fire Service and Civil Defence officials recovered their bodies and rescued another child.

Meanwhile, Aysha and Ayat also drowned while bathing in the Ghagat river in Mithapukur upazila. Police later recovered their bodies.

Earlier in the day, Mysha drowned in a pond near her house. Villagers rescued her and took her to Mithapukur Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared her dead.

Mithapukur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Ferdous Wahid confirmed both incidents.

It was long time coming

FROM PAGE 1

Then on Wednesday, a prison break by four death row convicts laid bare the building's infrastructural weakness and poor internal security.

After the incident, the prisons directorate constituted a three-member probe committee, led by Additional Inspector General (Prisons) Col Sheikh Sujaur Rahman.

The other members are Deputy Inspector General of Prisons Monir Ahmed and Senior Jail Superintendent of Rangpur Central Jail Prashant Kumar Banik.

The committee has been asked to submit an inquiry report within the next five working days.

Meanwhile, the district administration has also formed a six-member committee in this regard.

The committees are tasked with probing lax security, infrastructural weaknesses and the possible involvement of anyone from the prison administration.

They were also asked to make recommendations on how to deter future jailbreaks.

According to the Bogura jail website, the jail building was built in 1883. The main prison is situated on seven acres of land on the banks of the Korotoa river, which is 10 meters east of the prison. There is a perimeter wall, which has public roads on three of its sides.

There is no outer wall surrounding the entire jail premises.

Sources said the jail has the capacity to house 700 prisoners, but as of yesterday, there were 1,700.

This correspondent spoke to five guards and five former inmates now out on bail.

They said the condemned cell that the four death row convicts had escaped from is called the "Jaflong" cell and it has five rooms. Right next to it is the "Padma" ward, which has the perimeter wall attached to it.

The prison guards alleged they have difficulty maintaining security as common people move through the prison area throughout the day due to the public roads being adjacent to it.

They claimed there is no other prison in the country that has roads so close to it and that their living quarters, or barracks, are located along one of the roads.

They further alleged that as there is no outer boundary wall to protect their barracks, thieves would often easily break in and steal their valuables.

About the jail's infrastructural weakness, Imrul Kayes, additional district magistrate and head of the district administration's probe committee, told The Daily Star, "The jail is a KPI [key point installation] area. There should be no high rises or public roads within the premises. But in Bogura jail, we found them [public roads and high rises].

"We have included PWD [public works department] and fire service officials in our probe committee to find out all the weaknesses in the infrastructure."

Col Sujaur Rahman, in this regard, said, "It's a very old prison... The Jaflong cell is attached to the Padma ward, which is attached to the perimeter wall. However, perimeter walls, according to rules, are supposed to be at least 16-18 feet away from any prison building.

"On the other hand, there is supposed to be an outer boundary wall as well. But this jail has none ... We will ask for solutions to these matters in our recommendations."

One former Bogura jail inmate, on the condition of anonymity, said there are two prison guards stationed in front of each cell every night.

"The Jaflong cell is right next to the main gate, which is manned by two armed guards, while there is another guard posted outside the cell at night... This incident [the jail break] would not have been possible unless a prison official is involved," he alleged, adding, "It is also impossible to get the tools they used to break out [a screwdriver and an iron-sheet scrap] inside the condemned cell without help from an insider."

He said, "How is it possible that they made a hole on the ceiling without none of the inmates in the adjacent cell [Padma] knowing it? Surely, one or more prison workers are involved."

DNCC tears down parts of Sadeeq Agro

FROM PAGE 1

Eid. There are allegations that it sells goats and cattle at unusually high prices.

Ifat made a Facebook post about buying the goat, causing public discussions about Matiur's wealth. The Anti-Corruption Commission then launched an inquiry into allegations that Matiur amassed wealth illegally and laundered money.

Yesterday, a DNCC team, led by Executive Magistrate Mutakabbir Ahmed, conducted a near five-hour drive. The team first demolished a part of a two-storey building which housed Sadeeq Agro's office, a living quarter for the workers, and a cattle shed.

The farm animals were moved to an open place nearby before an excavator knocked down the structure.

Sadeeq Agro rented the land from its owner Abdul Rashid Talukder. The executive magistrate told reporters that the farm rented 0.15 bigha of land, but built the farm on 0.60 bigha.

The DNCC team later went to Sadeeq Agro's dairy farm at Nabinagor Housing and knocked down a tin-shed structure used as the office of BDFA and a cattle shed.

"The eviction drive is not against Sadeeq Agro or any particular organisation. It's against the occupiers of the canal," Magistrate Mutakabbir told reporters at the scene.

According to a DNCC press release, 60 illegal structures, including shops, restaurants, a saw mill, and a political party office were demolished, and 10 bighas of land was reclaimed on the first day of the three-day drive.

The farm's owner Imran said a vested quarter was after him because he took a stance against the import of frozen buffalo meat from India.

"These things [the drive] are being done against me to punish me for my stance. They are trying to ruin my reputation. They have asked me to step down from the association," he told The Daily Star.

Imran has been the president of BDFA since it was formed in 2019.

He added that the farm was within the demarcation pillars placed by the Dhaka deputy commissioner.

On Wednesday, the DNCC Estate Department requested Dhaka Metropolitan Police's assistance during the raid.

The letter said illegal structures of Sadeeq Agro and others along Mohammadpur Beribadh area would be evicted.

PREVIOUS CONTROVERSIES

There are allegations that Sadeeq Agro purchases cows and goats from villages at reasonable prices and sells them in Dhaka at exorbitant rates, telling people that the animals have pedigrees.

In 2021, Sadeeq Agro hogged the headlines by importing 18 Brahman cattle, defying restrictions.

The government in 2016 banned import of the particular breed of cattle, meant for the meat industry, after Bangladesh attained self-sufficiency in meat production.

Sadeeq Agro's cattle were flown in from the US amid coronavirus restrictions. But nobody showed up at Dhaka airport to receive them.

The farm used forged ministry documents for the import, and it already had other Brahman cows, possibly from previous such imports, on sale at its farm, an investigation by The Daily Star found.

Forged documents, copies of which were obtained by this newspaper, were used to dodge the authorities.

Tk 2,763cr project crawling along

FROM PAGE 1

been extended by another year. However, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), the implementing agency of the project, will seek even more time.

The project titled "Navigability Improvement and Excavation of Old Brahmaputra" was aimed at dredging 227-kilometre river channel from Jamalpur's Dewanganj to Mymensingh's Gafargaon.

"The project deadline has already been extended by one year, but we need at least three more years to complete the work," Mohammad Mohsin Miah, executive engineer of BIWTA, told The Daily Star recently.

He blamed non-cooperation by a section of locals, erosion of the river and low water level for the slow progress.

There are some 47 small and large rivers in Mymensingh region. Of them, the Sutia, Shila, Banar, Khiru, Laithi, Norosunda, Kanchamatia, Aymon, Jhenai, Rangsa, and Arial Kha depend on the natural flow of the Old Brahmaputra.

But all these rivers are at risk of running dry as the Old Brahmaputra itself is on the brink of death, said Akhlak Ul Jamil, executive engineer of Water Development Board in Mymensingh.

Shibbir Ahmed Liton, general secretary of Poribesh Rokhha O Unnayan Andolon, said the 283km-long Old Brahmaputra is dying due to widespread encroachment and build-up of silt.

According to locals, the Old Brahmaputra had been a great source of fish and water for agriculture. Different local varieties of fish were available in the river, leading to hundreds of people relying on fishing as means of income.

The natural flow of the Old Brahmaputra must be ensured to maintain ecological balance and prevent environmental degradation, they said.

Nazrul, convener of Janaudyog Mymensingh, said dredging should ensure that the river can maintain a depth of at least 10 feet and a width of around 300 feet within the dredged channel during the dry season.

"During a meeting in 2022, project officials assured us that launches would be able to operate once the dredging is completed. However, we don't see how they will keep this promise. We are frustrated."

He said the Mymensingh deputy commissioner should hold a meeting with the officials of the local administration and the project, journalists and civil society representatives so people can know about the real progress of the project.

"We used to make our living from fishing in the Old Brahmaputra. But fishing has become difficult now as the river has become narrow," said Jamir Ali, a 70-year-old fisherman from Char Gobindapur village in Mymensingh Sadar upazila.

Large boats used to transport agricultural products along the river in the past, but nowadays only small boats are able to navigate, said Md Nowab Ali, a senior journalist from Char Haripur village in the same upazila.

Prof Anwarul Islam, an adviser to Janaudyog Mymensingh and also a former vice-chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University, said the project authorities should conduct dredging following the cadastral survey (CS) and mutation records to ensure permanent protection of the river area.

"We visited the upstream of the Old Brahmaputra in Jamalpur's Dewanganj upazila in 2009 and found a large shoal [char] covering around a 6km area," said Nurul Amin Kalam, general secretary of Mymensingh Zila Nagorik Andolon, a citizens' platform.

"We think the shoal gradually changed the natural flow of the river over the last three decades," he said.

Kalam said they recommended the authorities start dredging from Dewanganj, but the authorities turned a deaf ear to the advice.

"We think the project was not properly planned and has not achieved anything so far," he told The Daily Star recently.

Denying the allegation, BIWTA Executive Engineer Mohsin said the dredging is being carried out in a planned way according to the joint survey report of the Institute of Water Modelling and a Dutch firm.

He said many people, who have built houses on several shoals of the river, obstruct dredging, causing delay in the project work.

Mohsin said some project officials have recently visited the estuary of the Old Brahmaputra and talked to the locals and public representatives to speed up the dredging.

He expressed optimism that the river's water level will meet their expectations next year.

Court orders seizure of NBR official's assets

FROM PAGE 1

money abroad, which is under inquiry, the application said.

His relatives Aftab Ali, Kazi Khalid Hasan, Khandaker Hafizur Rahman, and Momtaz Begum were involved in acquiring his illegal wealth, the application mentioned.

It added that his wife, father-in law, and the aforementioned relatives have no legal sources of income.

IMF charts path

FROM PAGE 1

concentrated in the electricity and agricultural sectors, where domestic price adjustments have failed to keep pace with the rise in costs, according to the IMF.

Whereas natural gas and fuel prices were raised broadly in line with international prices, concerns about food security and affordability amid an already inflationary environment led the government to limit price increases on fertilisers and power, it said.

"As a result, subsidy claims by electricity and fertiliser producers and importers have risen substantially and were met in part through arrears and the issuance of special, low-interest bonds to commercial banks to offset outstanding loans to electricity and fertiliser companies."

The government allocated more than Tk 1 lakh crore for subsidies and incentives in the current fiscal year. The same amount has been allocated in the proposed budget for the next fiscal year.

As per the IMF report, the government has recognised the unsustainable nature of the current subsidy bill and signalled its intention to raise power prices in 2024 and beyond.

It said the government intends to avoid incurring new arrears and enable the gradual clearing of arrears and eventual phasing out of power subsidies over five years.

To this end, the authorities implemented a first round of increase in the retail electricity price by 4 percent in February 2024 and are expected to continue raising prices gradually with around four price adjustments per year.

"Electricity subsidies are thus expected to start declining from FY25."

The IMF said avoiding new domestic arrears and clearing arrears is crucial to safeguarding fiscal prudence.

Increased subsidy demands from independent power producers and fertiliser suppliers since FY22 have resulted in domestic arrears of Tk 52,000 crore, which is about 1 percent of the GDP.

"The issuance of special bonds to commercial banks at below-market interest rates to pay off outstanding debts of electricity and fertiliser companies in lieu of subsidy payments should be discontinued," the IMF said.

Since January, the government has issued special bonds worth Tk 26,200 crore, which is 0.5 percent of the GDP.

The bonds carry interest rates equal to the repo rate, below prevailing market rates for treasury bonds of comparable maturity (8-10 years) and can be used as collateral against liquidity facilities from the Bangladesh Bank, it said.

The repo rate is the rate at which the central bank lends money to commercial banks.

The government now provides 2.5 percent incentives for remittance.

The IMF said the recent exchange rate reforms make such an incentive for attracting inflows unnecessary.

"Consequently, the government is encouraged to reduce this subsidy below 2 percent and eliminate it eventually."

Azim sensed danger

FROM PAGE 1

handkerchief soaked with chloroform.

The other accused, including Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan, then executed the killing.

This was revealed in the investigation progress report submitted to a Dhaka court yesterday in the abduction case filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station by the daughter of the MP.

Mafuzur Rahman, senior assistant commissioner of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), filed the report to the court and sought 10-day remand for Foysal and another accused Mostafizur Rahman Fakir. However, the court granted six-day remand.

The two were arrested from Sri Sri Ma Patal Kali Temple in Chattogram's Sitakunda on Wednesday evening.

According to the report, Foysal received Azim after he was lured out of the Kolkata house of his friend Gopal Biswas. The two boarded a car and went to another place. Amanullah joined them there and they got into another car.

The three then went to the New Town flat where another accused Celesty Rahman welcomed Azim by opening the door from inside.

As Celesty went to the top floor of the triplex apartment, Shimul and the other accused took Azim to a room, said investigators.

The lawmaker had a scuffle with the accused before he fell unconscious from the impact of chloroform exposure. The accused then killed the MP, stripped the body, and tied it to a chair. Subsequently, the body was dismembered.

The investigation progress report said Amanullah and Aktaruzzaman, one of the masterminds of the killing, promised to pay Foysal and Mostafizur a handsome amount for the killing.

The two went to Kolkata from Bangladesh on May 2 and checked into a hotel. Mostafizur went to the New Town flat on May 10 and Foysal reached there two days later. They stayed there to execute the killing, reads the report.

Law enforcers in India and Bangladesh have so far arrested nine suspects, including seven who directly took part in the killing. However, the weapons used in the murder are yet to be recovered.

Meanwhile, DB chief Harun Or Rashid, also an additional commissioner of DMP, yesterday said the killers bought a chair for Tk 17,000 from a market in Kolkata and brought chloroform with them.

"Azim's body was tied to that chair ... Siam brought the weapons and gave those to Foysal," he told reporters at his office in the capital.

Investigators said they were probing to determine who benefited financially and politically from the murder. They also said that a few other suspects were under surveillance.

Harun said, "Azim was a popular MP. Aktaruzzaman took him to Kolkata saying they would discuss financial transactions."

"We are yet to ascertain a particular motive. We are examining all possible causes, including political and financial factors," said the DB chief.

He said they will interrogate Foysal and Mostafizur on remand to know about the motive of the murder.

"We are not calling in anyone without any reason. We are not harassing innocent people."

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and stayed at a friend's house overnight. He left the house the following day saying he would visit a doctor.

On May 22, India and Bangladesh police said the lawmaker was murdered.

DHAKA NOT FOR BEGINNERS!

Capital now 6th least liveable city on Liveability Index

HELEMUL ALAM

Dhaka is not for beginners. This is a popular saying among Dhakaites, particularly the younger ones, who often make memes and write satires on this topic.

The megacity has a multitude of challenges that can overwhelm the unprepared.

Here, the air is so polluted that it can be life-threatening.

Even an hour-long rain can bring the capital to a standstill, with city roads remaining waterlogged for hours.

Besides, traffic congestion is a regular phenomenon in this city, adding to the chaotic public transport system.

Not to mention, the overburdened and expensive healthcare system and dengue woes leave many vulnerable.

On top of that, infrastructure, often built hastily and skirting regulations, raises safety concerns with missing fire exits and questionable construction practices.

However, the metro rail service has been a breath of fresh air lately.

A recent study has confirmed what Dhaka residents have known all along -- the capital of Bangladesh is one of the worst cities to live in.

Dhaka has slipped two notches to 168th in the Economist Group's Global Liveability Index 2024 report. This decline from last year's 166th rank has placed Dhaka just above Karachi, while Kyiv, the war-torn capital of Ukraine, ranks three places higher.

The annual global survey, published yesterday, assessed the liveability of 173 cities based on stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and infrastructure.

Vienna, Copenhagen, Zurich, Melbourne, and Calgary top the list, while Damascus, Tripoli, Algiers, Lagos and Karachi occupy the bottom ranks.

EXPERTS BLAME GOVT

Adil Mohammed Khan, president of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, attributes Dhaka's poor ranking to a lack of significant improvements across key sectors.

"This index is prepared on different issues like education, infrastructure, communications, and health. But we do not have any such sectors where we have improved a lot," he said.

Adil acknowledged some progress in mass transit, particularly with the metro rail, but deemed it insufficient for a megacity like Dhaka.

"We have failed to prepare a good public transport system, we have failed to curb pollution, and there is a lack of playgrounds for our kids," he said.

"There is no significant sign of improvement in planning and management of Dhaka city. Many new buildings are being developed, destroying green spaces," he added.

He suggested setting five or ten-year goals to ensure systematic development.

Adil also highlighted the necessity of gradually shifting industries out of Dhaka to reduce pressure on the city.

Iqbal Habib, vice president of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, also criticised the government for neglecting to improve the living conditions in Dhaka in a planned way.

Modernised curriculum will help students flourish: PM

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the curriculum has been modernised to enable the hidden talents of students to flourish.

"Just reading books is not enough. We'll have to bring out the talents of small children. It needs to create scopes for them so that their hidden talents can be flourished. With that view, we've included modern technology-based knowledge in the curriculum," she said.

The premier said this while inaugurating the National Primary Education Week-2024 and conferring the Primary Education Medal-2023 in the city's Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

The prime minister said the government wants to develop a balanced, public welfare-oriented, universal and standard education system.

"We initially started

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

No accidents occurred due to signal error

Rail minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Railways Minister Zillul Hakim yesterday in parliament claimed that no accident has occurred so far due to an error in the signal system by Bangladesh Railways.

The minister said this while replying to a tabled question of Awami League MP M Abdul Latif.

He said projects are underway to establish railway connections in all districts and continuously modernise the signalling system of the entire railway, alongside procuring high-quality engines and coaches.

Meanwhile, Textile and Jute Minister Jahangir Kabir Nanak informed the House that the government has earned about Tk 10,454 crore by exporting jute from 2012-13 to 2022-23.

He came up with the disclosure while responding to a question from AL MP Morshed Alam.

Need more women in community policing

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women's participation in Community Policing Forums across Bangladesh has increased over the years, but it still remains below expectations, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

The discussion titled "Towards Gender Equality: Gender-Responsive Community Policing in Bangladesh" was organised jointly by UN Women and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre.

Academicians, top female police officers, legal specialists, and gender activists participated in the event.

Amena Begum, deputy inspector general (Special Branch) of police, praised community policing for preventing crimes by engaging local people, including women.

"Females are still underrepresented in the police force, which was further impacted after the abolition of the female quota in government jobs. Recently, 100 officers joined the police force through BCS, and only four of them are female," she said.

Amena emphasised the need for more female representation in the police force.

"Only one-third of female police personnel can be engaged in operational activities due to various issues, including leave and maternity leave," she added.

Tania Haque, a professor of Women and Gender Studies at Dhaka University, highlighted persistent negative perceptions toward female police members, though attitudes are gradually shifting.

Towards Gender Equality
Gender-Responsive Community Policing in Bangladesh

Speakers at the discussion organised jointly by UN Women and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Female police personnel can contribute significantly, especially at the grassroots, if provided with a proper environment and infrastructural facilities, she said.

Rekha Saha, legal aid secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, pointed to societal attitudes and beliefs that foster gender-based discrimination and violence against women.

"Community policing has a big role here. If police can reach the community with confidence and trust, a significant change may occur," she said.

Afrida Rubai, assistant inspector general (Community and Beat Policing) at Police Headquarters, said more than 49,000 CPF committees exist nationwide, with around 45,000 female members.

Afrida acknowledged that while continuous training sessions are being conducted to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Why are they fleeing abroad?

AL MP Qamrul Islam on Benazir, Matiur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League MP Qamrul Islam yesterday raised concerns in parliament about Benazir Ahmed, Matiur Rahman, and others evading the law by fleeing abroad.

"Why are those accused afraid of facing the law? Why do they flee abroad? "he asked.

He argued that these individuals' fear of the law implies their guilt.

"We who do politics are ashamed to see the pictures of all these corrupt people, bank robbers," he added.

Why are those accused afraid of facing the law? These individuals' fear of the law implies their guilt.

Ruling party MP Aroma Dutta said some opportunistic individuals are tarnishing the country's image and they should be given exemplary punishment.

Independent MP Mohammad Huchamuddin Chowdhury from Sylhet echoed the call for justice against those involved in corruption.

Another Independent MP Akhtaruzzaman said inflation should be reduced.

"The finance minister has unveiled a plan for this. But it is the same model which failed in the United States five years ago," he claimed.

'From protector to rights violator'

Speakers on the role of state

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's human rights situation, including freedom of expression and people's right to vote, is in crisis since the ruling class has "turned into violator from protector," said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

Many people are now apprehensive about speaking freely, said the speakers, who included university teachers, journalists, and rights activists.

Human Rights Support Society (HRSS) organised the discussion as part of its "10th Human Rights Conference-2024" at the capital's Bishwo Shahitto Kendro.

Amid such a situation, ensuring people's right to vote could be a way to express their silent opinions. However, their voting rights have been snatched away and public representatives were either elected by a small number of voters or won elections uncontested, said speakers.

Abu Sayeed Khan, advisory editor of Bangla daily Samakal, said human rights cannot be upheld without democracy since they are correlated.

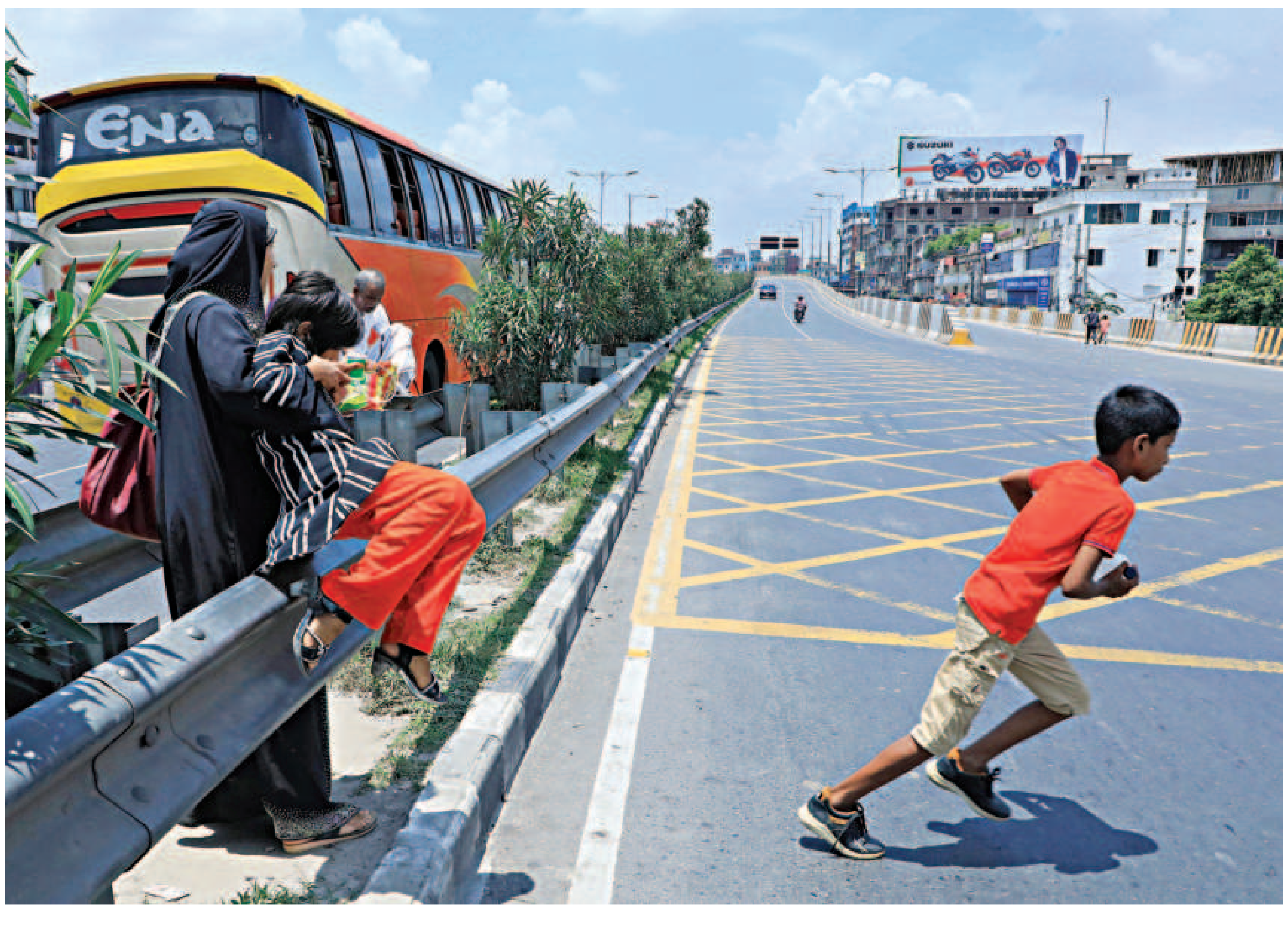
However, Bangladesh as a nation had never experienced a full-fledged democracy; instead, what it has seen is "electocracy," as people could have their say during the regimes, he added.

"Yet, such rights have been snatched away and the state has become more reckless," he said, adding that a culture of fear persists in society and people cannot speak out against the powerful.

Pointing to the deteriorating rights situation

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Ensuring people's right to vote could be a way to express their silent opinions. However, their voting rights have been snatched away and public representatives were either elected by a small number of voters or won elections uncontested.



A boy starts running across the road to go to the other side while his mother and sister climb over a divider to follow him. Despite being illegal, buses continue to drop off passengers in the middle of this approach road to the Padma Bridge in the capital's Postagola area. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

'Chai' traps in high demand

Fishing activities increase across Bagerhat amid monsoon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bagerhat*

With its arrival, the monsoon has ushered in traditional fishing activities among locals across Bagerhat.

People, both young and old, are being seen in the numerous ponds, beels (swamps) and canals across the district catching fish.

With this, the traditional fishing traps, locally known as "chai", have peaked in demand.

Crafted with locally sourced bamboo, this trap is an ingenious and sustainable tool used in traditional fishing practice.

Unlike fishing nets which catch fish indiscriminately, the "chai" allows small and juvenile fish to escape its perforations, while leaving only larger, matured fish to be caught inside the trap. As such, it does not adversely affect fish populations in the waterbodies.

"With monsoon here, the waterbodies are teeming with fish. The 'chai' is a perfect tool for catching fish just enough for our families' consumption, while making sure the spawns and juvenile fish live to grow bigger for harvest in the next season," said Rezaul Sheikh, a seasoned fisherman from Afra village in Kachua upazila.

The demand for these bamboo traps usually peaks during monsoon, leaving local markets like Badhal Haat bustling with activity.

Craftsmen like Basu Das and Krishna Das of Sangdia village in Kachua are now making the best out of this increased demand for the traps, selling each for Tk 250-300.

"Making 'chai' is a profession passed down to us through generations. It's not only about earning money from it, but also preserving a way of life that respects the natural balance. The income from selling these traps during monsoon helps me support my family throughout the year," said Basu Das.

Md Dalwar Hossen, a trader from Badhal union who sells these traps, said people from Badhal, Morrelganj, Chitalmari, and other places in Bagerhat and Pirojpur districts come to buy the traps.

Contacted, ASM Russel, district fisheries officer in Bagerhat, said, "We have seen a dramatic decline in fish populations due to use of illegal nets. The chai traps, however, are a traditional and sustainable tool that help conserve fish stocks while supporting the local fishing community."

Flood damages new embankment

Locals question quality of work

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

A flash flood on June 20 in the Teesta shoal of Gobordhan area under Mahishkhocha union, Lalmonirhat, reportedly caused significant damage to a newly constructed embankment. This raised concerns among locals about the quality of the work.

Bangladesh Water Development Board implemented the around Tk 49.35 crore project to construct the 2,450-metre Teesta river protection embankment between January 2022 and June this year.

A total 4,55,284 concrete blocks were used to construct the embankment in eight packages, said BWDB officials in Lalmonirhat.

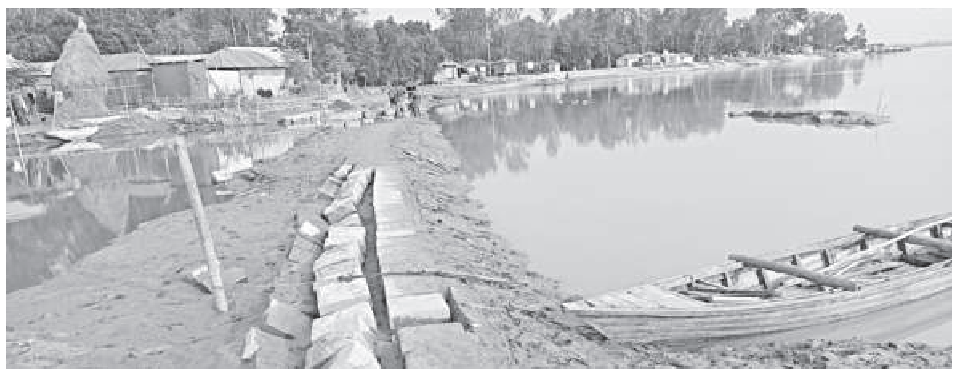
However, locals alleged that the project, supervised by an influential Awami League leader, was not properly executed.

They claimed contractors sold extracted sand and used inferior materials.

Ershad Hossain, representative of contractor firm Rupantar Traders, denied major damage, stating, "Only six or seven concrete blocks became loose. Those are being repaired."

Riyadul Islam, sub-divisional engineer of BWDB in Lalmonirhat, echoed him.

"The contractor is working on the repairs as well as constructing a u-drain so that water from inside can flow into the river easily. The project is being implemented as per design," he said.



Tk 33cr to address

FROM PAGE 5

Tk 8 crore for mosquito crash programmes and Tk 33 crore for addressing waterlogging.

The mayor said, "When I took over the post of mayor, the CCC had debt of Tk 1,075 crore. In three years, CCC's debt has now come down to Tk 440 crore."

He said a total of Tk 113.46 crore income tax and Tk 134 crore Value Added Tax (VAT) has been deposited to the government treasury.

The mayor also called upon the holding owners and government institutions to pay taxes regularly to keep civic services and development work in motion to build a clean, green and liveable city.

Antivenom available

FROM PAGE 5

Education, said snakebite patients usually die due to delay in taking treatment from hospital or due to wrong treatment. Presenting Rajshahi Medical College Hospital's data from 2013-2024 on Russell's viper, Associate Professor Abu Shahin Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman said a total of 235 patients were treated during this time. Of them. 53 percent are from Chapainawabganj.

Md Abu Reza, professor of department of genetic engineering and biotechnology at Rajshahi University, Rokeya Sultana, state minister for health; Prof Ahmedul Kabir, additional director general (admin) of DGHS, and Prof Deen Md Nurul Haque, vice chancellor of BSMMU, also spoke.

Trader sues SI over custodial torture

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A sub-inspector of Gulshan Police Station has been sued under the Torture and Custodial Death (Prohibition) Act for allegedly torturing a trader while in custody.

The SI is Hafizur Rahman.

Morshed Monjur, the victim, filed the case with the Metropolitan Sessions Judges' Court of Dhaka recently, additional public prosecutor Tapash Kumar Pal told The Daily Star yesterday.

Judge Mohammed Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain recorded statements of the victim and directed the Police Bureau of Investigation to submit a probe report before the court by August 19, said the state lawyer.

According to the case documents, SI Hafizur tortured the victim several times while he [victim] was in custody of Gulshan police between April 20 and 21 this year.

From protector

FROM PAGE 3

and growing insecurity, rights activist and HRSS chief advisor Nur Khan said anyone can become a victim at any time.

Incidents of extra-judicial killing and enforced disappearance continued to take place while people were threatened with being put in "crossfires" during different tenures of the government, he said.

Although rights groups voiced the need to form an independent commission to probe the incidents, those only started to decline when a foreign nation imposed a sanction, he added.

At present, there is a growing trend in "illegal detentions," as people get picked up and interrogated at anonymous places for two to 10 days, said Nur Khan.

He also said recent graft allegations against a former police chief and a former army chief came to light only due to media reports and not because of government steps.

He called upon the government to run a "purification campaign".

Nakib Muhammad Nasrullah, professor at Dhaka University's law department, said a major crisis in the country is that the state has turned out to be the violator of people's rights when it was supposed to promote them.

He said a government only overlooks people's concerns when it assumes power without their support.

Writer and journalist Mahbub Morshed said in present-day Bangladesh, wealthy people are becoming public representatives, while those who don't have enough money are finding it difficult to stay in the election race.

"This has created an inequity in society. As a result, society cannot function in the way it should," he added.

At the discussion, Maidul Islam, former director general of Anti-Corruption Commission, called upon rights activists to raise their voices against graft.

Modernised

FROM PAGE 3

setting up computer labs in the secondary schools and now we've a goal to do it in the primary schools as well," she added.

This year, a total of 126 stakeholders under 18 categories have been honoured with "Primary Education Medal-2023". Of them, 54 students, persons and institutes received the medal directly from the prime minister.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 28

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-30	5-00	6-54	8-17
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-57	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Need more women

FROM PAGE 3

sensitise police personnel, these efforts are not sufficient.

She also mentioned that in Dhaka, upper-class women are joining the forums, but at the district level, that is not the case.

During Open House Day programmes, women's participation increased from 26 percent in 2022 to 33 percent in mid-2023, she added.

Gender expert Fawzia Khondker shared her experience, highlighting the lack of engagement of poor and marginalised women in community policing programmes.

"There is a token participation of females. When I was invited, I was made female affairs secretary but I wanted to be the voice of the forum," she said.

Gitanjali Singh, representative, UN Women, said, "The number of women leadership in the forces is not where we wanted it to be. We need to enable a policy framework that really allow women's entry, retention and advancement."

This requires addressing many social norms, discriminatory attitude, and perception about women in the forces, she said.

Sadia Tasneem, national consultant at the EVAW Response Programme of UN Women, presented the keynote at the event, which was moderated by Tanjim Ferdous, in-charge of NGOs and Foreign Missions at The Daily Star.

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Web : www.hbuc.edu.bd E-mail : college@hbuc.edu.bd

অধ্যক্ষ পুন: নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধিভুক্ত বেসরকারী কলেজ শিক্ষকদের চাকুরীর শর্তাবলী রেগুলেশন (সংশোধিত) ২০১৯ ও বেসরকারী শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের (স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ) জনবল কাঠামো ও এমপিও নীতিমালা-২০২১ অনুযায়ী হাবীবুল্লাহ্ বাহার কলেজের অধ্যক্ষ পদে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

সভাপতি, গভর্নিং বডি, হাবীবুল্লাহ্ বাহার কলেজ, ঢাকা বরাবর আবেদনপত্র, ০২ কপি সাম্প্রতিক তোলা ছবি, সকল পরীক্ষা পাশের সনদপত্র, নম্বরপত্র, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র ও অভিজ্ঞতার সনদের সত্যায়িত কপি এবং অধ্যক্ষ, হাবীবুল্লাহ্ বাহার কলেজ বরাবর ২০০০ (দুই হাজার) টাকার পে অর্ডারসহ **জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ : ৩১ জুলাই ২০২৪**

চাকুরীরত প্রার্থীদের যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমোদন সাপেক্ষে আবেদন করতে হবে। ইতঃপূর্বে যারা আবেদন করেছেন তাদের পুনরায় আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নেই। অসম্পূর্ণ আবেদন বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। গভর্নিং বডি অত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি সংশোধন, পরিমার্জন ও বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষন করে। সভাপতি, গভর্নিং বডি।

TO-LET

250 sft. Full Furnished Studio Flat (Monthly Basis) at Bashundhara. TK: 23,000/-
Foreigner preferred.
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০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৮

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়

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ম্যাজিক ব্রিকস হোল্ডিংস লিঃ।
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Contact : 01800099008

World Health Organization
Bangladesh

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

The World Health Organization in Bangladesh invites proposals/bids from the interested Companies in Bangladesh for the following service:

1. **RFP/BAN/2024/022 (Addendum-1):** To conduct Routine EPI coverage evaluation survey including EPI review and assessment for Rohingya population in Cox's Bazar.

Deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 10 July 2024 (Dhaka time).**

Interested Companies can view and download the relevant RFP documents from: **https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/procurement-notice.**

Interested bidders are requested to submit their financial and technical proposals in two separate sealed envelopes as per the instructions provided in the RFP documents at the Reception of WHO Bangladesh, House-SW(I)1/A, Road-8, Gulshan-1, Dhaka.

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) NOTICE

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar hereby announces the launch of the following Request For Information (RFI):

RFI REFERENCE NUMBER	ITEM DESCRIPTION
RFI/HCR/CXB/2024/001	FOR THE PROVISION OF LIQUID PETROLEUM GAS (LPG & CYLINDER)

Interested and bona fide vendors are invited to participate in this RFI by accessing and downloading the RFI documents at the following web link:
https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/238038

RFI to be submitted:
RFI should be submitted as per the guidance in section 3 of the RFI document by email to bgdcosup@unhcr.org copy tarekm@unhcr.org and mansaray@unhcr.org.

RFI submission deadline: Wednesday, 07 July 2024 – 14:00hrs BST. Bangladesh time.

Kindly note that no hard copy is acceptable. The offer will be acceptable who submit only in the above link.

M&S
EST. 1884

Regional Lead - Product Technology & Quality
(Includes QA, Garment Technology)

Scope of the role

- Develop and deliver the Regional Technical Strategy to deliver improvement on Product Development, Quality, Safety, and compliance to Performance Standards and specifications. Leading the Sourcing Technical team to drive improved product execution, factory performance, and on-time delivery.

Accountabilities

- Lead Garment and/or Product Technologists in sampling management and contract sealing process; identifying opportunities for digital product creation.
- Develop and dive into the regional Product Quality strategy aligned with overall Clothing & Home Priorities.
- Ensure the integrity of product on relevant M&S systems, driving efficiency in PLM management.
- Act as a subject matter expert for product performance, product construction standards, and manufacturing process.
- Support the clothing sourcing strategy by ensuring our products are sourced from efficient, capable, socially responsible and sustainable supply chains.
- Work closely with the Head of Region and Business Area managers to implement sourcing strategy at the category level.

Experience Required

- At least 15 years of Technologist experience with a 'blue chip' retailer or supplier including at least 5 years in a managerial.
- Technical knowledge of a global brand on excellent quality standards with in-depth knowledge of global sourcing, buying cycle, and retailing. Driver of Business Performance Improvement – you have a proven track record of KPI improvements based on fact-based analysis or benchmarking.

Please drop your CV at:
Email at:talentacquisition@marks-and-spencer.com
Deadline: 7th July, 2024

আইসিটি সেন্টার
রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

টেন্ডার বিজ্ঞপ্তি

রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে নিম্নে উল্লেখিত সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারীর নিকট থেকে উন্মুক্ত পদ্ধতিতে (OTM) সিডিউল মোতাবেক সীল মোহরযুক্ত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে। কাজসমূহ ও সংশ্লিষ্ট সিডিউল ক্রয়মূল্য নিম্নরূপ:

(ক) Core Switch ক্রয় সংক্রান্ত। (তিন হাজার টাকা মাত্র)
(খ) কম্পিউটার ও আনুষঙ্গিক যন্ত্রপাতি সরবরাহ (দুই হাজার টাকা মাত্র)

প্রতিটি কাজের সিডিউল ক্রয়মূল্যের সমপরিমাণ অর্থ (অফেরতযোগ্য) পরিচালক, আইসিটি সেন্টার, রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এর অনুকূলে অগ্রণী ব্যাংক, রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্পোরেট শাখার "বিবিধ ফান্ড" ০২০০০০২২৩৮৪৪৮ হিসাব নম্বরে জমা দিয়ে সিডিউল ক্রয়ের নিমিত্তে আবেদনের মাধ্যমে নিম্ন স্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তর হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। দরপত্র আগামী ২২-০৭-২০২৪ইং তারিখ সকাল ১১.৩০ টার মধ্যে কোষাধ্যক্ষ দপ্তর, রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে রাখা টেন্ডার বাক্সে ফেলতে হবে (দুপুর ১২:০০ টায় টেন্ডার খোলা হবে)। ডাকযোগে দরপত্র পাঠানো যেতে পারে, তবে সেক্ষেত্রে অবশ্যই নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে কোষাধ্যক্ষ দপ্তরে পৌঁছাতে হবে। অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী সিডিউলের সংগে সরবরাহ করা হবে। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়াই দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত যে কোন সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের ক্ষমতা রাখে। এই বিজ্ঞপ্তি https://www.ru.ac.bd/ictcenter/notices/ লিংকে পাওয়া যাবে।

27.6.24
(প্রফেসর ড. মো. খাদেমুল ইসলাম মোল্যা)
পরিচালক, আইসিটি সেন্টার
রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

GD-1047

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

TENDER NOTICE

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar hereby announces the launch of the following tenders:

TENDER REFERENCE NUMBER	ITEM DESCRIPTION
ITB/HCR/CXB/2024/004	FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FRAME AGREEMENTS FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF BORAK AND MULI BAMBOO
ONLINE PRE-BID CONFERENCE	Date and time: 01 July 2024 at 11:00 hrs BST.

Interested and bona fide vendors are invited to participate in this Invitation To Bid (ITB) by accessing and downloading the tender documents at the following web link:
https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/237933

Bids to be submitted:
Bids should be submitted as per the guidance in section 2.6 of the ITB document via the URL below:
http://etenderbox.unhcr.org
Bid submission deadline: 14 July 2024 – 14:00 hrs BST. Bangladesh time.

Kindly note that no hard copy is acceptable. The offer will be acceptable who submit only in the above link.

TALTALI UPAZILA IN BARGUNA

Water hyacinth clogs canal

Locals suffer as boat service disrupted

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

Residents in Barguna's Taltali upazila are struggling to commute as boat services on Kachupatra Canal have remained halted since May 26, due to water hyacinth.

The 300-foot-wide, 50-kilometre-long canal used to connect Payra and Andharmanik rivers, while flowing through Amtali and Taltali, until it became a closed waterbody, with embankments built on both ends around 20 years back, said locals.

Due to lack of water flow, there is often an overgrowth of water hyacinths in the canal. During the dry season, locals remove hyacinths to allow movement of boats at Betmore Kheya-ghat in Badurgachha area of Sharikkhali union.

Locals said people from around 10 villages in the area, including more than 200 students, use the boat service to commute to neighbouring Chakamaia union.

"With boat service halted, locals now have to travel an extra 20-25km and spend Tk 100-150 more to reach Kalapara town," said Abdul Barek, a local.

"A permanent bridge would reduce our suffering," he added.

Mansura Akhtar, a fifth grader, said, "We have no school in our village, so we cross the canal using boats to attend Chakamaia Government Primary School. Now, we are struggling to attend classes on time."

Farooq Khan, chairman of Sharikkhali Union Parishad, said, "The canal is too wide for a bamboo bridge. So, boats were the only means to cross the canal."

Contacted, Sifat Anayar Tumpa, UNO of Taltali upazila, said the local UP chairman has been asked to take steps to remove water hyacinths from the canal to resume boat services. "Arrangements will be made regarding construction of a bridge after discussion with authorities later," she added.

AL's deposits with banks increase to Tk 100cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League has reported a substantial rise in its funds, now Tk 100 crore in the banks, according to the financial report for 2023.

An AL delegation, led by its treasurer AHN Ashiqur Rahman, yesterday submitted the report to Election Commission Secretary Shaiful Azim.

The ruling party's deposit was Tk 73.27 crore till January 1 last year and it stood at Tk 90.55 crore at the end of the year.

The treasurer said the party's income has increased over the last six months (from January to June 2024).

"Now our party funds have crossed Tk 100 crore. If the expenditure of other parties is Tk 10, our expenditure is Tk 2 because our activists pay out of their pockets," he told journalists after submitting the report at the EC office in the capital's Agargaon.

However, income and expenditure of the ruling party have increased over the last year compared to the previous year.

Last year, the AL's income surged to Tk 27.14 crore, a significant rise from the Tk 10.71 crore reported in 2022.

The main sources of the party's income, according to the report, were proceeds from nomination and primary membership forms. The other sources include membership subscription fees and income from assets.

Meanwhile, the party's expenditure in 2023 was Tk 9.87 crore. It was Tk 7.86 crore in 2022.

Century-old school at landslide risk

MINTU DESHWARA, *Moulvibazar*

The KB Ehia Government Primary School in Juri upazila of Moulvibazar is at risk of a landslide happening at any moment from a neighbouring hillock amid monsoon.

Mud and water are already sliding down the hillock, falling and accumulating on the roof of the school building.

Amid risk of further damage, academic activities at the school are in jeopardy.

According to school authorities, a hillock of around 30-40 feet tall is located just beside the one-storey school building on the east side. A lot of mud and soil has already collapsed on and around the building since heavy rains began earlier this month.

The school, established in 1921, was closed during that time due to Eid-ul-Azha and summer holidays. However, once the school reopens after July 2, its 306 students and eight teachers will be subject to the risk of a landslide happening at any time while attending classes.

Locals have expressed concern over the safety of the students.

"We were gripped by fear while attending classes before the vacation, when soil and mud started falling down the hillock beside the school. Many of my classmates stopped coming to school over fear of a landslide," said Raihan Ahmed, a fourth-grader.

Contacted, Ambia Begum, headteacher of the school, said the building on the east side is at most risk. It is already in a dilapidated state, as plasters are often falling while rainwater accumulates on the roof and leaks inside. Classes are held in one of its rooms, while the other is used as a teachers' room. In case of a landslide, the entire building is likely to collapse.

"Eid-ul-Azha and summer vacation started from June 13 and will end on July 2. We are worried because after school reopens, we would have to conduct academic activities amid the risk of landslides if there is heavy rainfall again. We informed the upazila primary education officer in this regard," she added.

Khandkar Abul Bashar, president of the school's managing committee, demanded construction of a strong wall behind the school building to prevent landslides from damaging it.

Contacted, Dilipmoy Dash Chowdhury, primary education officer in Juri upazila, said he is aware about the matter and has informed higher authorities.

Tk 33cr to address waterlogging, Tk 8cr to control mosquito

CCC announces Tk 1,981.52cr budget for 2024-25 fiscal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) yesterday proposed a budget of Tk 1,981.52 crore for fiscal 2024-25.

CCC Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury announced it at Theatre Institute Chattogram in the port city.

As was the goal of the last budget, the CCC has set a target to implement the proposed budget mostly from its internal sources.

For the current fiscal year, the CCC projects earnings of Tk 1,026.45 crore from internal sources, including holding tax, income from properties, etc.

It also expects to get about Tk 909 crore as a development grant and the rest of Tk 46.07 crore from other sources.

Of the proposed budget, Tk 1,050.50 crore has been allocated for the development activities of the city, Tk 328.42 crore for salaries and allowances,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Antivenom available at upazila hospitals

Says health minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Russell's viper bite is treatable and most patients can recover using existing antivenom available at every upazila level hospitals, said physicians at a programme yesterday.

Delayed admission after snakebite and developing acute kidney injury are the two main reasons behind deaths caused by Russell's viper, they said.

The remarks were made at a seminar at Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Convention Hall in the capital. Titled, "Russell's viper: Fear vs Fact", the event was organised by Bangladesh Society of Medicine.

Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen said antivenom is available in the country. "We can save patients if they are taken to hospitals as soon as possible."

Prof Md Titu Miah, president of BSM and director general of Directorate General of Medical

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Three friends get drenched in the rain on their way home from school. Their faces full of joy as the downpour provides an everlasting memory and at least some respite from the heat. The photo was taken in the Model Pharmacy intersection of Khulna city yesterday.

PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

বাংলাদেশ
বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন

বাংলাদেশ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন
University Grants Commission of Bangladesh
আগারগাঁও, শেরে বাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭
website: www.ugc.gov.bd

আইনজীবী তালিকাভুক্তিকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশনের বিভিন্ন মামলা পরিচালনার জন্য কয়েকজন অভিজ্ঞ আইনজীবী তালিকাভুক্ত করার নিমিত্তে নিম্নবর্ণিত যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন বিজ্ঞ আইনজীবীগণের নিকট থেকে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

১। আবেদনকারীগণের বাংলাদেশ সুপ্রীম কোর্টের হাইকোর্ট বিভাগে ন্যূনতম ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছর মামলা পরিচালনার অভিজ্ঞতাসহ ন্যূনতম ১০ (দশ) বছর মামলা পরিচালনার অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।

২। সুপ্রীম কোর্টের আপীল বিভাগে মামলা পরিচালনার অনুমতিপ্রাপ্ত এবং সরকারি/বেসরকারি/স্বায়ত্ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে তালিকাভুক্ত আবেদনকারীর ক্ষেত্রে উক্ত শর্ত শিথিলকরণসহ তাদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে।

৩। কমিশনে বর্তমানে যারা প্যানেল আইনজীবী হিসেবে তালিকাভুক্ত আছেন তারাও আবেদন করতে পারবেন।

আগ্রহী বিজ্ঞ আইজীবীগণকে আগামী ২০/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখের মধ্যে কমিশনের সচিব বরাবরে মোবাইল ও ইমেইল নম্বর উল্লেখপূর্বক সংক্ষিপ্ত জীবনবৃত্তান্ত ও এক পৃষ্ঠায় কম্পোজকৃত আবেদন করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্রের সাথে ০১ (এক) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি, আপীল বিভাগে মামলা পরিচালনার অনুমতিপত্র, হাইকোর্ট বিভাগে আইনজীবী হিসেবে তালিকাভুক্তির সনদ, সুপ্রীম কোর্ট বার এসোসিয়েশন কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত পরিচয়পত্র, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র এবং শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সকল সনদের সত্যায়িত কপি দাখিল করতে হবে।

মনোনীত তালিকাভুক্ত আইনজীবীগণকে কমিশনের বিদ্যমান শিডিউল অব ফিস অনুযায়ী সম্মানী প্রদান করা হবে। নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে কমিশনের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে বিবেচিত হবে। মনোনীত বিজ্ঞ আইজীবীগণের নামের তালিকা কমিশনের ওয়েবসাইটে (**www.ugc.gov.bd**) এবং কমিশনের নোটিশ বোর্ডে আগামী ০৫/০৮/২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখে প্রকাশ করা হবে।

২৭-০৬-২০২৪
ড. ফেরদৌস জামান
সচিব
বাংলাদেশ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন

GD-1048

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Office of the Director
National Institute of ENT
Tejgaon, Dhaka

Memo No: NIENT/Admin/Tender (Out Sourcing) /2024-2025/1000 Date: 27/06/2024

Invitation for Tender

KEY INFORMATION		
1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and Family welfare
2.	Agency	Department of Health Services
3.	Procuring Entity Name	Director, National Institute of ENT
4.	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
5.	Invitation for	Procurement of out Sourcing Manpower
6.	Invitation Ref No.	NIENT/Admin/Tender (Out Sourcing) /2024-2025/1000
7.	Date	27/06/2024
8.	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
9.	Budget and Source of Funds	GOB (Revenue)
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
10.	Organization Code	1270208
11.	Organization Name	National Institute of ENT Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208.
12.	Tender Publication Date	28/06/2024
13.	Tender Last Selling Date and Time	28/07/2024 during office hours
		Date Time
14.	Tender Closing Date and Time	29/07/2024 up to 11.00 AM
15.	Tender Opening Date and Time	29/07/2024 12.00 PM
16.	Name & Address of the office (s)	
	(a) Selling Tender Document	Office of the Director, National Institute of ENT, Tejgaon, Dhaka
	(b) Receiving Tender Document	Office of the Director National Institute of ENT Tejgaon, Dhaka & Office of the Deputy Police Commissioner (North). Tejgaon Division (North) Shamoly, Dhaka (west to shamoly shishu park)
	(c) Opening Tender Document	Office of the Director, National Institute of ENT, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208.
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
17.	Eligibility of Tenderer	The Tenderer shall have a minimum 3 years of specific experience in the supply of related services to the Govt./ semi govt./autonomous Institute/Hospital. Other requirement described in the Tender document
18.	Brief Description of Goods	Procurement of out Sourcing Manpower

19	Pkg. No	Identification of Pkg	Tender Security (Tk.) (refundable)	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	
	GR-01	Lot – 1: Out Sourcing Manpower – 52 Persons	3,40,000/-	1000/-	Deposit on Code No. **1-2711-0000-2366** by treasury challan (with CTR) in favors of **Director, National Institute of ENT, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208.**
		Lot – 2: Out Sourcing Manpower – 60 Persons	4,00,000/-		

PROCURING EBTITY DETAILS		
20.	Name of Official Inviting Tender	**Prof. Dr. Md. Zakaria Sarkar**
21.	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director, National Institute of ENT, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208.
22.	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Tejgaon, Industrial Area, Dhaka
23.	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel: Phone 8878155, Fax No: 8878150
24.	Authority is not bound to accept the lowest tender/rate. Authority may cancel the whole tender/part of the tender without assigning any reason.	
25.	Terms and conditions of the tender and other information will be available with the schedule.	

Note: If the date of selling, receiving & opening of tender is disturbed under any unavoidable circumstances, the next working day will be applicable for the same respectively.

27/6/24

(Prof. Dr. Md. Zakaria Sarkar)
Director
National Institute of ENT
Tejgaon, Dhaka.

GD-1045

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Exciting lineup of Bengali films on the horizon

ZAHID AKBAR

Directed by Raihan Rafi, Noor features Jannatul Ferdous Oishee opposite Arifin Shuvoo.

In marking the occasion of the recently celebrated Eid-ul-Azha, Shakib Khan's latest film ***Toofan*** has not only broken records but also redefined the look of success in the Bangladeshi film industry. Over the past few years, films starring Shakib Khan have consistently dominated the box office post-release. All things considered, local audiences have undoubtedly and eagerly been embracing this leading star's films.

Shakib's previous film ***Priyotoma*** set the precedent, delighting audiences with the top star of Dhallywood. Following suit, ***Toofan*** has shattered records, setting a new benchmark for post-release box office performances.

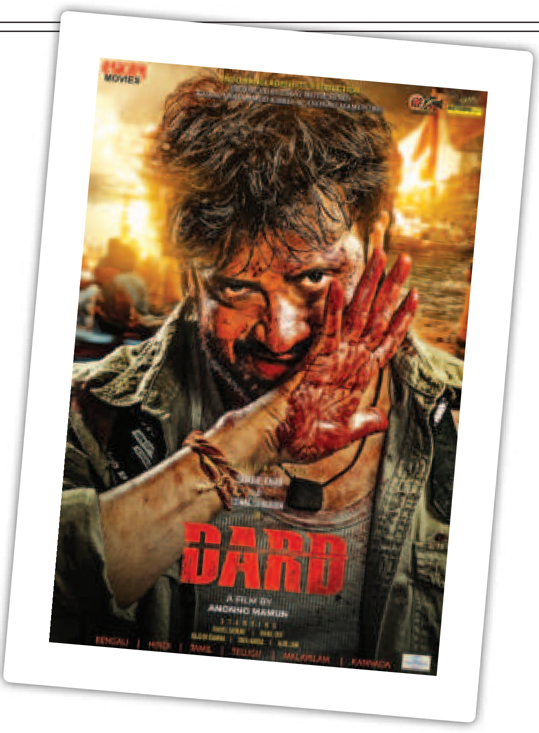
Over the past few years, the love for Bengali cinema among audiences has surged dramatically, with fans flocking to cinemas in groups. So much so that tickets for Bengali films are now a hot commodity in the festive grounds that are the cinemas. Then again, this celebration of cinema isn't just confined to Eid festivities but continues to build anticipation for upcoming Bengali film releases.

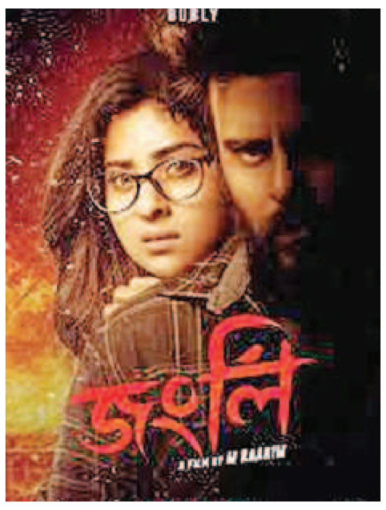
For instance, the upcoming Shakib Khan starrer film ***Dorod***, directed by Anonno Mamun, has accumulated significant audience approval with its teaser. In the film, the famed star plays a mentally unstable character blending romance and action. The teaser has captivated viewers with its diverse characters and dialogues.

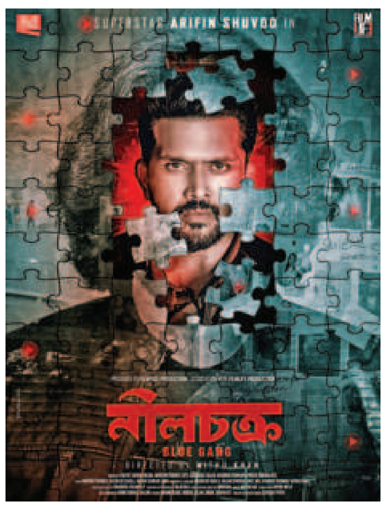
In a significant departure, Bollywood actress Sonal Chauhan plays opposite Shakib Khan in the film, adding international flair to the action-packed film that has audiences thrilled.

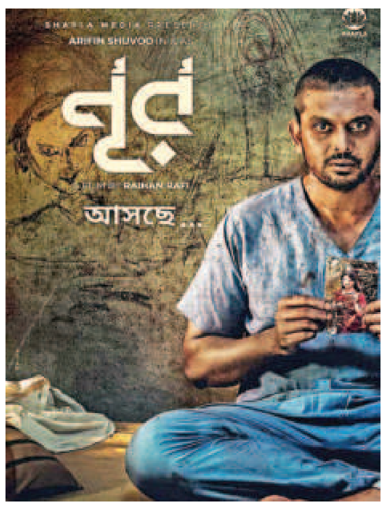
Anticipation is also mounting for "Neel Chokro" starring Arifin Shuvoo, fresh from his acclaimed role in the Shyam Benegal directorial biopic ***Mujib: The Making of a Nation***. Despite production delays, the film's first-look poster has already piqued audience interest.

Directed by Mithu Khan, ***Neel Chokro*** features Arifin Shuvoo alongside Mondera Chakroborty, promising a compelling narrative with a stellar ensemble cast, including Fazlur Rahman Babu, Deepanwita Martin, Shahed Ali, Tiger Robi, Monir Ahmed Shakeel, Priyontee Urbee, Masum Rezwan, and numerous others.


DARD
A FILM BY ANONNO MAMUN
BENGALI | HINDI | TAMIL | TELUGU | MALAYALAM | KANNADA


BUBLY
জংলি
A FILM BY M RAAHIM





In addition to the eagerly awaited ***Neel Chokro***, another film starring Arifin Shuvoo, titled ***Noor***, is set to be released soon. Although the film was completed some time ago, unforeseen delays have kept it from reaching audiences. However, Shuvoo has already begun promoting the film.

Recently, Arifin Shuvoo attended a special premiere show of Shakib Khan's ***Toofan***, wearing a T-shirt with ***Noor*** emblazoned on it. This subtle promotion suggests that the film's release is imminent.

Directed by Raihan Rafi, ***Noor*** features Jannatul Ferdous Oishee opposite Arifin Shuvoo.

To add to the list of upcoming film releases, ***Jongli*** starring Siam Ahmed and Shobnom Bubly, initially scheduled for this Eid release, has postponed its premiere due to various technical reasons. Despite this setback, anticipation remains high among audiences, who eagerly await its release in the coming months.

In ***Jongli***, Siam Ahmed stars in the titular role, alongside actresses Bubly and Prarthana Fardin Dighi. The intriguing cast also includes Dilara Zaman, Shahiduzzaman Selim, Arfan Mredha Shiblu, and Rashed Mamunur Rahman (Apu), among others. Post-production work is currently underway following the completion of the film shooting.

As the aforementioned upcoming films navigate their way to their respective release dates, viewers are buzzing with excitement, underscoring the growing appeal and diverse offerings of Bengali cinema. The fervour surrounding these releases signifies a potentially recurring vibrant period for the industry, buoyed by star power and compelling storytelling.

Timeless drama 'Aaj Robibar' director passes away

Monir Hossain Jibon, the director of the renowned BTV drama ***Aaj Robibar***, passed away at around 12:53am at the National Institute of Neurosciences Hospital in Agargaon, Dhaka, on Wednesday, June 26.

Apurba Rana, the deputy general secretary of the Directors' Association, confirmed his death to The Daily Star.

The director suffered a brain stroke at night and was hospitalised but tragically passed away despite the doctors' efforts.

His body was placed at the Shilpakala Academy premises for public homage yesterday at 10am, followed by his first Janaza at 11am.

Afterward, his body was taken to Monohardi Upazila, Narsingdi district, for the second Janaza after Asr prayers, followed by his burial in the family graveyard.

MITHILA'S upcoming film set for release in India

Actress Rafiath Rashid Mithila, celebrated in both Bengals, will star in the upcoming Indian film ***Aranyer Prachin Probad***, releasing on July 5.

Directed by debutant Dulal Dey, this highly anticipated film promises an innovative and distinct storyline.

Noting she has great faith in the audience's reception of this film, the actress said, "I constantly seek new stories and different roles to challenge myself. This film is no exception."

In addition to Mithila, Silajit Majumder, and Jeetu Kamal play significant roles in the film.

NEWS

BR investigating

FROM PAGE 2

She is now undergoing treatment at the One-Stop Crisis Centre of Chattogram Medical College Hospital under police custody.

The arrestees are Rasel, 27, Jamal, 27, Sharif, 29, and Rashed, 27.

When they were produced before a court, it sent them to jail after granting a police appeal for a 7-day remand for interrogation, said the OC.

Following the incident, BR suspended Abdur Rahim, a guard of the train, for negligence in duty and also suspended the agreement with SA Corporation.

Speaking to this newspaper, BR General Manager (Eastern Zone) Nazmul Islam, said, "We will take action against persons found responsible in the probe report. Besides, the police are taking action against the people accused in the rape case as per law."

Two AL leaders

FROM PAGE 12

A witness alleged that some supporters of Ashraf Ali, a former chairman of Ranihati union, carried out the attack.

Speaking on the matter, the Chapainawabganj SP said police were verifying whether Ashraf's men were involved in the attack. "Drives are on to arrest the attackers."

Ashraf Ali could not be contacted over the phone.

N'GANJ AL LEADER KILLED

Another AL leader died yesterday, hours after being hacked by his rivals in Narayanganj's Fatullah.

The deceased, Suruj Mia, 65, was the treasurer of Kashipur union AL.

Four others were also injured in the attack. They are his sons Jony Ahmed, 35, and Razu Ahmed, 40, and his associates, Rasel, 32, and Shakil, 30.

Nure Azam, officer-in-charge of Fatullah Model Police Station, said the victim's family said Suruj had a feud with a local sand trader.

His supporters attacked Suruj and his men with lethal weapons on a road at Alipara of Fatullah around 1:30pm, leaving five people injured, said the OC, quoting the family members.

The five were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where Suruj died of his wounds.

Conduct probe into wealth

FROM PAGE 12

"That's why I have submitted an appeal to the ACC chairman. If no initiative is taken in this regard, we will send a legal notice to the ACC. If it still does nothing, we will take the matter to the High Court," he added.

Asaduzzaman's father, Tofazzal Hossain Mia, was a farmer in Faridpur; he had pieces of land but no business, according to the plea.

But there is an allegation that Asaduzzaman has amassed huge wealth beyond his salary, allowances and other facilities that he got during his service, it said.

Reagan gave details of the assets acquried by Asaduzzaman, his wife, children and some relatives.

"People's trust and confidence in the state's law enforcement agencies have been undermined. So, the ACC can take proper steps on this issue," the plea said.

India march into final

FROM PAGE 12

Australia, and Kohli struggled initially to time the ball on a Providence Stadium pitch much slower and lower than the one in St Lucia, where Rohit flayed Australia's attack.

Kohli's miserable tournament with the bat continued on Thursday when, two balls after pulling Reece Topley for six, he was bowled by the left-arm quick.

England had another success when Pant was also out in single figures after chipping Sam Curran to midwicket.

India were 65-2 off eight overs when rain stopped play, with Rohit 37 not out and Suryakumar unbeaten on 13.

When play resumed, Rohit smashed spinner Liam Livingstone for a six and swept Curran for another remarkable six to complete a 36-ball fifty.

But with Rohit threatening to cut loose, Rashid bowled him with a googly that kept low.

Suryakumar then holed out off a slower ball from Jofra Archer into the safe hands of Jordan at long-on.

Jordan removed Pandya and Shivam Dube with successive deliveries but Patel denied him a second hat-trick in consecutive games.

England's chase never got going, with Axar striking thrice in the Powerplay.

England's plight then worsened as Kuldeep then claimed three more wickets in the middle-overs, sealing the match's fate. Pacer Jasprit Bumrah ended the proceedings by trapping Jofra Archer lbw as India reached the final of a T20 World Cup for the first time since 2016.

N Korea claims successful test to develop multiple warhead missile

AFP, *Seoul*

North Korea successfully tested its multiple-warhead missile capability, state media said yesterday, as dozens more trash-laden balloons sent by Pyongyang landed in the South.

Relations between the two Koreas are at one of their lowest points in years, with Pyongyang ramping up weapons testing while bombarding the South with balloons full of trash it says are in retaliation to similar missives sent northwards by activists in the South.

The balloons briefly forced Incheon Airport, Seoul's major hub, to close on Wednesday and, in response to the successive launches, South Korea has fully suspended a tension-reducing military treaty and re-started propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts and live-fire drills near the border.

North Korea claimed it had "successfully conducted the separation and guidance control test of individual mobile warheads", the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said yesterday.

The "separated mobile warheads were guided correctly to the three coordinate targets" during the test carried out on Wednesday, it said.

How shutki pizza

FROM PAGE 12

paid off spectacularly, earning it a spot on the New York Times Best Pizzas in the US list.

The story of shutki pizza is one of cultural exchange and culinary innovation, showcasing how traditional flavours can find new expressions and appreciation in diverse contexts. Unlike many nay-sayers, many expatriate Bangladeshis fell in love with this pizza that offers a comforting taste of home.

More than just a culinary invention, shutki pizza's success is an uplifting story for all aspiring chefs and foodies. It promotes accepting and experimenting with traditional ingredients, demonstrating that even the most conventional components of cuisine can earn attention and admiration when done so with originality and enthusiasm.

Shutki's global popularity creates great opportunities for other Bangladeshi products and recipes to be discovered and appreciated across the world. The tale of shutki pizza is a welcoming reminder that tradition and innovation can live peacefully and produce surprises fostering new cultural ties in a diverse world.

Arundhati Roy

FROM PAGE 12

"incomprehensible turn" the world is taking.

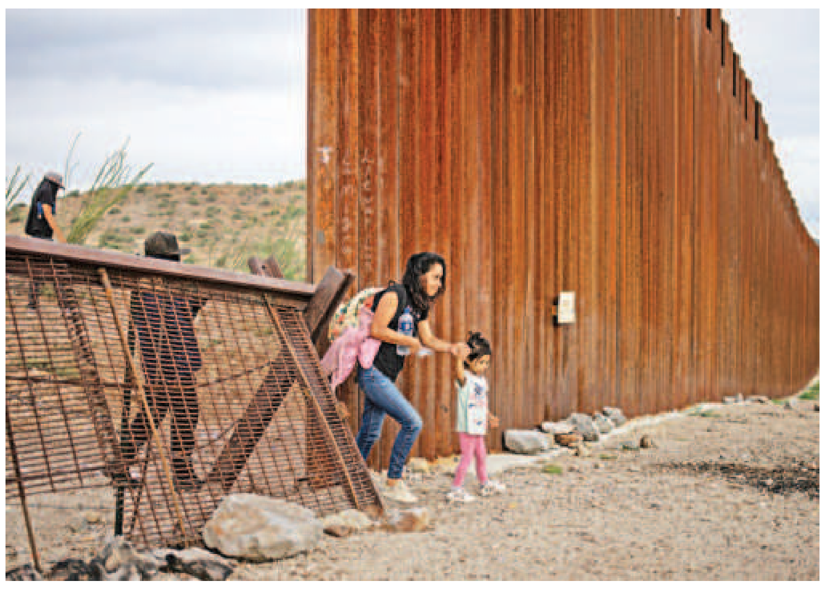
"I am delighted to accept the PEN Pinter prize. I wish Harold Pinter were with us today to write about the almost incomprehensible turn the world is taking. Since he isn't, some of us must do our utmost to try to fill his shoes," said the 62-year-old Roy.

The renowned author, who won the Booker Prize for her debut novel 'The God of Small Things', was chosen by this year's judges Chair of English PEN Ruth Borthwick; actor and activist Khalid Abdalla; and writer and musician Roger Robinson.

She will receive the award at a ceremony co-hosted by the British Library on October 10, where she will also deliver an address.

"Roy tells urgent stories of injustice with wit and beauty. While India remains an important focus, she is truly an internationalist thinker, and her powerful voice is not to be silenced," said Borthwick.

"Arundhati Roy is a luminous voice of freedom and justice whose words have come with fierce clarity and determination for almost 30 years now," said Abdalla.



Smugglers are seen to the left in Sonora, Mexico as they transport a mother and her daughter from El Salvador past the Border Wall into the United States in Ruby, Arizona, US on Wednesday. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Israel storms Gaza City

FROM PAGE 12

zone," Israeli army spokesperson Avichay Adraee posted on X.

Residents and Hamas media said the tanks had rolled in before the post and that people from the eastern suburb were running westward under fire as Israel had blocked the road south. There was no other immediate comment from the Israeli military.

More than eight months into Israel's offensive in Gaza, aid officials say the enclave remains at high risk of famine, with almost half a million people facing "catastrophic" food insecurity.

"We are being starved in Gaza City, and are being hunted by tanks and planes with no hope that this offensive is ever ending," Jamal said.

The death of another girl in Kamal Adwan Hospital late on Wednesday raised the number of children who have died of malnutrition and dehydration to at least 31, a Gaza health official said, adding that the offensive made recording such cases difficult.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 37,765 people have been killed during more than eight months of offensive. The toll includes at least 47 deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

In southern Gaza, drone footage on social media showed dozens of houses destroyed in parts of Rafah, with the Swedeya village on the western side of the city completely wiped out.

Forex reserves

FROM PAGE 1

the highest in nearly four months.

Last July, the BB began publishing the reserve figures as per the IMF's balance of payments and investment position manual to ensure that the country's dollar stockpile is reported accurately.

The gross reserves stood at $41.7 billion in August 2021. It has been falling since the second half of 2022 because of higher outflows after the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war sent global commodity prices skyrocketing.

Court appoints more officials

FROM PAGE 12

of land in Rupganj of Narayanganj, three kathas in Dhaka's Gulshan, two flats measuring 3,075 square feet in Badda, six flats in Adabor and 25 acres in Bandarban.

On June 6, the same court appointed administrators to look after some immovable properties of Benazir and his family members.

Bolivia coup attempt fails

Armed forces pulled back from presidential palace; general arrested

REUTERS, *La Paz*

Bolivian armed forces pulled back from the presidential palace in La Paz on Wednesday evening and a general was arrested after President Luis Arce slammed a "coup" attempt against the government and called for international support.

Earlier in the day, military units led by General Juan Jose Zuniga, recently stripped of his military command, had gathered in the central Plaza Murillo square, home to the presidential palace and Congress. A Reuters witness saw an armored vehicle ram a door of the presidential palace and soldiers rush in.

"Today the country is facing an attempted coup d'état," Arce said in comments from the presidential palace, with armed soldiers outside.

A few hours later, a Reuters witness saw soldiers withdraw from the square and police take control of the plaza.

IRAN ELECTION

Two candidates drop out of race

REUTERS, *Dubai*

Two hardline candidates dropped out of Iran's presidential election yesterday, a day ahead of the landmark vote, and called for unity among forces supporting the country's Islamic revolution, state media reported.

Iranian's tightly controlled election today follows Ebrahim Raisi's death in a helicopter crash last month, with the outcome expected to influence the succession to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the top decision-maker in the clerically-ruled state.

Tehran's mayor Alireza Zakani and head of the Martyrs' Foundation Amirhossein Ghazizadeh-Hashemi exited the race, state media said. They were expected to win just 1.7 percent and 2 percent of votes respectively according to a 22-23 June poll carried out by the Iran Students Polling Centre.

Their departure leaves four presidential candidates and Zakani urged the two most prominent hardline ones to join forces to prevent moderate Masoud Pezeshkian from winning.

Palestinian families flee the Tuffah neighbourhood in the east of Gaza City following an Israeli military operation yesterday. Heavy fighting, artillery shelling and helicopter fire were also reported around northern Gaza's Shujayia market. PHOTO: **AFP**

US health workers sound alarm on Gaza medical crisis

AFP, *Washington*

Patients in Gaza's few standing hospitals are dying in droves from infections resulting from a lack of protective gear and soap, even when they survive their horrific blast injuries.

And health workers are facing agonising decisions, like giving up on a seven-year-old boy with extensive burns because bandages are in short supply and he'd have probably died anyway.

These are just some of the horrors witnessed by American doctors and nurses returning from the besieged Palestinian territory, who are now on a mission to spread the word about what they saw and apply pressure on Israel to allow in more life-saving supplies.

"Whether or not a ceasefire happens, we have to get humanitarian aid. And we have to get it in sufficient volumes to meet the demands," Adam Hamawy, a former US army combat surgeon, tells AFP in an interview after a medical mission to Gaza's European Hospital last month.

"You could give all you want, you can donate," says the reconstructive plastic surgeon from New Jersey. "But if these borders don't open up to allow that aid to get in, then it's just useless."

Hamawy has volunteered in war-torn and natural disaster-hit countries for the past 30 years, from the siege of Sarajevo to the Haiti earthquake.

"But the level of civilian casualties that I experienced was beyond anything I'd seen before," says the 54-year-old, who helped save the life of Senator Tammy Duckworth when she lost both of her legs to a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) attack on the helicopter she was flying in Iraq.

"Most of our patients were children under the age of 14," he stressed. "This has nothing to do with your political views."

Hamawy and other medics told AFP they are convinced that for now their energy is better spent lobbying the halls of power to stop the offensive and require Israel to comply with international law by letting in more aid.

Israel denies allegations of international law violations during its invasion.

On a hot June afternoon in the capital Washington, Monica Johnston, a 44-year-old ICU nurse from Portland, Oregon said she conveyed specific lists of what was needed in meetings she had held with White House officials and lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

JULY 4 ELECTION IN UK

Sunak, Starmer clash in final TV debate

REUTERS, *London*

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Labour leader Keir Starmer went head-to-head on Wednesday night in their last debate before an election next week, with both launching highly personal attacks over their parties' credibility.

With Sunak's Conservatives trailing Labour by around 20 points in the polls, the prime minister went on the attack, accusing Starmer of not being straight with the country on migration, tax and women's rights, and urging voters not to "surrender" to the Labour Party.

Starmer responded that Sunak was too rich to understand the concerns of most ordinary Britons. A snap YouGov poll said the debate had been a tie, with both on 50 percent.

On immigration, one of the top concerns for British voters, Sunak rejected Starmer's argument that he would seek to return migrants to their home countries, saying many had arrived in Britain from Iran, Syria and Afghanistan.

Polls indicate that Starmer is on course to win the election with a large majority.

Biden, Trump to lock horns in first presidential debate

AFP, *Atlanta*

Joe Biden and Donald Trump were due to meet for a historic US presidential debate last night, with the stage set for what could be an inflection point in the 2024 race as millions of voters tune in to the clash of rivals.

The showdown -- between the oldest-ever incumbent and a convicted felon -- fires the starting gun on what promises to be a bruising summer of campaigning in a deeply polarized and tense United States still convulsed over the chaos and violence that accompanied the 2020 election.

With only two debates this election cycle, yesterday's high-stakes event takes on heightened significance, and both candidates have stepped up their personal attacks, with national polls showing the pair neck and neck.

"I think I have been preparing for it for my whole life... We'll do very well," Trump told right-wing network Newsmax in an interview on his debate preparation.

The president will be desperate to avoid any major gaffes.

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AMAHA

People react to tear gas during a demonstration over police killings of people protesting against Kenya's proposed finance bill 2024-2025, in Nairobi, Kenya yesterday. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Sudan faces famine risk in 14 areas

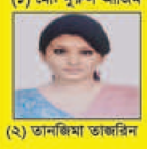
Says monitor

REUTERS, *Cairo*

There is a realistic chance of famine in 14 areas across Sudan if the conflict that began in April last year between military factions escalates further, a global hunger monitor said yesterday.

The areas include parts of the capital Khartoum, the regions of Darfur and Kordofan and El Gezira state, according to an update from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC).

As previously reported by Reuters, some 755,000 people in Sudan face "catastrophe", the most severe level of extreme hunger. In total, 8.5 million people - or 18 percent of the population - face food shortages that could result in acute malnutrition and death, according to the update.



বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল
২০৩, শহীদ সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম সরণী
পুরাতন ৮৬ বিজয়নগর, ঢাকা-১০০০।

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

(১) মো: নুরুল আজিম
(২) তানজিমা তাজরিন

সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাইতেছে যে, (১) কর্ণেল ডা: (অধ্যাপক) মো: নুরুল আজিম (অবসরপ্রাপ্ত), বাড়ী নং:১৭০, রোড নং:০৬, ব্লক: এ, বসুন্ধরা আ/এ, ঢাকা, (আকবর হেলথ কেয়ার লি:, বাড়ী নং:৫০, রোড নং: ২/এ, ব্লক: ডি, বসুন্ধরা আ/এ, ঢাকা) এর বিরুদ্ধে অভিযোগকারী আহমেদ রশিদ ও শর্মিষ্ঠা আহমেদ, ফ্ল্যাট:৬/এ, বাড়ী নং:৬৯৮, রোড নং:১০/এ, মিরপুর ডিওএইচএস, মিরপুর, ঢাকা তাহাদের একমাত্র মেয়ে Sreoshee Ahmed Oishee (Age-17) এর ভুল চিকিৎসা ও অবহেলায় মৃত্যুজনিত কারন উল্লেখ করে ১১/০৩/২০২১ইং তারিখে অত্র কাউন্সিলে অভিযোগ দাখিল করেন। (১) উল্লেখিত অভিযোগের প্রেক্ষিতে কাউন্সিল অভিযোগকারী এবং চিকিৎসক উভয়ের সাক্ষাৎকার গ্রহন করে। পরবর্তীতে কাউন্সিল কর্তৃক তদন্ত কমিটি গঠন পূর্বক তদন্তে প্রমানিত হয় যে, তিনি একজন অভিজ্ঞ ও সিনিয়র বিশেষজ্ঞ হিসেবে তাহার পেশাগত দায়িত্ব পালনের ক্ষেত্রে অবহেলা করেছেন। মাত্রাতিরিক্ত ঔষধ প্রয়োগের ফলে রোগীর মৃত্যু হয়।

(২) ডা: তানজিমা তাজরিন, বাড়ী নং:৬০, রোড নং:০৮, ব্লক:সি, নিকেতন, গুলশান: ০১, ঢাকা, মূলত কর্নেল ডা: (অধ্যাপক) মো: নুরুল আজিম (অবসরপ্রাপ্ত) এর তত্ত্বাবধানে counselling এর কাজ করতেন। Counselling এর কাজে অদক্ষতা, অপেশাদারী আচরন ও পেশাগত স্বীকৃত কাঠামো মেনে চলার অসামর্থ্যতা প্রতীয়মান হয়েছে। এছাড়াও ঔষুধের পার্শ্ব প্রতিক্রিয়া ও তার ব্যবস্থাপনা বিষয়ক জ্ঞানেও তার উল্লেখযোগ্য ঘাটতি প্রমানিত হয়েছে।

এমতাবস্থায় বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল আইন, ২০১০(৬১ নং আইন) এর ২৩(১) ধারায় প্রদত্ত ক্ষমতাবলে বিএমএন্ডডিসি হইতে কর্ণেল ডা: (অধ্যাপক) মো: নুরুল আজিম (অবসরপ্রাপ্ত) এর রেজিস্ট্রেশন (A-5319 Date of Registration:03.05.1976) ৫ (পাঁচ) বৎসরের জন্য এবং ডা: তানজিমা তাজরিন এর রেজিস্ট্রেশন (A-59879 Date of Registration:26.11.2012) ১ (এক) বৎসরের জন্য স্থগিত করা হইল যাহা ২৮/০৬/২০২৪ইং তারিখ হইতে কার্যকর হইবে। উল্লেখিত সময়ে বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল আইন, ২০১০ (৬১ নং আইন) এর ধারা ২২(১) অনুযায়ী তাহাদের রেজিস্ট্রেশন স্থগিতকালীন সময়ে তাহারা চিকিৎসক হিসাবে কোথাও কোন প্রকার চিকিৎসা সেবা প্রদান করিতে পারিবেন না। এমনকি উক্ত সময়ে তাহারা নিজেকে চিকিৎসক হিসাবে পরিচয় দিতে পারিবেন না।

Hossain 27.06.24
ডা: মো: লিয়াকত হোসেন
রেজিস্ট্রার (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)
বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল

EU leaders sign security deal with Ukraine

REUTERS, *Brussels*

European Union leaders signed a security agreement with Ukraine yesterday, kicking off a two-day summit at which they will also set a strategic course for the EU for the next five years and appoint the people who will run the EU's key institutions.

Leaders of the 27 EU countries, meeting formally for the first time since European elections on June 6-9, gave a warm welcome to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who made a rare personal appearance in Brussels for the signing ceremony.

Draft conclusions of the summit showed the leaders will reiterate their pledge to support Ukraine as long as it takes, stressing that "Russia must not prevail" and that Ukraine must get back the land annexed by Moscow.

They will also ask EU institutions to work out the details of a G7 deal to provide 50 billion euros in loans for Ukraine.

Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC)
Ministry of Textiles and Jute

Re-Invitation for Expression of Interest (EoI)
(International)

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH		
1	Ministry	Ministry of Textiles & Jute
2	Agency	Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC)
3	Inviting Entity Name	Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC)
4	Invitation for	Award of Lease for operation of the state-owned Textile Mill
5	Invitation Ref. No	24.03.0000.103.18(5).110.23-178
6	Date	27/06/2024
KEY INFORMATION		
7	Selection Process	Award of Lease to the highest scoring bidder ranked on the basis of combined score of technical and financial proposals weighted equally among responsive bidders.
INFORMATION FOR EoI		
8	Last date & Time of EoI Submission	Date: 22/07/2024 Time: 12.00 PM (BST)
9	EoI Submission Place	Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) Chairman Section, BTMC Bhaban, 7-9, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.
10	Opening Date and Time of EoI	Date: 23/07/2024, Time: 11 AM (BST)
11	Place of Opening	Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) Conference Room, BTMC Bhaban, 7-9, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.
12	Other details	Submission of EoI should be made in closed format bearing the name and address of the individual/firm, EoI no. & date and be addressed to the EoI issuing authority in 07 (seven) copies in English including 01(one) "ORIGINAL" in separate packet and in the form of book binding. Both the "ORIGINAL" and "COPIES" shall have to be covered within a single packet. The bidder shall have to mention the page number serially in every page of submitted EoI document.
INFORMATION FOR BIDDER		
13	Name of the Mills to be leased out	Kurigram Textile Mills Ltd. Najira, Kurigram.
14	Term of Award (of lease)	Up to 30 Years (further extendable)
15	ToR including Schedules (of lease) for remaining Textile Mills	Available on the following websites- (i) www.btmc.gov.bd (ii) www.motj.gov.bd (iii) www.bida.gov.bd
INVITING ENTITY DETAILS		
16	Name of Official Inviting EoI	Brigadier General Md. Ziaul Hoque, ndc,afwc,psc
17	Designation of Official Inviting EoI	Chairman
18	Address of Official Inviting EoI	Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) Chairman Section, BTMC Bhaban, 7-9, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.

19	Contact details of Official Inviting EoI	Telephone / Mobile Number	E-mail
		+88-02-55014347	btmcho@gmail.com
20	Focal Persons to be contacted (if necessary)	Alamgir Hossain Chief Operating Officer (Deputy Secretary) +88-02-55014258	hittam24@yahoo.com
OTHER INFORMATION			
21	Any interested party may visit the enlisted Kurigram Textile Mills Ltd. Najira, Kurigram for lease purpose.		
22	Only short-listed bidders shall be invited for Final Proposal (FP).		
23	The Inviting Authority retains the right to reject any or all EoI without assigning any reason.		

Date: 27/06/2024

Brigadier General Md. Ziaul Hoque
Chairman
Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Takeaways from PM's India visit

Lack of progress on Teesta water-sharing issue is frustrating

It is little wonder that any positive outcome from the PM's recent visit to India has been overshadowed by a palpable frustration over the lack of progress on the longstanding Teesta water-sharing issue. Overall, as a former ambassador has put it, the two-day visit was "long on visions but short on details." And one glaring shortage or rather omission in the joint statement issued afterwards was that of the Teesta water-sharing agreement, which has remained pending for 13 years despite assurances from India's highest level. The issue didn't even appear to feature in talks. Instead, we have learnt of India's interest in a megaproject to manage and restore Teesta River inside Bangladesh, where China's competing interest would more likely complicate and delay things.

But before it becomes another geostrategic battleground for the regional superpowers, we must ask ourselves: what does the project mean for the future of the Teesta water-sharing agenda? Reportedly, it will involve dredging the river, building embankments, setting up townships and industries, irrigation, etc. Clearly, it has its benefits, if planned and executed properly, but can focusing on only one part of a transboundary river resolve the water crisis facing downstream Bangladesh, with India unilaterally controlling its flow? Will India's potential involvement in the project overshadow the water-sharing agenda? Although the PM has said there is no link between the two, concerns remain. It is, therefore, vital that while the government scrutinises all aspects related to the project, including the viability of massive investments, it also keeps demanding results from India on the water-sharing issue.

Bilateral talks during the visit also involved various other issues, with the two countries signing and renewing some agreements. One of the issues that drew significant speculations is rail connectivity, which the PM too addressed in her media briefing. The question that's being raised is, how much of it will really benefit Bangladesh? While greater regional connectivity via rail and road is important and should ideally benefit both Bangladesh and India in terms of trade and commerce, experts say the rail transit as it is being conceptualised will mostly benefit India. There seems to be a perception that whatever connectivity projects have been implemented over the last few years have benefitted India more than they did Bangladesh, allowing the former greater and more strategic passage. Examples of Europe's rail connectivity clearly do not apply if the interests of all parties are not considered equally. The government, therefore, should approach the issue with greater caution with a realistic assessment of the costs and benefits of such projects.

Another issue that caught our attention is the agreement to initiate discussions on the renewal of the Ganges Water Agreement, which will expire in 2026. This is a positive development, and it is vital that the experience of the past years is reflected in the renewal process. The Joint Rivers Commission should continue to work on the unresolved issues surrounding our common rivers, and Bangladesh must be able to protect its best interests in this and any future water-sharing treaty. We value our friendship with India, and we believe our mutual respect should result in mutual benefits in any bilateral issue. This is how the foundation of longstanding relations is nurtured.

We must be judicious about foreign debts

External debt servicing cost is becoming a growing concern

It is concerning that Bangladesh's interest payments on external borrowing are projected to increase by 65 percent within three years. This is due to rising global interest rates and an expanded foreign loan portfolio. It goes without saying that the rise in foreign debt costs will put further pressure on our dwindling foreign currency reserves. As such, it is crucial for the government to carefully analyse our debt situation before taking on any future foreign loans.

According to a finance ministry report, Bangladesh's debt interest payments alone will rise to $2.21 billion by 2027 with the taka losing 35 percent of its value against the dollar over the last two years. The principal amount is also estimated to rise by 28 percent to $3.17 billion in fiscal 2026-27, compared to the current fiscal year. Foreign loan repayments—including interest and principal amount—are projected to reach $3.82 billion in the current fiscal year. By 2027, the amount owed is expected to rise to $5.38 billion. And the proportion of external interest payments in the budget is also expected to rise from 0.9 percent in FY22 to 2.6 percent in FY27.

Two major factors are also contributing to the increase in interest payments for foreign loans. The first is that the reference rates—an interest rate benchmark used to set other interest rates—in advanced countries are expected to stay high, and the second is that Bangladesh's graduation from the category of LDCs will gradually narrow the window for getting concessional loans from external sources. The latter is something we have known for a while; therefore, the government should be in the process of preparing plans to be able to manoeuvre without hiccups in light of that fact—and if it hasn't started already, it should definitely do so now.

As the finance ministry report itself has admitted, managing these debt service obligations is essential for ensuring financial stability and preventing liquidity crisis. Since Bangladesh is not out of its forex crisis yet, this becomes even more important. Hence, not only should the government be judicious when it comes to taking loans, it should also be prudent in its use of foreign funds. Which means the government has to do a better job of choosing projects that are of high social and economic importance, and must refrain from taking on unnecessary projects that will put further strain on our external debt situation, without giving any major benefits in return.

From people to a 'bubble'

Awami League's 75-year journey

THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

The history of Awami League (AL)—which started off as the Awami Muslim League (AML)—at 75 can be encapsulated under three headings: AL at birth; AL under Bangabandhu's leadership; and AL with Sheikh Hasina at the helm. From the time of its birth in 1949 to our liberation in 1971, AL can be credited with being either the author of or the main mover and participant in all democratic and cultural movements working tirelessly to strengthen the demand for the rights of the Bangalees in East Pakistan. No other party can claim to have singularly represented all our democratic aspirations as the Awami League during our days under Pakistan.

In the first phase, the two most important events that brought the AML to the forefront was first, the Language Movement, which united the people of East Pakistan and crystallised the efforts of AML to become the true voice of the people, and second, the 1954 provincial election under the banner of United Front (Jukta Front), in which AML was by far the biggest and most active partner, getting 143 seats as the party and 228 seats as part of the Jukta Front out of a total of 309 seats. These events marked AML's coming of age.

Awami League members in the cabinet of AK Fazlul Huq in East Bengal in 1954.

FILE PHOTO: **WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

> **The 1954 election proved that there was a far deeper significance of AML's birth than many people realised then and even now. It has not been studied in depth, and its significance has not been fully evaluated in subsequent research and books that have been published since.**

The 1954 election proved that there was a far deeper significance of AML's birth than many people realised then and even now. It has not been studied in depth, and its significance has not been fully evaluated in subsequent research and books that have been published since. It was the beginning of the disillusionment with the ideology of Pakistan; it was the start of questioning as to whether religion could be the only foundation of a newly formed state; it presented evidence that people lost confidence in the founding party of Pakistan, the Muslim League, which never recovered later, except under the military tutelage.

Almost all the leaders who formed the new party were integral parts of the Pakistan movement, and some of them, like Shaheed Suhrawardy and Maulana Bhashani, were its front-ranking leaders. So, why after succeeding to carve out Pakistan, would these leaders and thousands of their followers move away from the party—the Muslim League—that founded the new country?

The answer is very simple. With Pakistan's birth, Muslim League suddenly revealed itself to be devoted to serve the interest of the feudal landed gentry from West Pakistan, especially that of Punjab. The so-called Pakistani leadership was not concerned with its multiple and varied linguistic and cultural heritage. Bangalees, who constituted the majority of the new country's population, found their economic rights and cultural heritage ignored and their language, Bangla, denied the status of being a state language. In fact, the death of the new country was signalled by the very man who founded it, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, when he declared in Dhaka, "Let there be no doubt that Urdu and Urdu shall be the only national language of Pakistan." That was the beginning of the end of Pakistan founded in 1947.

It was under Bangabandhu's stewardship that Awami League truly expanded its appeal to the masses and captured the imagination of the Bangalees. His was a dazzling phase—truly energising, deeply penetrating and fully capturing the attention, support and devotion of millions of ordinary people. His Six-Point Programme galvanised the people as never before and hardened their resolve to fight for their economic, cultural and political rights. Those of us, as student activists, who were witness to his meteoric rise, who had the privilege to hear his mesmerising speeches and marvelled at his courage in facing both the Pakistani elite and its formidable armed forces, and saw firsthand how he unified the Bangalees with his unmatched charisma, felt in our hearts that finally we had a leader who could realise the dream of our freedom and independence.

The victory in the 1970 general election, under Bangabandhu's leadership, was Awami League's biggest, most sweeping and politically critical achievement in that period. In many ways, it was the precursor to our Liberation War. That electoral victory gave AL the legal, moral and political right to speak on behalf of the people of East Pakistan, and declare independence and start the armed struggle when genocide was imposed on our unarmed people. AL's leadership, the role of the Mujibnagar government and especially that of war-time PM Tajuddin Ahmad were remarkable in every way. Though physically absent, Bangabandhu was present in every *mukti joddha* camp, and in the hearts and minds of everyone who fought for our independence.

Bangabandhu's brutal killing, along with all members of his immediate family, save the two daughters—our current PM and her sister—was the most tragic event that could have befallen us, and from which we are yet to fully recover.

Of Awami League's 75 years of existence, the last 43 have been under Sheikh Hasina's leadership. Since her return from exile in India in 1981 till date, she rebuilt AL after it suffered from deep existential crises following the brutal murder of Bangabandhu. She has not only successfully re-organised and re-energised the party, but also brought it to power in 1996, after 21 years of being in the opposition. She returned to power in 2008 and has continued till date, well on her way to completing an unbroken spell of 20 years of heading our government.

During her last 15 years of unbroken rule, she brought about remarkable advancement in the country's economic field. Her spectacular success in infrastructure development and power generation, with the capacity cost aspect being seriously questioned, is highly laudable. Bangladesh's praiseworthy rise up the development ladder can definitely be attributed to Sheikh Hasina's able and determined running of the state's affairs.

However, her grand success came with some very damaging costs. As is evidenced in history, a party in opposition and the same party in power, especially when the stay is long, presents two radically different pictures. The Awami League that began as the voice of the people has now ended up being that of an individual. The more the party stayed in power, the more its operations became centralised. From the smallest to the most significant policy decisions, they are no longer the result of debates within its ranks, but personnel choices of the leadership. From local leaders to the central, from nominations to every single post in all the levels of the elected office, the leader's wish is everybody's command.

Today, it is one of the most centralised parties anywhere in the world with the inevitable consequence of rising authoritarian tendencies in all levels of the leadership structure. The micromanagement of the party has had the same consequences as it always does: of there being no delegation of authority, no accountability at any level, and no sense of ownership of what the party does, except to carry out orders from the top.

Elections, a crucial measure of judging how a political party is faring in the public eye, is no longer valid in Bangladesh. It has lost its fundamental ability to elect genuine representatives of the people, due to both the ruling party's grip on all state institutions that guarantee free polls and the opposition's unthinking boycott of elections. Making voters insignificant has been a hallmark of the last three general elections.

As AL celebrates 75 years of its existence, there are many reasons for it to be proud of. It has many achievements that others can be envious about. Compared to many political parties in different parts of the world, AL's record can be considered exceptional.

But there are an equal number of reasons for it to be deeply concerned. Money and muscle power have replaced people's power in the day-to-day operation of this party that people once unquestioningly obeyed and unreservedly loved. Except for a few at the top, party positions today are up for grabs by the rich and the corrupt. The victory of a large number of AL's own "disobeying" candidates in the last election stands as proof as to how corrupt the original selection process was.

The party today is its own judge and jury. It only speaks to the mirror because it cannot tolerate the retort that would come if it spoke to the people. It listens only to its own music as other tunes are unpalatable. It is intoxicated by its own rhetoric and mesmerised by only those things that it wishes to see. It is a typical example of a political party living in its own bubble. And since it has monopoly control on all the levers of power, the bubble, as fragile as it is, can also be dangerous. This is so because the reality presented by the bubble can form the basis of decisions that can fatally harm us all. The handling of the issue of corruption, money laundering, misuse of power, and especially that of defaulted loans and the treatment meted out to wilful defaulters cannot be but the results of living in a bubble.

We hope we have given enough food for thought to the Awami League on its 75th anniversary.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Awami League members bring out a procession on June 21, 2024, on the occasion of the party's 75th anniversary.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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advertisement@thedailystar.net
GPO Box: 3257

Subscription:
01711623906

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When Dhaka lacks adequate open space to begin with, encroachment of the existing parks, like Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Park in Gulshan 2—that, too, with the city corporation's permission—proves that people's well-being isn't a priority for the city authorities.

FILE PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

Our lack of open spaces reinforces class disparity

Abir Hossain
is a sub-editor at Campus, Rising Stars, and Star Youth.

ABIR HOSSAIN

Recently, I came across a news report announcing that one of the country's biggest real estate companies had undertaken a project to build a 500-foot megastructure in Dhaka, aiming to make it a landmark in the capital. I winced at first glance. The prospect of the project itself felt morally depraved. It seemed disconnected and dystopian, and it is. Not only does Dhaka not need a 500-foot skyscraper, but even in the context of its urban fabric, it doesn't fit in. But progress as a concept appears to be measured exclusively by murky indicators such as advances in commerce and the reaping of wealth. Moreover, the skyscraper holds the potential to attract more businesses, introduce more opportunities to invest in even bigger profit-maximising projects, and create spaces for the country's most elite to leisure in. Is that what we really need, though? And more importantly, how can such a project, which in all likelihood does not embody any aspect of our culture, become a potential landmark in the capital?

While the developers of the project have already begun selling commercial space within the vicinity, it's not like the skyscraper will mark the beginning of the end for commercial projects. Other high-rises will continue to be propped up, which will further limit the opportunity to build open spaces in the city. It is quite clear which group of people these projects will benefit, but what will be disregarded are its effects and the people who will bear the brunt of said effects. It will only aggravate the claustrophobic chaos of the capital that we live in—quite literally leaving us with no place to go.

With movement restrained, people, especially the younger demographic, are forced to resort to online spaces in search of a community. There is nothing inherently wrong with online communities, but it is a problem if that is the only means they have to meet new people. After all, online forums are unified by a common interest, which entails that their appeal tends to be reserved for certain demographics. Demographics tend to share similar and overlapping opinions and when the same views are regurgitated, it creates an echo chamber, affirming their biases. People are deprived of the opportunity to expose themselves to outlooks and ideas different from their own. The exchange of thoughts is leashed, if not completely contained, and groups of people continue to live in their own bubbles.

Without open space, these barriers cannot even be realised, let alone diminished. And the public spaces that we do have are either neglected or exclusive to upper-class neighbourhoods. Dhanmondi Lake, for instance, while housing visitors from adjacent residential areas, is grossly neglected. The smell in and around the area is unsavoury, to say the least. Additionally, it is situated in one of the most expensive neighbourhoods in the capital. While it is open to everyone, those who live around it are able to enjoy its benefits to a greater degree. The same may be claimed for Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed Park located in Gulshan—yet another area for the upper class.

The public spaces that we do have are either neglected or exclusive to upper-class neighbourhoods. Dhanmondi Lake, for instance, while housing visitors from adjacent residential areas, is grossly neglected. The smell in and around the area is unsavoury, to say the least. Additionally, it is situated in one of the most expensive neighbourhoods in the capital. While it is open to everyone, those who live around it are able to enjoy its benefits to a greater degree.

The silver lining is that these places exist, but it does beg the question of whether open spaces are a luxury reserved only for the wealthy. If that is the case, which it might as well be, we should be asking whether these spaces are open to begin with. Is it any different to the cafes and restaurants that are open only to paying customers? Spaces which can only be accessed if one has the means to consume the commodities they have to offer? The distinction between a cafe and a park is that you need social capital to access all the benefits of the latter. And being open to only a select few is something that should frighten us all. In an essay titled "The Political Economy of Public Space," David Harvey talks about how urban renewal projects are developed with the aim of separating people who are in different socioeconomic brackets. These projects enforce a sense of order where the city is geared towards serving the upper class.

If people, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds, are not able to congregate in a space without being forced to spend money, it truly is dystopian. Open spaces aren't just essential for one's physical and mental well-being; it quite literally is a place for people to socialise. Without open spaces, we risk being more isolated, stifling the flow of ideas, and maintaining the very same order that has put us in this position.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh once said they had taken initiatives to build playgrounds in every ward. He also acknowledged that doing so is a challenge due to a lack of space. It is admirable that change is happening, but it is a shame that the authorities themselves are having trouble with building open spaces for the reason that they attributed it to. Commercial projects never seem to face similar issues. As it stands, Dhaka already has an abundance of them—a lot more than it needs—most of which are poorly built to cut costs and have endangered lives.

Open space is antithetical to these projects. It allows us to slow down, unwind, and gather. Most importantly, it reinforces the spirit of community, and being a part of a group means caring for the needs and wants of each other. Something that appears to be in short supply from our elected representatives. In the pursuit of placing cosmetic global appeal within Dhaka, the authorities and corporations have forgone what we need locally. That needs to change. I don't know if it will. I am not particularly hopeful, but the welfare of the people needs to be prioritised over the greed of corporations and industries. If there is any tangible embodiment that can enable such a change to be realised, public spaces are it.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

Assange is free, but are we?

Slavoj Žižek,
professor of philosophy at the European Graduate School, is international director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities at the University of London.

SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

I fought for years with and for Julian Assange. But upon hearing that he has regained his freedom, my first thought was that he is returning to a world that looks—and is—much worse than the one he left behind. Pandemics, wars, and widespread ecological breakdown force us to ask the big question: in what sense are we who breathe the fresh air outside prisons still free?

Even our fictional accounts are getting worse. The new children's movie Inside Out 2 follows a 13-year-old Riley at the start of puberty. Her personified emotions—Joy, Sadness, Fear, Anger, Disgust—have created a new section in her mind called the "Sense of Self." Then, four new emotions—Anxiety, Envy, Embarrassment, Ennui—arrive, and conflict ensues. Joy thinks Riley should focus on having fun at camp, while Anxiety wants Riley to win a spot on the team and make new friends. In the end, the first and second generations of emotions learn to work together to protect Riley's ever-changing Sense of Self, leaving viewers with an utterly fraudulent depiction of the human psyche.

In the real world, these internal psychic tensions often escalate to the point of madness. A much better movie would have portrayed the emotions of a Palestinian boy in the ruins of Gaza, not a girl from a wealthy Los Angeles suburb. Rather than working together to form a stable self, his conflicting emotions would push him towards psychic breakdown and suicidal acts of violence. Recall GK Chesterton's wonderful description:

"A soldier surrounded by enemies, if he is to cut his way out, needs to combine a strong desire for living with a strange carelessness about dying. He must not merely cling to life, for then he will be a coward, and will escape. He must not merely wait for death, for then he will be a suicide, and will not escape. He must seek his life in a spirit of furious indifference to it; he must desire life like water and yet drink death like wine."

Oleh Sentsov's recent film, Real, renders this combination of opposites perfectly. After spending several years as a political prisoner in Russia, Sentsov went to fight for the Ukrainian army. The film consists of 90 minutes of GoPro footage taken when he didn't realise his camera was on. Presented unedited, it depicts the strange mix of terror and boredom that defines life on the front line.

Such dualities run through the entire film. The banal brutality of the real is punctuated by magical moments of what might best be described as meaningless meaning. Sentsov recalls a moment from just before the footage in Real begins, "There was a soldier with the call sign Johnny, a veteran of the Afghan war. He was going there to evacuate the wounded, but he was hit, and he managed to make one last radio transmission, in which he said, 'This is Johnny. I'm dead.'" It is a moment of authentic metaphysical absurdity.

Many reviewers believe Real shows war as it truly is. If that was Sentsov's message, his film would be yet another pacifist paean to the meaningless absurdity of war. But though Sentsov recognises the brutal meaninglessness of the situation, he ultimately believes that the fight for a just cause must go on. Having stripped away all the romanticism of battlefield heroism, Real shows what true courage means: to accept the misery of a military struggle, and not obfuscate it with pathetic fantasies.

This is the message we need right now. In the case of Ukraine, pacifism has been used to excuse Russia's military aggression. The message from those who oppose Western support for Ukraine is, "You must not resist the occupier, because then you will become the same as him." In the Holy Land, the message is similar, but the mainstream media's reporting of events is very different. There is a consistent effort to shape and manipulate our perception of what is going on, so as to limit the emotional impact. While Israelis are killed in a "massacre," Palestinians are merely "found dead." These forms of "soft" censorship pervade public discourse.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange gestures at supporters after arriving at Canberra airport in Canberra, Australia on June 26, 2024.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Did you know that a large group of Israeli Jewish intellectuals recently called on all EU member states, the United Kingdom, and others to recognise the state of Palestine? This courageous act generated scarcely any coverage in Western media. Major events that might disturb the Western public's sensibilities either go unmentioned or are reported only with a small note at the bottom of the page.

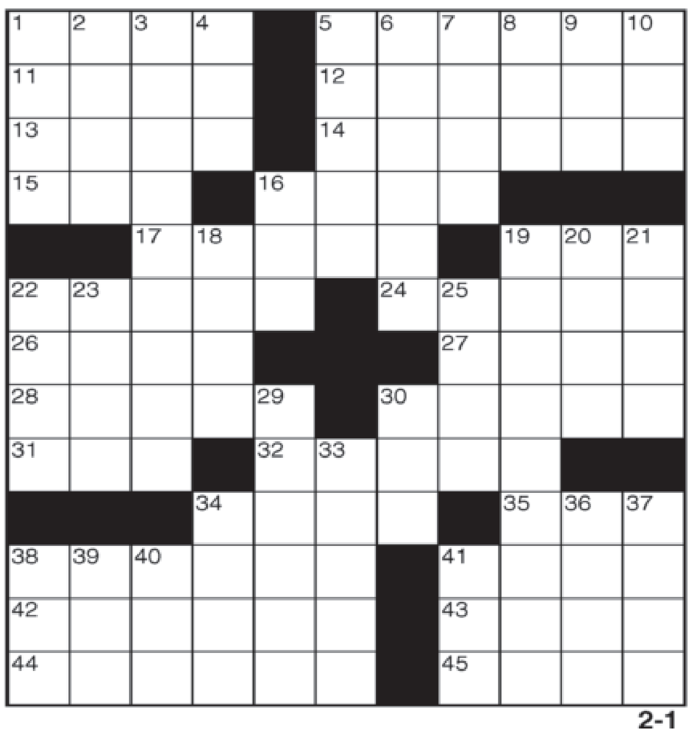
How many people noticed that, on June 20, 2024, Israel enacted what amounts to an annexation of the West Bank, with the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) transferring powers there to "pro-settler civil servants"? The irony of this move will not be lost on Palestinians. While a military occupation implies some distance from Israel, this new dispensation means that they are being integrated into the Israeli civil order—albeit one dominated by chauvinists bent on excluding them.

These examples show why we need heroes like Assange. He did what needed to be done, and he paid a high price. The time has come for others to continue the work he started. By "work," I mean not just a job but a vocation: something that you are called to do. Assange did not choose to launch WikiLeaks and expose state secrets so that he could spice up his life. He did it because he could not have done otherwise. For that reason, I suspect he is a happy man, despite all the suffering he has endured.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Smell
5 Cube face
11 Haleakala setting
12 Screen sight
13 Choir voice
14 Poker ploys
15 Role for Keanu
16 Stately trees
17 Bowling round
19 Motor need
22 Further down
24 Impudent
26 Steel ingredient
27 School near Windsor
28 A googol has 100
30 Yankee Stadium setting
31 Inquire
32 Geometry class challenge
34 Put together
35 Touch lightly
38 Teem
41 Edison's middle name
42 Hotel area
43 Enter the regatta
44 Not so small
45 Jekyll's alter ego

DOWN
1 Yemen neighbor
2 Secluded valley
3 Unemployed
4 Brazilian city
5 "Beat it!"
6 Trembles
7 "Exodus" author
8 Wagon puller
9 Fish eggs
10 Hosp. sections
16 Galley item
18 Nevada city
19 Like some foul hits
20 File stand-in
21 Bobcat's kin
22 Minnelli of "Cabaret"
23 Valuable rocks
25 Flying start?
29 Dishwashing aid
30 "— appetit!"
33 Contract addition
34 Psychologist Carl
36 Gung-ho
37 Account
38 Maximum amount
39 Frilly wrap
40 Owned by us
41 Blond shade



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TUESDAY'S ANSWERS

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CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Our "immutable" Constitution and the paradoxes of Article 7B

Article 7B presents a complex challenge for Bangladesh's democracy. Bangladesh's aspiration for a democratic future necessitates a Constitution that can adapt to the needs of its evolving citizenry. While Article 7B's intent to safeguard our core constitutional principles is commendable, its rigid formulation undermines popular sovereignty and democratic evolution.

MD. IMAMUNUR RAHMAN *and*
DR. M. JASHIM ALI CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh's Constitution has seen its "basic structures" altered by several amendments. Several of those amendments altered the Constitution so drastically that we tend to call them "constitutional dismemberments"– a term borrowed from Professor Richard Albert of the University of Texas at Austin. The Supreme Court of Bangladesh declared some, such as the Fifth and Seventh, constitutional amendments, unconstitutional. Some, such as the Fifteenth, were never formally challenged.

The Fifteenth Amendment of 2011 arguably tried to protect the Constitution's basic structures from amendment, destruction, or dismemberment. It introduced Article 7B, granting an "unamendable" status to some unspecified "basic structures" and a large number of specific constitutional provisions. These include the Preamble, Parts I, II, III, and Article 150 accommodating the Fourth to Seventh Schedules of the Constitution. While proponents see Article 7B as a shield against democratic erosion, critics view it as a paradoxical grip that freezes the Constitution in time, hindering future generations' capacity to bring changes.

Some argue that Article 7B contradicts the core value of popular sovereignty (Article 7) by rendering certain provisions unalterable. It effectively militates against the people's right to self-determination, creating a constitution whose parts are considered unchallengeable. With the past dictating the present and future, some may call it a "Dead Men's Constitution." The architects of the Fifteenth Amendment, though alive now, are not eternal. Their vision, enshrined as unalterable law, raises a crucial question: Should the unalterable will of a bygone era dictate the aspirations of a living and evolving population?

Further, Article 7B undermines the core principle of a "living constitution" that should adapt alongside a nation's circumstances. Drafted in a specific historical context, a Constitution may no longer perfectly reflect the needs of a nation that has evolved over decades. However, Article 7B shackles future generations to a rulebook they may disagree with and lack legitimate means to change. This rigidity creates a breeding ground for frustration and potential unrest.

The "basic structure doctrine", championed by the Supreme Court, also aims to protect core democratic principles from erosion. This is, however, limited and the Supreme Court has the option to revise its definition from time to time. Article 7B recognises the doctrine but ironically exaggerates it by making even peripheral provisions, such as the status of Dhaka as our capital, unamendable. We already know that the judicially enumerated basic structure doctrine itself lacks a clear definition, potentially allowing the judges to interpret it subjectively. Therefore, elevating this judicial doctrine to the status of an unalterable constitutional principle through Article 7B risks perpetuating the very flaws of the doctrine itself.

Article 7B has a self-preservation paradox too. It declares certain provisions, including itself, unalterable. It raises serious questions about its validity. Was Article 7B or the Fifteenth Amendment as a whole, made by a Constitutional Assembly in the exercise of its original constituent power? Clearly not. Was it an act of a parliament exercising its derivative power of amendment? Perhaps yes. Since Article 7B was not part or basic structure of the original 1972 Constitution, Parliament should be able to use its amendment power to amend it.

Article 7B's self-entrenchment has a logic paradox as well. The "immutable Constitution" it seeks to establish is achieved through the very amendment process it restricts. Imagine a locked box with a note inside saying, "This box can never be opened." However, the note was placed by opening the box, and the instruction is to be seen upon opening the box. Similarly, Article 7B relied on the amendment process to become unamendable.

The self-preservation may set a dangerous precedent. Future regimes could exploit this logic to shield their amendments from scrutiny and hinder the Constitution's ability to adapt to unforeseen challenges. In this regard, it is worth recalling Justice A. B. M. Khairul Hoque's opinion regarding the referendum clause of the Fifth Amendment. Justice Hoque called it "a sheer hierocracy" that Ziaur Rahman amended the four pillars of the Constitution as per his sweet will and eventually made it impossible for Parliament to amend the new principles without seeking a referendum. Justice Hoque declared the referendum clause unconstitutional on the grounds of this hierocracy. Could the same logic apply to Article 7B? Article 7B seems to have a similar legitimacy crisis as did Zia's referendum clause.

"We, the people"
"We, the people"
"We, the people"

In conclusion, Article 7B presents a complex challenge for Bangladesh's democracy. Bangladesh's aspiration for a democratic future necessitates a Constitution that can adapt to the needs of its evolving citizenry. While Article 7B's intent to safeguard our core constitutional principles is commendable, its rigid formulation undermines popular sovereignty and democratic evolution. While courts typically avoid questioning internal parliamentary proceedings, Bangladesh's Supreme Court would perhaps need a more nuanced approach, if the Article 7B is ever questioned there. We must balance legal principles with democratic ideals, potentially exploring the role of judicial review in ensuring a fair and inclusive amendment process.

The writers are Assistant Professor and Chair in the Department of Law at Z. H. Sikder University of Science and Technology, Bangladesh, and Lecturer in Law, Faculty of Business, Law and Politics at the University of Hull, United Kingdom, respectively.

INTERNATIONAL LAW

Legal Stance of Bangladesh on the Palestine question

MD. SHAWKAT ALAM FAISAL

Since its independence, Bangladesh has been a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause. In fact, Bangladesh is one of 28 United Nations (UN) member states that neither recognise Israel nor maintain diplomatic relations therewith.

Bangladesh's stance on the Palestine issue is grounded in its historical struggle for self-determination, a unique instance of remedial secession outside the colonial context. Indeed, Article 25 of the Bangladesh Constitution pledges support for oppressed peoples fighting against imperialism, colonialism, or racialism, which Bangladesh referenced in the Oral Statement on 20 February 2024, to justify its participation in the current Advisory Opinion proceedings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the question of Israel's occupation of Palestine.

Previously, Bangladesh also participated in the oral proceedings of the ICJ's Advisory Opinion proceedings on the question of construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and expressed its intent to intervene in the proceedings of *South Africa* v *Israel*. Alongside South Africa, Bolivia, Comoros, and Djibouti, Bangladesh referred the Palestinian situation to the International Criminal Court under Article 14 of the Rome Statute. Consequently, its participation in the current Advisory Opinion proceedings was anticipated, with expectations regarding how it would contribute to the legal questions posed by the UN General Assembly to the ICJ on the Legal Consequences arising from Israel's Policies and Practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

In the 1st written submission, Bangladesh addressed issues on the ICJ's competence, the nature of the questions posed, the adequacy of evidence, and the potential impact of the Advisory Opinion on political peace negotiations. Bangladesh asserted that there are no compelling reasons for the Court to decline rendering the opinion, as historically, the Court has never refused to render advisory opinions.

Regarding the nature of the question and the Court's propriety, Bangladesh indicated that the Court could refer to the Wall Opinion to address jurisdictional and judicial propriety concerns. In the 2nd Written Submission, Bangladesh argued that legal and political questions are often intertwined, and that the presence of political questions does not negate or dwindle the legal nature of the issues. It affirmed that the Court had sufficient evidence from various UN sources to render the Advisory Opinion in question. Bangladesh contended that future solutions for the Palestinian people should be grounded in international law, without them having to negotiate their freedom under unlawful conditions.

Bangladesh's participation in the current Advisory Opinion proceedings is symbolically and legally significant, reaffirming its historical stance on the Palestine question and contributing to the deliberation of the Court.

Bangladesh highlighted that the legality of occupation is still debated and countered the argument that occupation can never be illegal. It proposed two frameworks, based on reports by Special Rapporteurs Michael Lynk and Francesca. Bangladesh contended that Israel's occupation policies violate both frameworks and outlined the legal consequences, stating that Israel must end its occupation, provide assurances against repetition, and make reparations.

Bangladesh's submission also underscored the Palestinian right to self-determination, supported by various international recognitions and previous ICJ opinions. Although it did not fully analyse this right, it highlighted Israel's violation of this right and the obligations of Israel, other states, and the UN to ensure its realisation.

Bangladesh's participation in the current Advisory Opinion proceedings is symbolically and legally significant, reaffirming its historical stance on the Palestine question and contributing to the deliberation of the Court.

The writer is apprentice lawyer.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Navigating Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) and loan defaults in Bangladesh

IFAT TASNIM

The issue of defaulting on loans continues to be the biggest trouble for the banking industry. At the end of March 2024, total disbursed loans stood at BDT 16,40,000 crore, of which BDT 1,82,000 crore were in default, the highest in the history of Bangladesh. Currently, 11.11 percent of disbursed loans have turned into NPLs.

In the banking and finance sector, NPLs and loan defaults are related terms that belong to slightly distinct circumstances. While both NPLs and loan defaults involve borrowers not meeting their repayment commitments, the remedies that banks have at their disposal for handling these situations can differ based on the particulars and the overarching regulatory environment. Loans that are seriously past due—typically 90 days or more—are referred to as NPLs. Whereas, when debtors fail to make the agreed-upon payments under the contractual obligation of principal and interest on time, it is considered that they have defaulted on their loans.

Several things can lead to defaults, such as unexpected events that affect borrowers' capacity to repay debt, company failures, financial difficulty, or even sheer negligence and unwillingness to repay on part of the borrowers. Certain industries— such as manufacturing, agriculture, and textiles— are more vulnerable to loan defaults. Another reason behind the increase of NPLs in Bangladesh's banking industry is inadequate or poor governance.

Banks may also use techniques such as pledge enforcement, hypothecation enforcement, or mortgage foreclosure to uphold security interests. Alternatively, to expedite repayment, they might choose to use negotiation techniques, such as settlement agreements or loan restructuring.

To overcome these obstacles and restore the health of the banking industry, rule of law, accountability, and transparency must be reinforced. When dealing with loan defaulters in Bangladesh, banks have a variety of options at their hands, *e.g.*, civil litigation and looking to specialist tribunals like the Artha Rin Adalat. Banks may also use techniques such as pledge enforcement, hypothecation enforcement, or mortgage foreclosure to uphold security interests. Alternatively, to expedite repayment, they might choose to use negotiation techniques, such as settlement agreements or loan restructuring. Cross-default clauses may increase the pressure on defaulters and cause defaults on other loans. Banks may also report defaulters to credit bureaus, which might have an impact on the defaulters' credit scores and future credit availability.

To properly negotiate the complexity of loan defaults, both banks and borrowers must have extensive knowledge on these remedies. Artha Rin Adalat Ain section 22 permits the Artha Rin Adalat to appoint mediators to help parties settle their differences through mediation. These neutral third parties promote the value of a compromise in the settlement of disputes by facilitating negotiation and working to encourage consensual resolution outside of formal judicial proceedings. Finally, to effectively tackle the problems caused by NFLs and loan defaults in Bangladesh, a comprehensive strategy encompassing governance improvements and efficient application of legal and alternative dispute resolution procedures is needed.

The writer is student of law, LCLS (South).

> **We've found ways of winning games, we just couldn't find a way today [Thursday]. I hope that we've inspired young kids to pick up a bat and a ball and play cricket, and want to play for their nation and hopefully that everybody's proud of the side.**
>
> **Jonathan Trott**
> Afghanistan head coach after their exit from T20 World Cup semifinal

Mother's love fuels archer Sagor's Olympic dream

ANISUR RAHMAN

Under the giant steel roof at the Sheikh Russel Roller Skating Stadium in Paltan, adorned with shining banners featuring a smiling photo of archer Sagor Islam raising his index finger triumphantly, the 18-year-old archer looked radiant alongside his mother during a warm reception yesterday.

This celebration followed his outstanding achievement of qualifying directly for the upcoming Paris Olympics as the second archer and overall third athlete from Bangladesh.

Sagor, the younger child of 47-year-old Selina, lost his father at the tender age of three. However, he did not face the magnitude of hardship as anticipated, thanks to the tireless efforts of his widowed mother, Selina.

Since the demise of her husband from a brain stroke, Selina has been running a tea stall in Rajshahi for the last 15 years to support her four children, including the younger Sagor. Her dedication has now paid off in abundance, with Sagor making history in Bangladesh sports and feeling like "the number one son in the world".

Selina has come to Dhaka for the third time, each visit related to Sagor, to witness the warm reception for her son. She recounted their journey and the challenges faced after losing her husband 15 years ago.

"Without my husband, I worked hard for the last 15 years by selling tea, but I never forced my children to work. I wanted to raise them as good human beings by providing them with education and other facilities I could afford. My elder son completed his honours degree, while my two daughters got married.

"I never allowed Sagor to work at the tea stall. Though he was a bit fickle-minded, he loved sports. So, I kept him close by getting him admitted to the nearby SB Archery Academy in Rajshahi," said a teary-eyed Selina, who was brought to the stage along with Sagor after he was garlanded with flowers, adding that she now feels no pain from the struggles of raising Sagor as he has made the country proud with his performance.

Meanwhile, sponsor City Group handed over a reward of Tk 5 lakh for Sagor.

A triumph soaked in tears

ASHFAQ-UL-ALAM

Since the 90s, cricket fans have come to expect three things whenever a World Cup takes place -- India beating arch-rivals Pakistan, Australia running roughshod over the competition and South Africa somehow finding a way to lose in the semifinal.

Over the years, the fans have seen the once invincible Australia become more fallible, even though their trophy case remains unmatched in international cricket.

And Pakistan too got the monkey off their backs in the 2021 ICC T20 World Cup, finally defeating India by 10 wickets.

This left South Africa's inability to get over the line in semifinals as the only constant.

Before yesterday, the Proteas had suffered heartbreak in seven semifinals, the latest of which came in last year's ODI World Cup in India, when they lost to eventual champions Australia by three wickets.

This procession of misery began in 1992, during their first participation in a World Cup after a 21-year exile from international cricket, falling victim to the later abolished rain rule, losing to England by 19 runs.

They tied against Australia in the famous 1999 semifinal but couldn't progress owing to finishing behind the Aussies in the Super Six round. More heartbreak followed in the 2007, 2015 and 2023 editions of the ODI World Cup.

South Africa's semifinal woes carried over into the T20 World Cups as well, as they lost to Pakistan and India in the 2009 and 2014 editions respectively.

The sight of South African cricketers lying on the ground, distraught, with their eyelids struggling to hold back tears after they failed to cross the final hurdle before the final once again, had become an enduring image of Protea cricket.

The fact that South Africa have managed to reach the final four in seven World Cups till 2023 is proof enough of the team's callibre. But for whatever reason, lady luck never favoured them in the semis.

With the baggage of seven failed attempts weighing on them, Aiden Markram's men entered into South Africa's eighth World Cup semifinal yesterday in Trinidad.

For their opponents, Afghanistan, this was unheralded territory, as the war-torn nation had never before made it this far in a major ICC event.

Afghanistan's inexperience at this stage was a clear advantage for the Proteas, however, keeping the ghosts of the previous failures at bay and concentrating at the task at hand, could not have been an easy task for Markram's side.

But once the action started, the mismatch in strength between the teams became apparent. The Proteas' pace attack ran through Afghanistan's defences, bowling them out for a mere 56 and the batters then completed a commanding nine-wicket win.

After fighting their way out of tricky situations right from the first round, South Africa have now made it to the final with perhaps the most dominant win in a semifinal ever. Now, the Proteas need just one more win to replace the 'choker' tag with 'champions'.

Reflection and action needed to chase int'l level

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh's team are set to return to country after their participation on a global event that laid bare the deficiencies in the nation's cricket cognition, team building, planning, and mental resilience.

The Tigers returned without a win in the Super Eights of the T20 World Cup, but more disastrous was their baffling approach in those three matches. The pertinent question is: where does Bangladesh cricket go from here?

The event's ninth instalment revealed the deficiencies of the players. However, in a bigger way, it exposed the flaws in how Bangladesh perceives cricket.

First, the quality of the wickets and the competitiveness of domestic competitions must be addressed. A lack of good wickets and a competitive structure makes it difficult for selectors to gauge which players have the required quality and mentality.

Surfaces here produce 140-150 scores, and in the Dhaka Premier League, teams have not been competitive. On the other hand, the franchise Bangladesh Premier League does not always allow local players to shine in pressure situations.

"No, local players are not being tested. When [Najmul Hossain] Shanto or [Towhid] Hridoy played in the top order not long ago, they were performing [for the Sylhet franchise]. Given the opportunity, our players can perform, but that opportunity is scarce," veteran coach Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, who also coached Fortune Barishal in BPL's 2022 season, told The Daily Star.

Secondly, the national coaching panel had little influence on improving the batting unit, which proved disastrous. The team appeared rudderless, not only in terms of application but also in their battle plans. Without clarity and ownership, the players failed to follow one man's idea of how the game should be played.

"I haven't seen a team that is playing as a team. Regarding team selection, or even unity within the team, it was not seen in the last two World Cups. Hathurusingha's treatment of players, especially those that don't make the side, I felt, was not very balanced," added Fahim, who has been the mentor to many national players.

Third, the biggest factor in poor performances is bad decision-making, coupled with a significant deficiency in cricketing IQ. "Where are our players learning the game and from whom?" asks Fahim.

Coaching education is still far behind in the country, and Fahim feels that this is where reflection is needed to help players learn the nuances of the game. However, for the immediate needs of the national team players, they need to be allowed to play in foreign leagues.

"Ask Shakib where he was influenced the most as a cricketer. He will say it's county cricket where his biggest change came. It's unbelievable what playing for Sussex means. Look at Afghanistan. They are building their players by playing them outside.

"What's our goal? We have to do a lot of things so that in two years we are prepared for the 2026 T20 World Cup. So if Taskin [Ahmed] goes here and there, playing franchise cricket or county cricket, it has to be availed. It has to happen irrespective of what's happening to the national team," he said.

The need for another T20 tournament has come on the radar, and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is set to introduce a new T20 tournament. Fahim, however, believes more lower-tier tournaments need to be introduced.

"For instance, the Chattogram division can hold a tournament, and there, players who are still in the lower tiers in the nook and corner of the country can participate. You will see that many players with a T20 mindset will come through. There used to be the Star Summer tournament, and districts will get sponsors. It doesn't have to be like the BPL. It would be a platform for player development," he said.

As it stands, Bangladesh have a long way to go to catch up to the international level, and BCB must take bold and blunt decisions following extensive soul-searching, for a change.

However, if making the Super Eights is something BCB uses to beat their own drums, leading to not holding the coaching staff accountable for sub-par preparations, things are certain to remain the same, if not regress beyond repair.

Brazil seek improvement against Paraguay

REUTERS

Brazil face Paraguay in their Copa America Group D match in Las Vegas on Saturday (7:00 am Bangladesh Time) after a disappointing goalless draw against lowly Costa Rica in their opener left the five-time World Cup winners questioning how to sharpen their cutting edge.

A wasteful Brazil side dominated possession but were clueless on how to beat an ultra-defensive Costa Rica playing with a back five.

Paraguay, who lost 2-1 to Colombia in their first game, are expected to use a similar defensive game plan to Costa Rica.

That will pose another challenge for Brazil's 62-year-old manager Dorival Jr who will have to find answers on how his side can break deadlocks.

Attacking midfielder Lucas Paqueta, one of Brazil's most active players against Costa Rica with five shots that missed the target and one that hit the post, believes Brazil can bounce back.

"It's clear that finishing from outside the area against teams who close down and defend deep is something that we can improve, but we are still very confident that we will," Paqueta said on Wednesday.

There is no indication Dorival will make any changes against Paraguay despite the growing pressure from fans and media who are eager to see teenage sensation Endrick starting alongside his future Real Madrid team mates Vinicius Jr and Rodrygo up front.

The 17-year-old striker Endrick was Brazil's hero in Dorival's first two games in charge earlier this year.

Dorival does not want to rush the teenager into a starting role but after a run of five straight games without a win in competitive matches, Brazil's worst record in 23 years, the manager could soon be forced to listen to the crowd.

EURO LAST 16

Faltering stars and unbowed underdogs

AFP, *Gelsenkirchen*

Euro 2024's last 16 match-ups were confirmed on Wednesday night after Georgia snatched a spot in the knockout stage for the first time in their history with a stunning 2-0 win over Portugal.

As it turns out, the round of 16 will see some of the tournament heavyweights line up alongside ambitious underdogs, promising something special. Here, we look at each match-up along with their schedule in Bangladesh time.

Switzerland v Italy (June 29, 10:00 pm)

Italy head into Saturday's clash with Switzerland in Berlin still a work in progress after scraping into second place seconds before the end of their final Group B game with Croatia.

The defending champions will be wary of the Swiss, who will likely have four Serie A players in their starting line-up and showed in their 1-1 draw with Germany that they are perfectly capable of giving the big boys a bloody nose.

Germany v Denmark (June 30, 1:00 am)

Revitalised under Julian Nagelsmann, Germany have been alongside Spain as the best team in the group stages and will rightly be considered favourites against Denmark, who laboured to second place in the dismal Group C behind England.

Denmark coach Kasper Hjulmand said that his team always "step up" when facing the big nations but Germany will also have the backing of Dortmund's famous Westfalenstadion on Saturday night as they seek a record-breaking fourth Euros title.

England v Slovakia (June 30, 10:00 pm)

England have had a soft landing against Slovakia on Sunday after topping Group C despite putting in three hugely disappointing displays against middling opposition.

Coach Gareth Southgate was pelted with plastic cups by frustrated fans after Tuesday's goalless draw with Slovenia and performances will have to pick up if his team are to live up to their billing as one of the pre-tournament favourites.

Spain v Georgia (July 1, 1:00 am)

Luis de la Fuente's side have been the most impressive team of the tournament so far after breezing through the supposedly tough Group B with a perfect nine points and a statement win over the Italians.

Georgia's Khvicha Kvaratskhelia celebrates scoring their first goal in their stunning 2-0 victory over Portugal in a Euro 2024 group game on Wednesday. PHOTO: **AFP**

With almost their entire first XI, including star wingers Lamine Yamal and Nico Williams, rested in Monday's 1-0 win over Albania, anything other than straightforward passage into the quarters for Spain would be a massive shock in Cologne on Sunday.

However, Georgia are this tournament's fairytale and showed by beating Portugal on Wednesday they can spring an upset.

France v Belgium (July 1, 10:00 pm)

Possibly the most intriguing tie of the round sees two big teams yet to hit form face off in Duesseldorf on Monday.

France were unimpressive in qualifying in second place from Group D. Kylian Mbappe is the only player in Didier Deschamps' side to score a goal and that strike came from the penalty spot in a 1-1 draw with already-eliminated Poland.

Belgium meanwhile have played well in bursts but were barracked by fans in Stuttgart on Wednesday after a safety-first approach against Ukraine saw them edge into the last 16 from Group E.

Portugal v Slovenia (July 2, 1:00 am)

Portugal will be heavy favourites to get past Slovenia in Frankfurt on Monday night and coach Roberto Martinez will have a mostly rested first XI to call upon after making a raft of changes for Wednesday's defeat to Georgia which made no difference to the Group F winners.

Slovenia didn't impress in Group C, finishing third and scoring twice in three matches, but Matjaz Kek's team are unbeaten in nine games and beat Portugal 2-0 in a pre-tournament friendly.

Romania v Netherlands (July 2, 10:00 pm)

The Dutch were hugely disappointing in Group D, finishing third behind Austria and France, and should be wary on Tuesday of Romania who are in the last 16 for the first time in 24 years after topping a tight Group E.

However, Ronald Koeman, who called his team "appalling" after losing 3-2 to Austria, has been rewarded for their underwhelming displays by being placed on the easier side of the knockout bracket where off-colour England and an unsure Italy are the only heavyweights.

Austria v Turkey (July 3, 1:00 am)

Ralf Rangnick's Austria have been given the dangerous tag of tournament dark horse after topping Group D ahead of France and the Dutch, playing some exciting football in the process. Tuesday night's match with Turkey in Leipzig promises to be an entertaining affair with Vincenzo Montella's talented side being backed by huge support at every match.

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India march into final

AFP, *Providence*

India hammered defending champions England by 68 runs in Guyana on Thursday to set up an ICC T20 World Cup final showdown against South Africa.

England, chasing 172 for victory, collapsed to 103 all out with spinners Axar Patel, who was later named player of the match, and Kuldeep Yadav taking three wickets apiece.

India will now face South Africa, who overwhelmed Afghanistan by nine wickets in the first semifinal on Wednesday to book their place in Saturday's final in Barbados.

Earlier, Rohit Sharma hit his third fifty of the tournament as India posted a challenging total of 171-7.

India, sent into bat by England captain Jos Buttler, were 40-2 in the powerplay after Virat Kohli (nine) and Rishabh Pant (four) both fell cheaply.

But a third-wicket partnership of 73 between Rohit (57) and Suryakumar Yadav (47), spanning a rain delay of over an hour, took India to 113-3 in the 14th over of a stop-start innings.

England, however, removed both the well-set batsmen before Hardik Pandya (23) and Ravindra Jadeja (17 not out) added useful runs late.

Axar then took India past 170 with a one-handed six off Chris Jordan in the last over.

Jordan took 3-37, including two wickets in two balls, while leg-spinner Adil Rashid had fine figures of 1-25 in his maximum four overs.

Both Rohit, fresh from his blistering 92 in a victory over

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Axar Patel celebrates one of his three wickets of the day with captain Rohit Sharma, whose half-century set the stage for India's commanding 68-run win over England in the second semifinal of the ICC T20 World Cup at the Providence Stadium in Guyana on Thursday. India will now face off against South Africa in the final on June 29. PHOTO: ICC

Arundhati Roy wins PEN Pinter Prize

THE HINDU ONLINE

Booker Prize-winning author Arundhati Roy, currently facing the threat of prosecution over historic comments on Kashmir 14 years ago, was yesterday honoured with the prestigious Pen Pinter Prize 2024 for her unflinching and unswerving writings.

The prize, established in 2009 by the charity English PEN, defends freedom of expression and celebrates literature in memory of Nobel-Laureate playwright Harold Pinter.

Roy expressed her delight at being named this year's winner amid an

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Two AL leaders, teacher killed in C'nawabganj, Narayanganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people, including a local Awami League leader and a schoolteacher, were shot and hacked to death in Chapainawabganj's Shibganj upazila last night.

The deceased are Abdus Salam, a zilla parishad member and also the general secretary of Noyalavanga union AL, and Matin Ali, a teacher of Harinagar High School.

Saidul Hasan, superintendent of police in Chapainawabganj, said criminals carrying guns and machetes launched the attack in front of Ranihati Degree College around 8:30pm when Salam, Matin, and his brother Titu Ali were sitting there. Salam died on the spot, while the other two got injured.

Locals later took Matin and Titu to the district hospital, where doctors declared Matin dead around 9:00pm.

Sajjad Hossain, officer-in-charge of Shibganj Police Station, told The Daily Star that there was a long-standing feud between two groups over establishing supremacy in Noyalavanga union.

"Salam, who led one of those groups, might have been killed over the dispute."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Israel storms Gaza City neighbourhood

Orders Palestinians to go south; 47 more Palestinians killed

REUTERS, *Cairo*

Israel stormed a neighbourhood in Gaza City yesterday, telling Palestinians as the tanks moved in that they must move south, and bombed the southern city of Rafah in what it says are the final stages of an operation against Hamas fighters there.

Residents of the Shejaia neighbourhood in Gaza City said they were taken by surprise by tanks rolling in and firing in the early afternoon, with drones also attacking after overnight bombing.

"It sounded as if the offensive is restarting, a series of bombings that destroyed several houses in our area and shook the buildings," Mohammad Jamal, 25, a resident of Gaza City, told Reuters via a chat app.

The Palestinian Civil Emergency Service said there were reports of people killed and wounded in Shejaia but their teams were unable to reach them because of the ongoing offensive. Three people were reported killed there in the earlier bombing, with five killed in the Sabra neighbourhood.

The armed wing of Hamas said it had detonated a pre-planted explosive device against an Israeli tank east of Shejaia.

The armed wing of Hamas ally Islamic Jihad said it had detonated a pre-planted explosive device against an Israeli tank east of Shejaia.

"To all residents and displaced people in the Shujaiya area and the new neighborhoods ... For your safety, you must evacuate immediately south on Salah al-Din Street to the humanitarian

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Conduct probe into wealth of ex-DMP chief

SC lawyer appeals to ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asaduzzaman

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday submitted an appeal to the Anti-Corruption Commission seeking an investigation into the wealth statement of former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia.

The 14-page plea was submitted to the ACC chairman by lawyer Salah Uddin Reagan.

The prime minister has declared zero tolerance against corruption in the country. Still, the ACC has not taken any action despite reports of huge wealth amassed by the former DMP commissioner published in various media, Reagan said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

How shutki pizza is winning American hearts

K TANZEEL ZAMAN

We have all been there, surviving the smell of shutkis while growing up. The beloved varieties of dry fish have always been a staple in Bangladeshi households for their distinctive, rich flavour. Usually seen and enjoyed in dishes like bhorta and curry, this delicacy has recently made an unexpected yet triumphant journey across the globe, landing on the menu of a pizzeria in Detroit, USA.

"Amar Pizza", located in Detroit, has garnered significant acclaim for its maverick, innovative shutki pizza. Before you scrunch your nose, shutki-filled pizza has intrigued and delighted food enthusiasts beyond the Bangladeshi community. The pizzeria's bold bet of putting shutki into a universally loved dish like pizza has

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Court appoints more officials to look after Benazir's assets

COURT CORRESPONDENT

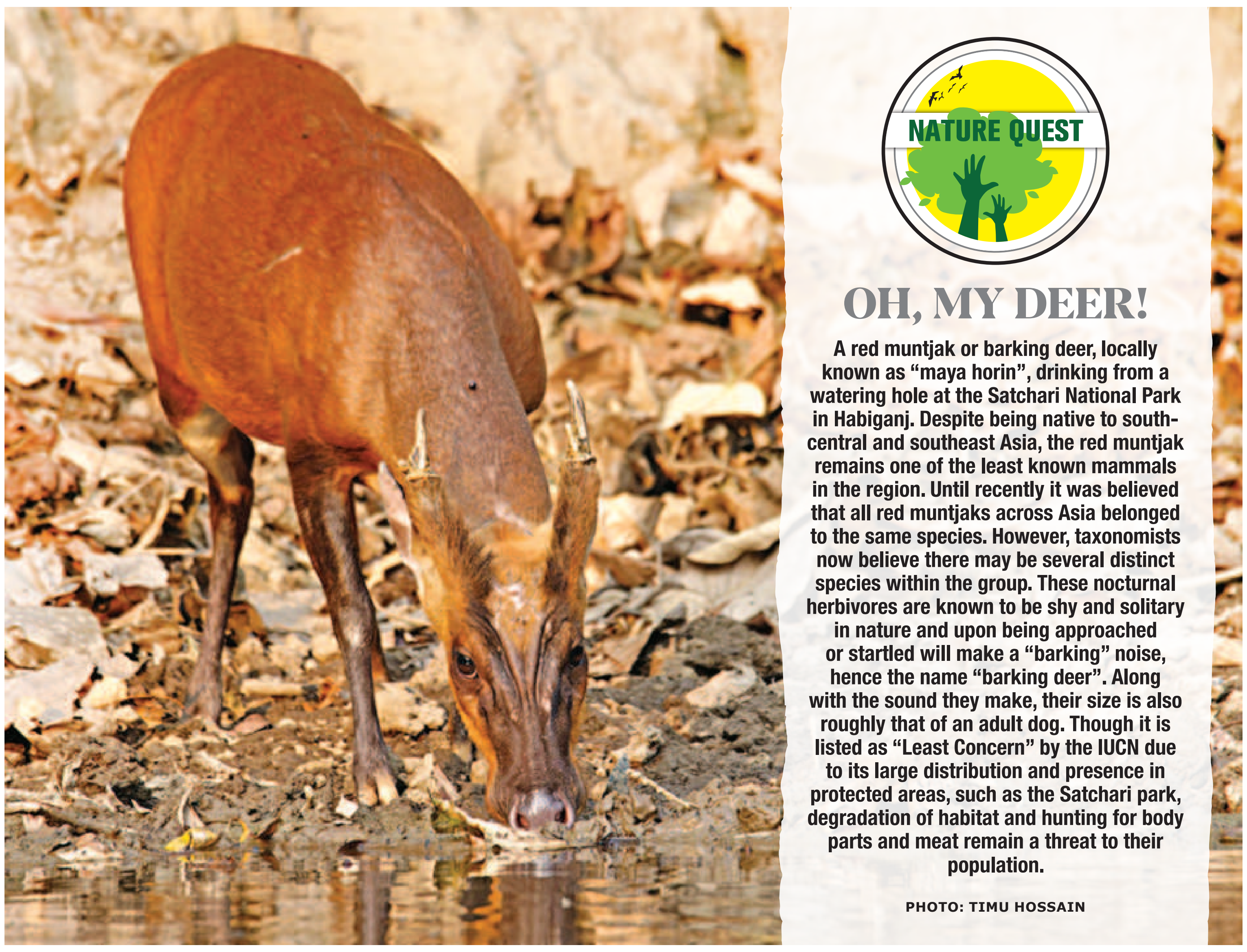
A Dhaka court yesterday appointed more administrators to look after the confiscated immovable properties of former IGP Benazir Ahmed and his family members.

The director of the Anti-Corruption Commission's property management unit will look after the assets in Dhaka and Rupganj. The deputy commissioner of Bandarban will look after the land in the district.

Judge Mohammed Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Md Hafizul Islam submitted a petition in this regard, said ACC lawyer Mahmud Hossain Jahangir.

The immovable properties are 24 kathas

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



NATURE QUEST

OH, MY DEER!

A red muntjak or barking deer, locally known as "maya horin", drinking from a watering hole at the Satchari National Park in Habiganj. Despite being native to south-central and southeast Asia, the red muntjak remains one of the least known mammals in the region. Until recently it was believed that all red muntjaks across Asia belonged to the same species. However, taxonomists now believe there may be several distinct species within the group. These nocturnal herbivores are known to be shy and solitary in nature and upon being approached or startled will make a "barking" noise, hence the name "barking deer". Along with the sound they make, their size is also roughly that of an adult dog. Though it is listed as "Least Concern" by the IUCN due to its large distribution and presence in protected areas, such as the Satchari park, degradation of habitat and hunting for body parts and meat remain a threat to their population.

PHOTO: TIMU HOSSAIN

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REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 157 | ASHAR 15, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | ZILHAJJ 22, 1445 HIJRI | 16 PAGES: TK 15.00

KSRM
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Coastal women and their woeful walk for water
WR1

Germany ready for another deep run
P11

Further down the kleptocratic route
P8

Aug 21 Attack: Road to justice still not over
P3

PUBLIC SERVANTS

Anti-graft laws, rules relaxed over the years

BAHARAM KHAN

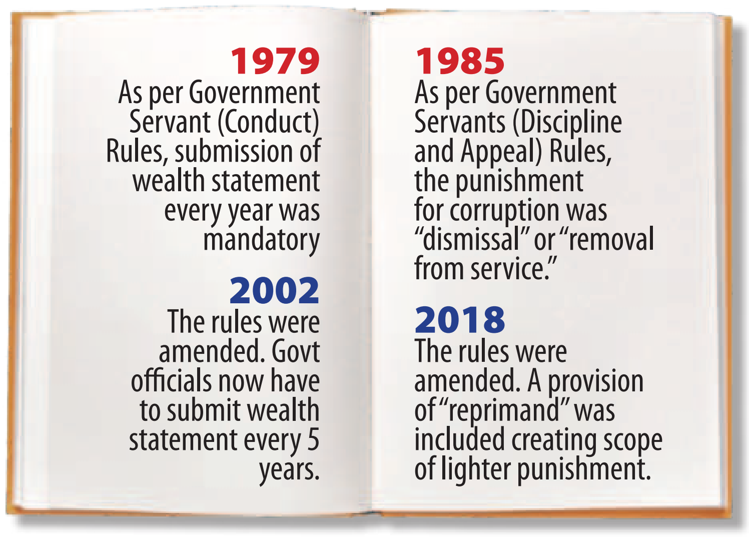
For over two decades, laws and regulations meant for curbing corruption by government employees have been relaxed, creating scope for officials to indulge in irregularities with relative impunity.

Both the BNP and Awami League-led governments made amendments to the rules, lightening penalties for corruption.

Through an amendment to the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules (1985), the authorities in 2018 included "reprimand" as a penalty for corruption that has been proven through investigations.

Before this amendment, the punishment was either "compulsory retirement", "removal from service" or "dismissal from service".

Civil service expert Firoz Mia said relaxation of the rules and regulations would have a harmful impact in the long run.



1979
As per Government Servant (Conduct) Rules, submission of wealth statement every year was mandatory

2002
The rules were amended. Govt officials now have to submit wealth statement every 5 years.

1985
As per Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, the punishment for corruption was "dismissal" or "removal from service."

2018
The rules were amended. A provision of "reprimand" was included creating scope of lighter punishment.

"If an investigation finds that a government employee was involved in corruption, why would the person be in service? Why should other officials work alongside the corrupt individual? What message would the colleagues get?" he asked.

Instead of creating scopes for corrupt officials to evade accountability, the government should make strict corruption-busting rules that uphold transparency, he added.

In April, an investigation found that Promatha Ranjan Ghatak, now an assistant secretary, had embezzled Tk 7.35 crore while he was the land acquisition officer in Madaripur from June 2020 to June 2021 .

On papers, he provided the money to five locals who owned plots of land that were acquired by the state for the Padma Bridge. But in reality, as public administration ministry investigations found, the plots were owned by the government, and there was no need to compensate anyone.

The punishment Promatha received was a demotion from the rank of senior assistant secretary to assistant secretary.

Feroz Mia said the penalty was not commensurate with Promatha's offence.

A joint secretary of the cabinet division, requesting anonymity, said, "Had the 1985 rules not been relaxed, the official would surely be dismissed. As long as he is there, his honest colleagues will feel uncomfortable."

In April, the government reduced the salary of Bir Amir Hamza, an assistant commissioner (land) of Bogura Sadar Upazila, for 12 months after he was found guilty of forgery for financial gains.

The punishment raised eyebrows as many of his superiors thought he would be sacked.

Many believe that the government provided impunity to the public servants by enacting the Government Services Act, 2018, which replaced Public Servants (Dismissal on Conviction) Ordinance, 1985.

According to the 1985 ordinance, a government employee punished for any criminal offence should be dismissed.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

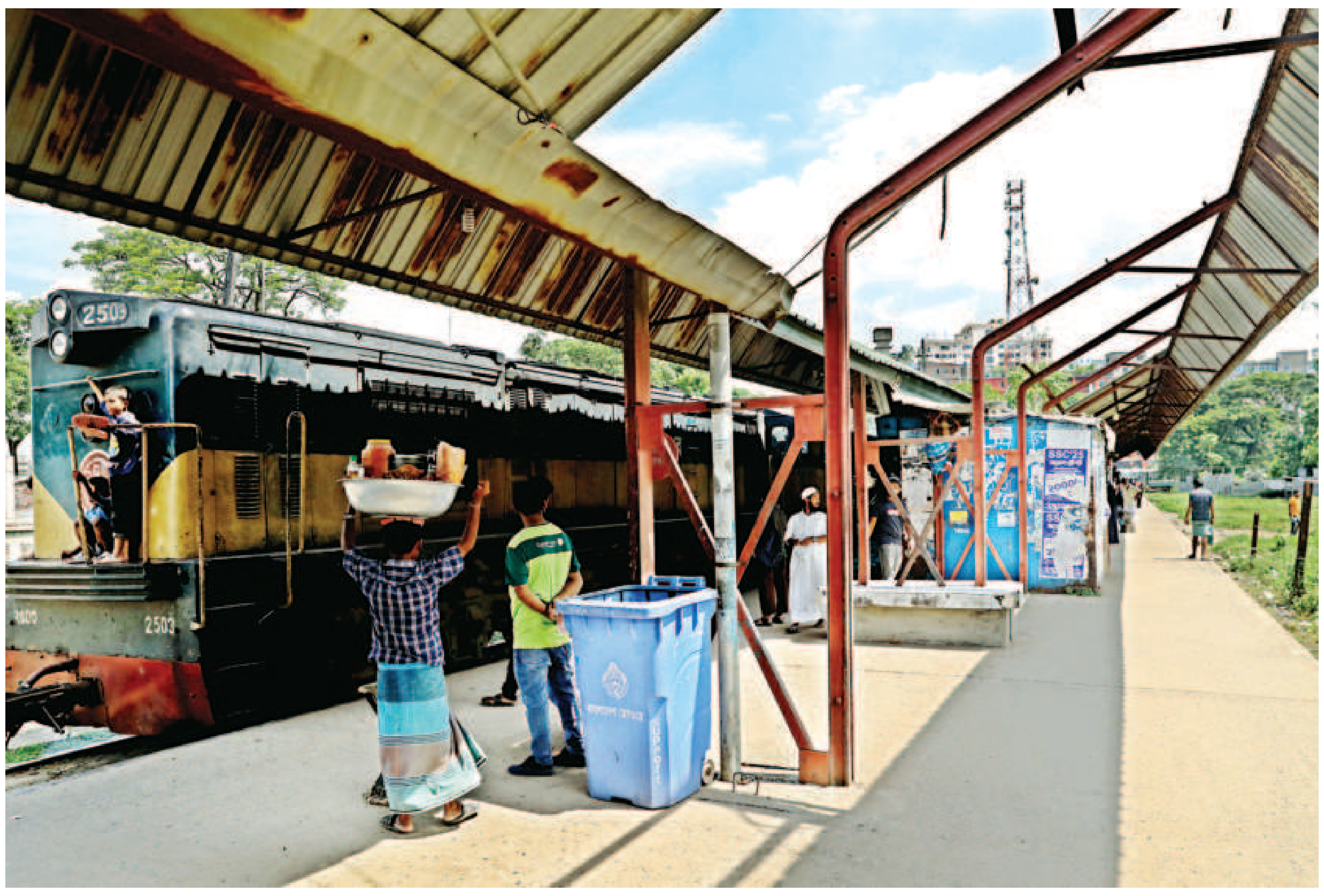


PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

The roof of the platform at Narayanganj's Fatullah Railway Station is falling apart due to a lack of maintenance. This is causing suffering to passengers as they find it difficult to cover themselves from sun and rain. The photo was taken on Thursday.

AL to hold programme today to 'counter' BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League will hold a programme in the capital today apparently to counter a rally of its arch-rival BNP on the same day.

The AL's Dhaka city (south) unit will organise a discussion in front of the party headquarters in the capital's Gulistan at 3:00pm marking its 75th founding anniversary, reads a press release issued by the same party unit yesterday.

On June 26, the BNP announced that it will hold freshprogrammes demanding immediate, unconditional release of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

As part of the programmes, the BNP will stage a rally in front of its central office in the city's Nayapaltan at 3:00pm today.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

2 of the killers faked identity, worked at a temple: DB

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Foysal Ali Sahazi and Mostafizur Rahman Fakir, suspects in the Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim Anar murder case, are truck drivers. But to dodge the eyes of law enforcers, they started working as cooks at a temple.

MP AZIM
MURDER

In the morning, they would wake up and head to a kitchen market to buy vegetables. They then prepared and cooked the vegetable. Just like devout Hindus, they would work at the temple so that no one could doubt them.

Sources in the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), who are investigating the killing of the MP from Kaliganj, revealed this.

The two suspects were arrested from a Kali temple in Chattogram's Sitakunda on Wednesday evening. They are on a six-day remand in DB custody.

Foysal and Mostafizur were shown arrested in the MP Azim abduction case

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Rice prices up by Tk 2-3 a kg

Sellers attribute it to paddy price hike, mills closure during Eid

SHAHEEN MOLLAH *and* **MUNTAKIM SAAD**

Prices of almost all varieties of rice have gone up in the capital's kitchen markets over the last one week.

Traders said rice prices have increased by Tk 50 to Tk 100 per 50 kg sack because of the price hike of paddy and the closure of rice mills for the Eid-ul-Azha.

The prices of the staple have soared at a time when the county has sufficient stock.

Visiting several markets in the capital yesterday, The Daily Star found that retailers were selling, depending on quality, Miniket rice for Tk 62 to Tk 68 a kg, Nazirshail for Tk 65 to Tk 78, BR-28 and BR-29 for Tk 54 to Tk 56, coarse grain rice for Tk 54, and coarse hybrid rice for Tk 48.

Before the Eid on June 17, the retail prices of these varieties were lower by Tk 2-3 per kg.

Nayeem Hossain, a private service holder, said he had bought Miniket rice from a store in East Shewrapara at Tk 72 a kg before the Eid. For the same variety of rice, he had to pay Tk 75 yesterday.

Abul Hashem, owner of Hashem General Store at Ibrahimpur Bazar in Kafrul, said he sold Miniket rice for Tk 68 a kg a week ago, but the staple sold for Tk 70 yesterday. Similarly, the price of BR-28 rice has gone up to Tk 55 per kg from Tk 53 a week ago.

"The price hike in the wholesale markets is having an impact on the retail prices," he said.

Alamgir Hossain, manager of Suchana Rice at Mohammadpur Krishi Market, attributed the rice price hike to the increase in paddy prices.

He said the prices of Miniket and Nazirshail rice have gone up by Tk 100 per 50 kg, while the price of BR-28 rice has increased by Tk 50 per 50 kg.

Kamal Sarder, proprietor of Makbul Traders at Mirpur-11 kitchen

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Maiden triumph or return to glory?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ninth edition of the ICC T20 World Cup will draw to a close today with a never-seen-before matchup in the final, as inaugural champions India take on first-time finalists South Africa for the right to call themselves the best in the world in the shortest format of the game.

The match, set to take place at the Kensington Oval in Barbados starting from 8:30 pm Bangladesh time, will draw the curtains on perhaps the most unique edition of the T20 World Cup so far.

The tournament was set to be different from the onset, with 20 teams competing, the most in any cricket World Cup, and the USA co-hosting the event for the first time alongside the West Indies.

More surprises got unravelled as the tournament kicked into gear, with the drop-in pitches in the USA and the sluggish wickets in the Caribbean making way for some low-scoring yet exciting encounters throughout the competition.

A number of shocking results also took place, with the USA's stunning win over Pakistan and qualification to the Super Eight and Afghanistan triumphing over Australia and making it to the semifinals for the first time topping the list.

After four weeks of action across North America, India and South Africa, the two undefeated sides in the tournament, are the final two standing.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

GANGA WATER-SHARING

Indian foreign ministry refutes Mamata's claim

Says Centre consulted state govt about treaty's renewal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *New Delhi*

Indian foreign ministry yesterday refuted West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's claim that the Centre did not consult the state government on the renewal of the Ganga water-sharing treaty with Bangladesh.

"The facts do not bear out the assertions [by Mamata]. The representative of the West Bengal government has attended all the meetings of an internal committee set up on the issue (of the Ganges water-sharing accord with Bangladesh) consisting of all stakeholders. In fact, on April 6, 2024, a communication was received from the West Bengal government indicating its requirement of drinking water and industrial water under the treaty beyond 2026," Ministry of External Affairs Randhir Jaiswal told the weekly media briefing in New Delhi.

His remarks came after Mamata wrote a letter to Indian Prime Minister

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE
CNN

Democrat candidate, US President Joe Biden, and Republican candidate, former president Donald Trump, attend a debate ahead of the presidential election, in Atlanta, Georgia, US, on Thursday.

PHOTO: **AFP**

US PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Flop show rocks Biden campaign

AFP, *Atlanta*

A badly wounded Joe Biden looked to get his re-election campaign back on track yesterday after a debate performance that unnerved supporters and left allies of Donald Trump unable to conceal their glee.

Democrats had hoped to see the president defiantly answering critics who say he is too old for a second term while hammering Trump on his criminal record and the threat they say he poses to democracy.

Instead, many acknowledged, they got a faltering display from a candidate who sounded hoarse for much of the showdown, stumbled over words, pulled punches, often stared open-mouthed and looked confused.

"There are no two ways about it -- that was not a good debate for Joe Biden," Democratic former White House communications chief Kate Bedingfield told host network CNN as the curtain came down on the match-up.

David Axelrod, a senior advisor in Barack Obama's administration, said Biden's performance had "confirmed people's fears" about an 81-year-old being too old for the Oval Office.

The president, who had spent days in mock debates at his Camp David retreat, was scheduled to begin the clean-up yesterday with his largest event of the campaign, in the battleground state of North Carolina.

Facing tough questions over his performance and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

3 Ansar Al Islam members arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

Three suspected members of the banned militant organisation Ansar Al Islam were arrested in the Chowfaldandi area of Cox's Bazar.

The arrested Zakaria Mandal, 19, of Jamalpur, Md Niamat Ullah, 21, of Bhola, and Md Ozair, 19, of Feni, are active members of the banned militant outfit, said Rab.

Ten extremist books, 29 leaflets, 1 diary, 2 madrasa identity cards, 2 NIDs, 2 mobile phones and Tk 4,590 were seized from their possession.

Teams from the intelligence wing of Rab headquarters, Rab-15 and Rab-7 conducted the operation Thursday night, Commander Arafat Islam, director of the legal and media wing of Rab, told journalists yesterday.

After the Eid holidays, the arrestees left home and gathered in Cox's Bazar to conduct secret meetings, Arafat said.

They joined Ansar al-Islam after being inspired by the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan, he added.

"The activities of Ansar Al Islam almost came to a standstill in the face of regular operations by Rab and other law enforcement forces. Due to disruption of activities in the name of this organisation [Ansar Al Islam], they formed a new militant group named 'As-Shahadat' with the ideology of Ansar al-Islam and are carrying out recruitment activities."

MY DHAKA

The unknown tomb in Mohammadpur

SK MEHEDI HASSAN

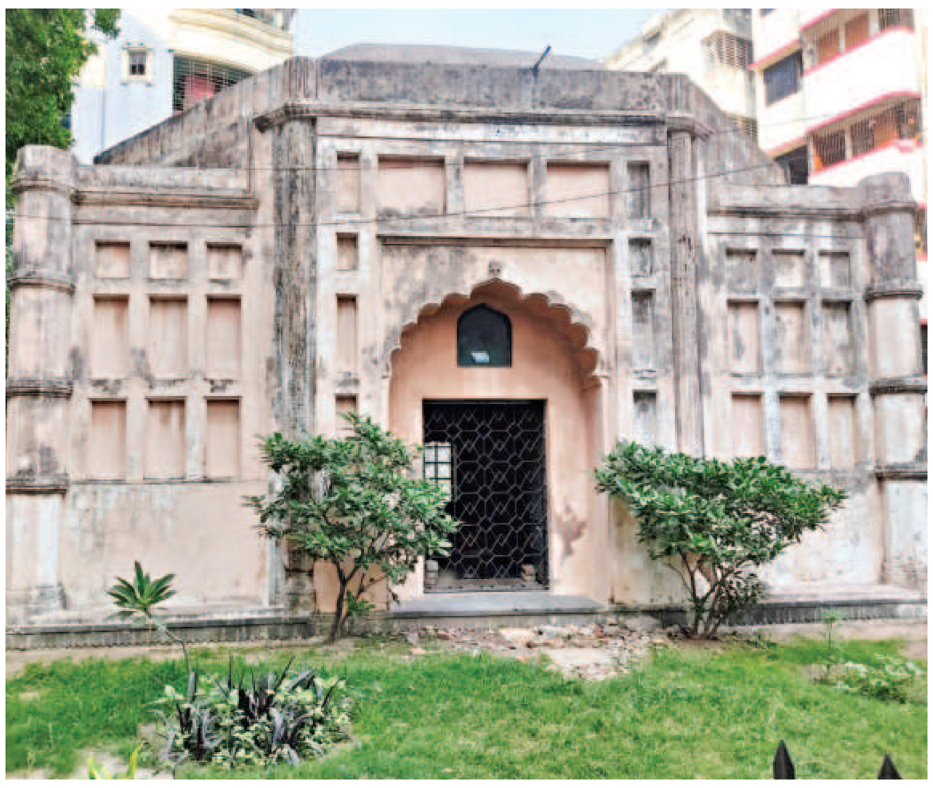


PHOTO: STAR

Between Shia Mosque and Mohammadpur Bus Stand, a mausoleum stands at Banshbari, easily visible on the left. On the other side of the road is the historic Sat Gambuj Mosque and today, surrounded by numerous modern buildings, the sepulchre stands out because of its unique design and structure.

"Whose grave is this?" -- I often wonder. With utmost curiosity, I asked several locals this very same question, but no one could provide a clear answer.

From the outside, the structure looks like a Nawab's house. The old building evokes a forgotten past with its style, shape, and use of materials, intriguing people about the story behind it.

Archaeologists and historians suggest that the building belongs to the Mughal era. Buildings of that era have a uniform pattern of structure and character, including large bulbous domes, slender minarets at the corners, massive halls, large vaulted gateways, and delicate ornamentation.

Unknown Tomb

Regarding the mausoleum, Nuruzzaman Sheikh, a resident of Mohammadpur, said, "I see the structure regularly but never thought about whose grave it might be. When the government itself doesn't know, how would I?"

The Department of Archaeology has a signboard that reads: "Unknown Tomb: The tomb appears to be an inseparable part of Sat Gambuj Masjid. According to the legend... one of the daughters of Nawab Shaista Khan was buried in it."

Shaista Khan governed Bengal for 24 years (1664-1688), with a break for a little over one year in 1678-79. His tenure as subahdar was the longest. Of Iranian origin, his family was connected with the Mughal royal family.

As even the Department of Archaeology cannot determine who is buried there, a mystery always shrouds the structure.

Besides, there are two more graves on the tomb premises, but no statement clarifies who they belong to. It is assumed that the graves are of those who took care of the tomb.

On a sunny afternoon, I visited the spot. The gate was open, and the premises were fenced with iron bars, with no one around the structure.

There are four doors on four sides. I got close to one of the doors. Amid the chaotic life outside, an eerie silence existed inside the building. A large grave with a green cloth covering the surface was visible.

In a dimly lit, ancient tomb, several candles flickered, casting eerie shadows on the walls. Amidst the glow, a man seemed to pray.

The air was thick with mystery as if the secrets of the past were silently watching over the scene.

While I was getting out, I looked back. The mysterious tomb of Mohammadpur stood as an enigmatic relic of history -- its silent walls echoing with unanswered questions and forgotten tales from centuries past.

BOGURA JAILBREAK

Deputy jailer, chief prison guard suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogura*

A deputy jailer and the chief prison guard of Bogura District Jail have been suspended from their posts over negligence in duty following the jailbreak of four death row convicts early Wednesday.

Md Hosenuzzaman, deputy jailer, and Farid Uddin, chief prison guard, were suspended on Thursday, jail authorities told The Daily Star.

Earlier on June 26, prison authorities also suspended three other prison guards, Bogura District Jail Superintendent Anwar Hossain said.

The prison authorities also evacuated the "Jaflong cell" and shifted the 10 death-row convicts and 16 other prisoners, including militants, to another building following the jailbreak.

They have been kept under a special arrangement in another cell of the jail, said the jail superintendent.

The investigation committee which was formed after the incident considers the building risky, he added.

Three held with foreign liquor worth Tk 2 crore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

The Narcotics Control Department arrested three people along with large quantities of illegal foreign liquor worth about Tk 2 crore in Patuakhali early yesterday.

A lorry along with 26,880 cans of Chinese beer were seized in a raid at the toll plaza area of Patuakhali Bridge on the Patuakhali-Barishal highway, said Patuakhali Narcotics Control Department Assistant Director Enayet Hossain.

The arrestees are Mehedi Hasan Rabbi, 23, of Nachnapara Chowrasta area of Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila, lorry driver Rubel Munshi, 27, of Barishal's Kaunia area, and Basirul Islam, 28, of Dinajpur's Fulbaria Municipality area.

Of them, Basirul and Mehedi are working for Patuakhali's Payra Power Plant's contractor Chinese company, Oriental Pearl.

Enayet said the consignment was seized based on a tip-off. It is believed that these beers came from China to Kalapara via Payra Port. This is the biggest consignment of illegal beer seized in Barisal division.

A case has been filed with Patuakhali Sadar Police Station over the incident.

Quoting the lorry driver, the DNC official said each can contain 330ml of beer and the market value of the seized beer is around Tk 2.15 crore.

Indian foreign ministry

FROM PAGE 1

Narendra Modi on June 24 opposing any water-sharing talks with Bangladesh without the state's involvement, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Jaiswal said India's internal committee on the renewal of the Ganges water-sharing treaty has submitted its final report. He, however, did not disclose its content.

India and Bangladesh signed the Ganga water-sharing accord in 1996. The 30-year treaty is due to expire in 2026 but may be extended by mutual agreement.

Last Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi after meeting his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina in New Delhi announced that the two countries will begin technical-level discussions on the renewal of the treaty.

In the letter to Modi, Mamata had claimed that the decision to start talks for the renewal of the Ganges water-sharing treaty with Bangladesh was "unilateral" and urged him not to hold any discussion with Bangladesh without involving the West Bengal government.

Asked if any payment of fees and deployment of security personnel were discussed while signing the MoU allowing Indian railways to access Bangladesh territory, Jaiswal said those can only be answered by technical experts.

"These are technical questions and these will be addressed by technical experts at the right time."

The MEA spokesman said India and Bangladesh are working to enhance connectivity to promote bilateral trade and in other areas to take the relationship to a higher level.

AL to hold

FROM PAGE 1

The AL announced its programme yesterday saying that it will hold a discussion at 3:00pm today in front of its central office on Bangabandhu Avenue, around 1.6km away from the BNP headquarters.

This is the third time since the January 7 parliamentary polls the ruling party is organising a programme to counter BNP's.

On January 30, the BNP took out black flag processions in the capital calling for dissolution of the 12th parliament. On the same day, the AL organised nationwide rallies protesting "undemocratic activities" of the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

The ruling party held "peace rallies" since December last year apparently to counter the BNP's demonstrations demanding general election under a non-party neutral administration.

Anti-graft laws, rules relaxed over the years

FROM PAGE 1

As per the 2018 act, an employee can be in service even after being sentenced to up to 12 months in prison for a criminal offence.

The 2002 amendment to the Government Servant (Conduct) Rules-1979 is yet another example.

According to Section-13 of the rules, civil servants had to submit their wealth statement to their departments every year.

But now the employees have to do it every five years, thanks to an amendment to the rules during the tenure of the BNP-led alliance government in 2002.

Many officials do not bother with submitting their wealth statements it at all, sources said.

Besides, the public administration ministry has taken an initiative to further relax this provision. The ministry proposes that the government collect the employees' wealth statements from annual tax returns if necessary.

Former secretary Badiur Rahman said that weakening the law means encouraging corruption.

The lenient rules and laws send a message to the government employees that they can get away with corruption, he said. "These amendments are a step in the wrong direction."

Only stringent laws can deter corruption, he added.

Supreme Court lawyer Arif Khan said, "Enacting laws or regulations that encourage corruption is tantamount to ignoring the Constitution."

The Constitution states that the government will enact laws so that no citizen can possess illegal wealth. According to Article 20(2) of the Constitution, "The State shall endeavour to create conditions in which, as a general principle, persons shall not be able to enjoy unearned incomes..."

Over the last few weeks, corruption by several government officials hogged the headlines.

Awami League leader and lawmaker Mahbubul Alam Hanif on June 25 told parliament that corruption had eclipsed the government's achievements.

"The government has repeatedly announced its zero-tolerance policy against corruption... The rules and regulations have been relaxed and made more lenient. There is scope for errant officers to be on job with the bare minimum penalties."

He said the Government Services Act, 2018, could be "considered a law to protect criminals".

On June 26, lawmaker Kabirul Haque said corruption had become institutionalised.

2 of the killers faked identity

FROM PAGE 1

filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station by his daughter.

According to investigators, all the suspects of MP Azim's murder went into hiding after detectives arrested Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan, the coordinator of the killing mission, on May 19.

"Foysal and Mostafiz are the followers of Amanullah, a leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party. They worked as two main associates for Amanullah in the murder of the MP," said DB chief Harun Or Rashid, also an additional commissioner of the DMP, yesterday.

He said the duo were involved in different criminal activities on Amanullah's instructions.

Regarding the hideout in the temple, the detectives said Foysal and Mostafiz returned to Bangladesh on May 19 from Kolkata after the killing of the MP on May 13. They then called Aktaruzzaman, one of the masterminds of the murder, over the phone to pay the blood money.

Aktaruzzaman, now believed to be hiding in the US, then gave them Tk 30,000.

With the money, the duo first went to Chandranath Temple on the Chandranath Hill of Chattogram and tried to stay there.

Investigators said there is a police outpost on the hill. The area is also under the coverage of CCTV cameras, they said.

When the two approached the on-duty police personnel, they were told that they could not stay at the temple.

But at their request, the police personnel asked the duo to go to Patal Temple at the foot of the hill saying that they could stay there at night, said investigators.

The two then went to the temple. Posing as cousins, they identified themselves as Shimul Roy and Polash Roy.

Quoting devotees at the temple, the detectives said no one could doubt their activities.

The duo used to perform all rituals, said investigators, adding that they went on two-day leave during the Eid-ul-Azha.

Requesting anonymity, a police official said Foysal and Mostafiz left the temple on June 15 and went to Ramgarh area of Khagrachhari.

The two celebrated Eid at the home of Foysal's friend in Khagrachhari, said the official, adding that the two returned to the temple after Eid.

A top police official questioned how those working at the police outpost failed to identify the two suspects as their photos were supposed to be available at all police stations.

Police were also looking into this, the official said, adding that detectives did not get any tip-off from the police outpost.

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and stayed at a friend's house overnight. He left the house the next day saying he would visit a doctor.

On May 22, India and Bangladesh police said the lawmaker was murdered.

Rice prices up by Tk 2-3 a kg

FROM PAGE 1

market, said millers have hiked the rice prices gradually since the reopening of the mills after the Eid.

"Prices of paddy have been increasing for the last two-three days, but the millers started hiking the rice prices after the Eid," he added.

Chitta Majumder, owner of Majumdar Traders, a leading rice importer of the country, yesterday said that there was enough stock of rice and paddy in the country.

He said many farmers are not selling their crop now in anticipation of further increase in prices.

"The paddy we bought for Tk 1,300 per maund a week ago now costs Tk 1,380," he told The Daily Star.

He said even though rice is cheaper in India compared to Bangladesh, they cannot import the staple.

"This is because the selling price of the imported rice would be higher by Tk8-10 per kg than the price of a similar variety of local rice as we have to pay import taxes and VAT," he added.

Flop show rocks Biden campaign

FROM PAGE 1

immediate future, he told reporters he had done "well" as he stopped off at an Atlanta Waffle House with First Lady Jill Biden after coming off stage.

He added that he was croaking because of a "sore throat" and that, in any case, it is "hard to debate a liar."

Although Biden managed to pin down Trump on abortion rights and his role in the violence that marred the 2021 handover, he waited bafflingly long -- almost 45 minutes -- to bring up Trump's felony convictions and other legal woes in any detail.

He spoke under his breath and appeared at times to lose focus, pausing for several seconds after stumbling in the opening stages.

Trump's performance was far from accomplished -- his verbal fusillades were littered with falsehoods and he dodged several times when asked what he would do about the opioid crisis ravaging middle-class families.

He also refused to clearly commit to accepting the results of November's election, playing into the narrative that he has little respect for democracy or the rule of law.

CNN reported that while Biden made nine false or misleading statements, Trump made a staggering 30, including "egregious" falsehoods on abortion, the US Capitol insurrection, health care and NATO.

But the Republican -- who is countering Biden's rally with an appearance of his own in Virginia on Friday -- largely avoided the rhetorical landmines that exploded under Biden.

At one point, the president bizarrely declared that "we finally beat Medicare," as the discussion turned to funding the health insurance program for seniors.

A Biden replacement?

As the disappointment of Biden's showing registered with Democrats, there was even talk of finding a new candidate before the party's convention in August.

Democrats -- "including members of his own administration -- traded frenzied phone calls and text messages within minutes of the start of the debate as it became clear that Mr. Biden was not at his sharpest," the New York Times reported.

Some also "privately discussed among themselves whether it was too late to persuade the president to step aside in favor of a younger candidate," the paper added.

Even a German official coordinating cooperation with the United States told a German newspaper that Democrats should consider replacing Biden as their candidate.

"There's been a lot of chatter in our circles about Newsom," one party strategist told political outlet The Hill -- although California governor Gavin Newsom quickly shut down suggestions that he could take Biden's place.

In the Trump corner, pundits reveled at how the night turned out.

Keith Nahigian, a Republican veteran of six campaigns who helped prepare multiple election candidates including John McCain for debates, told AFP that Biden's performance was "the worst I've ever seen."

"Biden called for this debate a few months ago. He pushed for this debate. I think he just sunk his presidency," he added.

Ralph Reed, chairman of the conservative Faith and Freedom Coalition, compared the debate to a prize fight "that should have been stopped in the early rounds."

Maiden triumph or return to glory?

FROM PAGE 1

India's journey to the final has been smooth, as barring the first round match against Pakistan, which they won by six runs, they have hardly been tested, overpowering every opponent en route to their third T20 World Cup final.

By comparison, South Africa's road to the final has been bumpy and full of obstacles.

The Proteas edged Nepal and Bangladesh by one and three runs respectively in the first round in low-scoring thrillers, held their nerves against West Indies in their final Super Eight game which had turned into a virtual quarterfinal and then thrashed Afghanistan in the semifinals -- their first win in a World Cup semifinal after seven unsuccessful attempts.

The win over Afghanistan lifted a weight which had been weighing down the South African team since the 1992 ODI World Cup, when their dreaded streak of semifinal defeats began.

Now, Aiden Markram's side will be stepping into uncharted waters in the final, while Rohit Sharma's team will come face to face with a hurdle they have come to dread in recent years.

India have enjoyed a dominant phase in the last decade across three formats, reaching the knockout stage in nine ICC tournaments and making the final five times – T20 World Cup in 2014, ODI World Cup in 2023, ICC Champions Trophy in 2017 and the ICC Test Championship in 2021 and 2023.

However, in all five finals, the Men in Blue got bested. The defeat to Australia in last year's ODI World Cup final in front of over 130,000 home fans in Ahmedabad was particularly scarring for Rohit's team, a side that had come into that final undefeated, much like they have done in the current event.

Today's final in Barbados is an opportunity for Rohit and his team to exorcise the past demons and take India back to the top of the mountain in T20Is for the first time since 2007. Meanwhile, for South Africa, the match is the chance to pass over the 'chokers' moniker to India and replace it with champions.

DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 29, 2024
ASHAR 15, 1431 BS
The Daily Star

A butterfly relishes nectar from a flower. Skipping from flower to flower, these winged insects collect nectar, aiding pollination for new flowers to bloom. The photo was taken in Doulatpur Rail Station area, Khulna.

PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

‘Take action to prevent child marriage’

UN under-secy-general urges to invest in girls’ education

PORIMOL PALMA

Child marriage in Bangladesh is deeply troubling, and effective and immediate action is required to put an end to it, said UN Under-Secretary-General Dr Natalia Kanem.

“We have seen girls aged just 12 who are pregnant. This is deeply worrying, and society needs to realise it and take action in this regard,” said Dr Kanem, who is also executive director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

She was in Dhaka recently for a two-day global dialogue on demographic diversity and sustainable development, marking the 30th anniversary of 1994’s landmark International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo.

In an interview with The Daily Star, spoke on the progress made since the ICPD in Cairo and the challenges and ways out in the days to come.

She said ICPD put women and girls at the centre of development, and there has been remarkable progress in women’s development, alongside their sexual and reproductive health.

“For example, maternal mortality fell by one-third. In Bangladesh, it fell by 38 percent. There were many policies and laws enacted, like the Prevention of Oppression Against Women and Children Act 2000 in Bangladesh,” Kanem said.

The dividend comes when you invest in girls’ education. This will ultimately lead to multiple benefits in health, productivity, and income.

NATALIA KANEM

However, the ICPD agenda remains largely unfinished, with child marriage being one of them, she added.

According to UN data, 51 percent of girls in Bangladesh are married before their 18th birthday and of them, 15 percent are married before the age of 15. Additionally, at least four percent of boys are married before the age of 18.

“It is very risky to have a pregnancy at such a young age. Teaching them safe sexuality and delaying pregnancy are of critical importance,” Dr Kanem said.

When such young women give birth to children, they face health risks, alongside higher risks of gender-based violence, she said.

If the mother is educated, a family enjoys better health and economic conditions, eventually leading to a better-off future generation, while the opposite happens otherwise, she added.

“The dividend comes when you invest in girls’ education. This will ultimately lead to multiple benefits in health, productivity, and income,” she also said.

Another objective of ICPD was to end maternal and child deaths, but that goal is far from being achieved despite notable progress.

Sharing her experience of visiting facilities at the Santal community in Gaibandha, where UNFPA-trained midwives deliver babies, Dr Kanem said before only three percent of women used to go to the facility but now it has gone up to 20 percent.

“Three midwives delivered 494 children there. The people were so happy,” she said, noting that pregnant women visiting such facilities for deliveries and pregnancy-related advice help in a great way.

In general, 33 percent of deliveries take place at homes, which is dangerous. The challenge now is how to decrease it, she said, adding, “Bangladesh has leadership, but massive social awareness is required and media can play a role here.”

Uphold ideals of Liberation War

Chief justice urges journos; 3 get Bazlur Rahman Smrity Padak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan yesterday called upon journalists to adhere to the principles of those who sacrificed their lives during the 1971 Liberation War in their professional work.

Speaking as the chief guest at an award ceremony, he commemorated journalists such as Shahidullah Kayser, Shaheed Saber, Sirajuddin Hossain, and Selina Parvin, who laid down their lives for the country’s independence.

Highlighting the contribution of the Liberation War Museum, Hassan praised the institution’s efforts to educate future generations.

He said without such institutions, many aspects of the Liberation War would have been lost.

He urged the audience, especially the public representatives present, to establish research centres at the grassroots to spread the spirit of the Liberation War.

The Liberation War Museum organised the event to present the Bazlur Rahman Smrity Padak-2023 awards for journalism.

Ahmad Istiak, a reporter from The Daily Star, and Jharna Moni, deputy chief reporter of the Bhorer Kagoj, jointly received the award in the print media category.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

PHOTO: **STAR**

The awardees with the dignitaries at the event yesterday.

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK

Road to justice still not over

HC yet to conclude hearings on death references, appeals

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

It is still uncertain when the August 21 grenade attack cases will reach the eventuality although the High Court has so far held hearings on death references and appeals for 91 working days since December 5, 2022.

The cases were filed after the gruesome attacks on an Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka on August 21, 2004, leaving at least 24 people dead and 300 injured.

The then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, now the prime minister, narrowly escaped death in the incident.

An unexploded grenade at the scene.

STAR FILE PHOTO

The state counsels (deputy attorney generals and assistant attorney generals) have read out from the paper books, which contain all the details of a case, trial proceedings, statements, evidence, verdicts and other documents of the cases, for 61 days before the HC bench of Justice Shahidul Karim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman.

Then the defence counsels have placed arguments for 30 days till June 12 before the bench on behalf of 24 convicted accused out of total 49.

The HC bench will resume the hearing on June 30, court sources said.

Once the defence lawyers finish placing arguments, the state counsels will make arguments against the convicted accused and then the defence will give reply to their (state) arguments, Deputy Attorney General Bashir Ahmed told The Daily Star on June 20.

After concluding the hearings, the HC bench will deliver a verdict on the death references, and the appeals, filed by the convicted accused challenging the trial court judgement.

DAG Bashir said after the HC will release the full text of the verdict, both the state

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

A Dhaka court on October 10, 2018 sentenced 19 people, including former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar to death in two cases. Nineteen others including BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman were given life imprisonment.

Govt ‘sheltering the corrupt’

Alleges BNP leader Farroque

UNB, *Dhaka*

The Awami League government is providing shelter to numerous corrupt individuals like Aziz Ahmed and Benazir Ahmed, alleged BNP chairperson’s advisory council member Zainul Abedin Farroque yesterday.

“Where is Benazir [former police chief Benazir Ahmed], Aziz [former army chief Aziz Ahmed], Matiur [revenue officer Matiur Rahman] today?” he questioned.

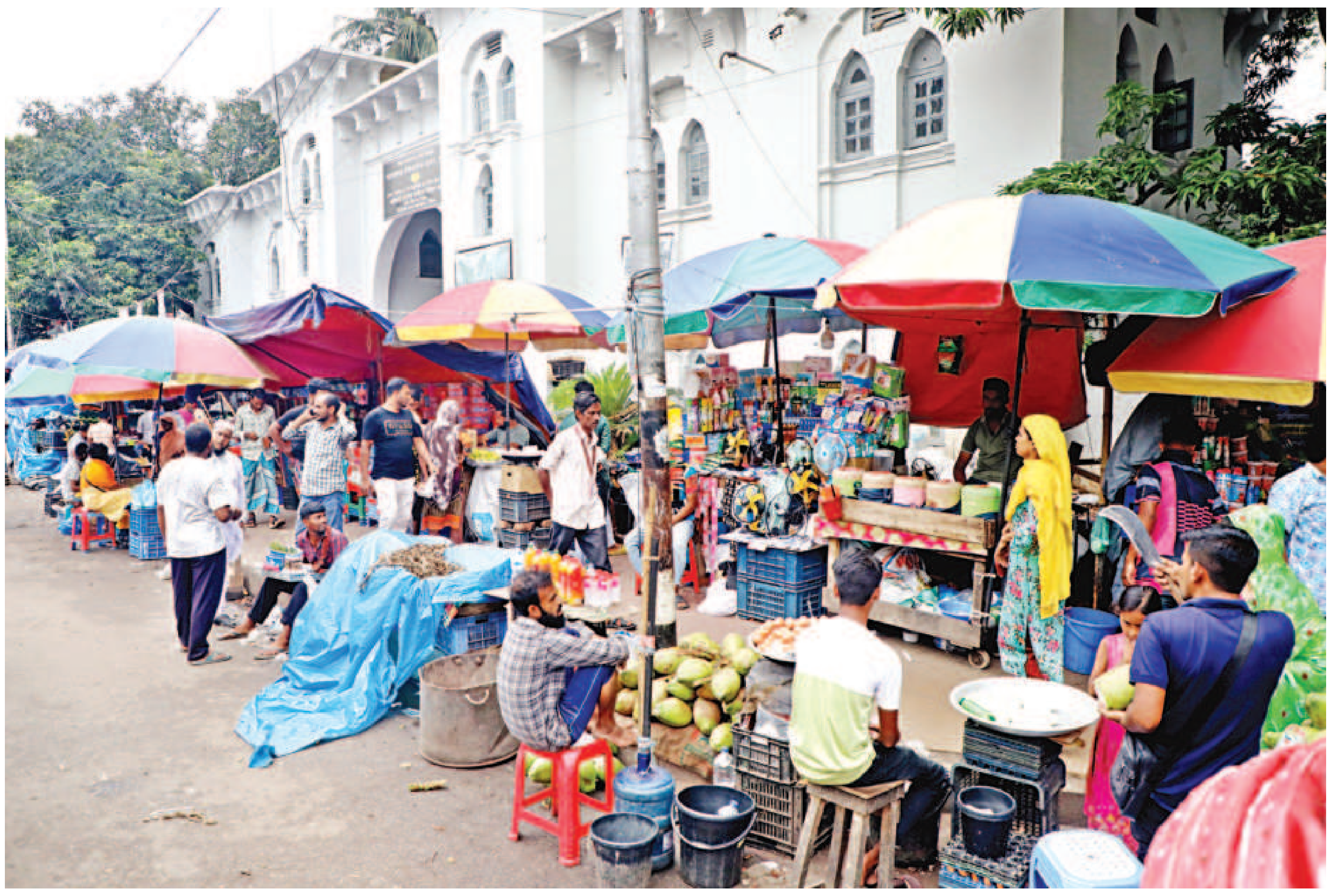
Speaking at a demonstration, the BNP leader said new corrupt individuals like National Board of Revenue first secretary [Taxes Legal and Enforcement] Quazi Abu Mahmud Faisal have emerged.

“In Bangladesh, there are numerous individuals thriving under the shelter of the government, who have amassed crores of taka by plundering. These people must be exposed, or the people of Bangladesh will never forgive you [government],” the BNP leader said.

Farroque, a former opposition chief whip in parliament, criticised the AL general secretary for his political rhetoric supporting the government amid increasing allegations of corruption against government officials. “The people are very conscious. You’re in power with the support of a few bureaucrats. You have not been able to win over the people,” he claimed.

Projonmo Bangladesh, a pro-opposition platform, organised the programme in front of Jatiya Press Club, protesting the government’s agreement with India.

The BNP leader strongly opposed the Indian government’s plan to develop a network of railway tracks through Bangladesh to connect the northeast region with the rest of India.



Vendors take up almost the entire footpath in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, leaving little to no room for patients and pedestrians to walk. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

‘Introduce ration for RMG workers’

DU CORRESPONDENT

A rationing system must be introduced for readymade garment (RMG) workers and low-income people, demanded participants at rallies in Dhaka yesterday.

Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati and the National Garment Workers Federation organised the separate programmes in front of Jatiya Press Club.

The speakers also sought the cancellation of tax exemptions for illegal “wealth earners and money launderers”.

They said although the lion’s share of remittance comes from the RMG sector, no budget allocation is kept for them, they said.

Low-income people are intimidated when the new budget comes, as taxes on goods increase every year, said the participants.

Taslima Akhter, president of Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati, and Babul Hossain, its general secretary, were among those present.

SHARIFA'S TALE

Removing it from textbook was a submissive decision

Says Nirmul Committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee yesterday condemned the education ministry's decision to remove the story titled "Sharifa's Tale" from the seventh-grade textbook under the new curriculum, terming the decision "submissive".

In a statement, the pro-Liberation War platform demanded that the ministry immediately withdraw the decision, calling upon the government to make the curriculum inclusive.

Nirmul Committee said the new curriculum has been formulated based on pluralism but is facing a setback because of such recommendations.

The education ministry recently decided to remove "Sharifa's Tale" from the seventh-grade textbook following recommendations of a probe committee and instructed the National Curriculum and Textbook Board to take necessary steps regarding the decision.

Nirmul Committee said the new curriculum has been formulated based on pluralism but is facing a setback because of such recommendations. It said communal forces have been creating obstacles to implement the curriculum, demanding legal action against those who were running campaigns both online and offline against it.

"Sharifa's Tale" was included in the history and social science book for seventh grade in a section on "human similarities and differences". This chapter was designed under the new curriculum to raise public awareness about transgender people.

Prof Md Moshiuzzaman, acting NCTB chairman, recently told The Daily Star the story would be replaced in the next academic year. The textbook would still have a topic for the same learning outcome, but with a different narrative.

The story drew significant attention after an adjunct faculty member of BRAC University tore out the pages containing it during an event. A video of this incident went viral on social media.

On January 24, the education ministry formed a five-member committee to review "Sharifa's Tale". The committee recommended dropping the story in May.

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়
লালমাটিয়া বি-ব্লক-এ ১৬০০ বর্গফুটের শতভাগ রেডি ব্র্যান্ড নিউ ফ্ল্যাট।
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ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়
বসুন্ধরা এফ- ব্লকে একটি বিল্ডিং -এ ১৫০০ বর্গফুটের ৩টি শতভাগ রেডি ফ্ল্যাট।
ম্যাজিক ব্রিকস হোল্ডিংস লিঃ।
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৮
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Poet Abul Hussain's death anniv

CITY DESK

Today is the 10th death anniversary of poet Abul Hussain, said a press release.

On this day in 2014, he passed away.

Poet Abul Hussain authored 25 books.

Naba Basanta was his first book of poetry. Birash Sanglap (1969), Duswapna Te Duswapne (1985), Haoa Tomoy Ache (1982), Ekhono Shomoy Achhey (1997), Aar Kirsher Opekkha (2000), Kaler Khatae (2008), and Selected Poems by Abul Hussain (1986) are some of his notable works.

Born in Khulna on August 15, 1922, he was educated at Kolkata Presidency College and Kolkata University in Economics.

Poet Abul Hussain received Ekushey Padak, Bangla Academy Award and Padabali Award.

12-year-old boy drowns in river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

A boy drowned while he was swimming in the Old Brahmaputra river in Mymensingh's Gafargaon upazila yesterday morning.

The victim is Masum Billah, 12, son of Saidul Islam. Quoting locals, Md Abu Bakar Siddique, officer-in-charge of Gafargaon Police Station, said Masum Billah, a student at a local madrasa, along with five other boys went to swim in the river in Char Bhatipara.

Masum suddenly drowned in the river. His body was recovered around noon.

'We demanded concrete bridges, got wooden ones'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

The local authorities have constructed a total of 12 wooden bridges to replace makeshift bamboo ones over canals and streams across Roumari and Char Rajibpur upazilas in Kurigram.

Of those, nine bridges were constructed in Roumari and three in Char Rajibpur with funds from the Rural Infrastructure Maintenance (Test Relief) Programme under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief.

Separated by the Brahmaputra river, the two upazilas are dotted with canals and small rivers and are largely affected by river erosion and flooding. The residents of the villages face immense difficulties in commuting to the upazila headquarters due to poor communication.

For years, the residents have been using makeshift bamboo bridges to cross the waterbodies crisscrossing through the two upazilas. They have long been demanding the construction of permanent concrete bridges to ease their suffering.

"We had demanded construction of concrete bridges, but the authorities built these wooden ones. These will not last long. At least these are less risky than bamboo bridges. However, we urge the authorities concerned to construct concrete bridges to enhance communication in these areas," said Atiar Rahman, a school teacher in Kalapani area under Char Rajibpur upazila.

"Earlier, local farmers had to carry their produce to markets on foot using the bamboo bridge on the Jalchhera river. Now the newly constructed wooden bridge will allow battery-run easy-bikes to ply, making things a bit easier. We are happy, but would have been happier if our demand for a permanent concrete bridge was met," said Nur Mandal, a farmer from the upazila's Khajarghat area.

Akkel Ali, a farmer from Char Lalkura village under Roumari upazila, echoed him.

According to Mohammad Shamsuddin and Lutfar Rahman, project implementation officers of Roumari and Char Rajibpur upazilas respectively, each wooden bridge is 50-100 feet long and was built at a cost of Tk 2-4 lakh.

Contacted, Biplab Hasan, lawmaker from Kurigram-4 constituency, said letters have already been sent to the authorities of the relief department and Local Government Engineering Department to construct concrete bridges on several small rivers and canals in phases.

20 shops gutted in Bagerhat fire

UNB, *Bagerhat*

At least 20 shops were gutted in a fire that broke out in a market in Sarankhola upazila of Bagerhat on Thursday night.

The fire-hit shops included grocery, pharmacies, electronics and plastic goods.

Owners and fire services said the fire erupted in one of the shops of Rayenda Panch Rasta intersection in the upazila around 10:30pm.

Moniruzzaman Babul, general secretary of Rayenda Bazar Committee, urged the government to compensate the affected shopkeepers.

Sarankhola Fire Service and Civil Defence's Station Officer Md Aftab E Alam said it took an hour to bring the fire under control.

Man dies after being hit by train

UNB, *Chuadanga*

A man died after being hit by a train at the unguarded railway gate of Chhotadhupatila in Hauli union of Chuadanga's Damurhuda upazila yesterday.

The deceased Alamin Hossain, 29, was the son of Zhantu Ali of Dihi Krishnapur area.

Locals said the Dhaka-bound Maitree Express train from Kolkata hit Alamin while he was crossing the rail line around 11:30am. Alamin died on the spot.

On information, a team from Damurhuda Model and Darshana Railway police stations visited the spot.

Later, the body was taken for post-mortem.

আশুগঞ্জ পাওয়ার স্টেশন কোম্পানী লিঃ
ASHUGANJ POWER STATION COMPANY LTD.
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)
ISO 9001:2015, ISO: 14001:2015 & ISO 45001:2018 Certified Management System.

শেখ হাসিনার উদ্যোগ ঘরে ঘরে বিদ্যুৎ

স্মারক নং: ২৭.২৫.১২৩৩.২১১.১১.০০৩.১৮(এড-১).০৩৬৬
তারিখ: ১৩ আষাঢ় ১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ
২৭ জুন ২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

আশুগঞ্জ পাওয়ার স্টেশন কোম্পানী লিঃ (এপিএসসিএল) বাংলাদেশের অন্যতম বৃহৎ বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদনকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান। উক্ত প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিম্নোক্ত পদসমূহে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তসাপেক্ষে অনলাইনে (http://apscl.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইট এ) দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। অনলাইন ব্যতীত কোন প্রকার আবেদন গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম, সংখ্যা ও প্রারম্ভিক মূলবেতন	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা
১	সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (মেকানিক্যাল) (পদের সংখ্যা: ৭টি), মূল বেতন: ৫২,০০০/-	কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে মেকানিক্যাল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিষয়ে স্নাতক ডিগ্রি।
২	সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (ইলেকট্রিক্যাল) (পদের সংখ্যা: ৭টি), মূল বেতন: ৫২,০০০/-	কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে ইলেকট্রিক্যাল এন্ড ইলেকট্রনিক্স ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিষয়ে স্নাতক ডিগ্রি।

সকল পদে বাংলা ও ইংরেজি ভাষায় দক্ষতা অত্যাবশ্যক, কম্পিউটার চালনায় পারদর্শী ও অংশগ্রহণমূলক নেতৃত্বের গুণ থাকতে হবে।

ফ্রিঞ্জ বেনিফিট/সুবিধা:
১. ফ্রিঞ্জ বেনিফিট/সুবিধার মধ্যে রয়েছে মূল বেতন, পাওয়ার স্টেশন ভাতা, নিয়মিত আবাসন (খালি থাকা সাপেক্ষে) বা সংস্থার বিধি অনুসারে বাড়ি ভাড়া ভাতা, দুটি উৎসব ভাতা, নববর্ষ ভাতা, মেডিকেল সুবিধা (প্রতিপূরণ), শিক্ষা ভাতা এবং কোম্পানির বিধি অনুসারে অন্যান্য ফ্রিঞ্জ বেনিফিট প্রাপ্য হবেন।
২. প্রাথমিকভাবে শিক্ষানবিশ (Probationer) হিসাবে নিয়োগপত্র ০১ (এক) বছরের জন্য প্রদান করা হবে এবং শিক্ষানবিশ কালের সন্তোষজনক মূল্যায়নের ভিত্তিতে শিক্ষানবিশ কাল ০১ (এক) বছরসহ ০৩ (তিন) বছরের জন্য চুক্তিভিত্তিক নিয়োগ নিশ্চিত করা হবে। প্রতি ০৩ (তিন) বছর পর সন্তোষজনক মূল্যায়নের ভিত্তিতে চুক্তি নবায়ন করা হবে। অবসর গ্রহণের বয়স ৬০ (ষাট) বছর।

শর্তাবলী:
১. বয়সসীমা: ১৫ জুন ২০২৪ তারিখে প্রার্থীর বয়সসীমা ১৮ হতে ৩০ বছর হতে হবে (মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কোটায় তাদের সন্তানদের ও শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী প্রার্থীদের বয়সসীমা সর্বোচ্চ ৩২ বছর)।
২. শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা: কোন পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম ২য় বিভাগ অথবা সিজিপিএ ৪.০০ এর স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ২.৫০ অথবা সিজিপিএ ৫.০০ এর স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.৫০।
৩. নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে পদের প্রার্থীগণ পরীক্ষার ফি বাবদ ৬৬৯/- টাকা টেলিটক প্রিপেইড মোবাইল মারফত SMS এর মাধ্যমে জমা প্রদান করবেন।
৪. অনলাইনে আবেদন করার লিংক এপিএসসিএল এর ওয়েবসাইটে http://www.apscl.gov.bd এবং টেলিটক এর ওয়েবসাইটে http://apscl.teletalk.com.bd পাওয়া যাবে। এছাড়া বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রীয় মোবাইল অপারেটর টেলিটকের জবপোর্টাল https//alljobs.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইটে সরাসরি প্রবেশ করেও বিজ্ঞপ্তিটি পাওয়া যাবে। আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও পরীক্ষার ফি জমাদানের শুরুর তারিখ ও সময়: ০১ জুলাই, ২০২৪ খ্রি:, সকাল ১০:০০টা এবং শেষ তারিখ ও সময়: ১৫ জুলাই, ২০২৪ খ্রি:, বিকাল ৫:০০টা।
৫. কোন সরকারি/আধা সরকারি/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত/বিদ্যুৎ সেক্টর প্রতিষ্ঠানে চাকুরীরত প্রার্থীগণকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিক্রমে আবেদন করতে হবে এবং অনুমোদনের কাগজ মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় দাখিল করতে হবে।
৬. মুক্তিযোদ্ধা সনদপত্র/ শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় দাখিল করতে হবে।
৭. নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে কোটা সংক্রান্ত সরকারী নীতিমালা/বিধি-বিধান অনুসরণ করা হবে।
৮. কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন আবেদনপত্র এবং নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়া বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।
৯. নিয়োগ পরবর্তী পদায়নের ক্ষেত্রে বাংলাদেশের যে কোন স্থানে কাজ করার মানসিকতা থাকতে হবে।
১০. পদের সংখ্যা হ্রাস/বৃদ্ধি হতে পারে।
১১. যে কোন প্রকার তদবীর/সুপারিশ প্রার্থীর অযোগ্যতা হিসাবে গণ্য হবে।

অনলাইনে আবেদন এবং টাকা জমা দেয়ার কাজটি প্রার্থী নিজে করবেন। এক্ষেত্রে অন্য কোন মাধ্যম থেকে উক্ত কাজটি সম্পন্ন করে প্রার্থী প্রতারিত হলে কর্তৃপক্ষ দায়ী থাকবে না। শেষ তারিখ (১৫/০৭/২০২৪) ও সময়ের জন্য অপেক্ষা না করে হাতে যথেষ্ট সময় নিয়ে online এ আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও আবেদন ফি জমাদান করতে পরামর্শ দেয়া যাচ্ছে।

S.M. Zakir
২৭.০৬.২০২৪
(সালাউদ্দিন মোহাম্মদ জাকির)
ব্যবস্থাপক (এইচআরএম), অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্ব
যোগাযোগ: email: hrm@apscl.org.bd

Road to justice still

FROM PAGE 3

and defence will have scope to move appeals before the Supreme Court.

Then few years' time may be needed by the Appellate Division for disposing of the appeals, and later on, the parties will have an option to move review petitions challenging the apex court judgement.

That is why, it cannot be said at this stage how much time will be needed for reaching the finality of the cases, he added.

A Dhaka court on October 10, 2018 sentenced 19 people, including former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar to death in the two cases filed in connection with the grenade attacks.

Nineteen others including BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman were given life imprisonment and 11 people were handed different terms in prison.

Eighteen of the convicted accused, including Tarique, who is in London, are absconding and 31 are in jail.

The death references of the cases reached the HC on November 27, 2018, for examination of the trial court's verdict.

On January 13, 2019, the HC accepted the appeals filed by the convicts for hearing. The same day, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim (now a judge of the Appellate Division) and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman also stayed parts of the trial court verdict that fined the convicts.

Mithachhara

FROM PAGE 5

Officials of the BWDB admitted that the waterbody has been filled up by silt from upstream again after excavation.

Visiting the areas along the canal recently, this correspondent observed that the canal has turned into a drain in many places, while agricultural lands on its banks lie barren due to a lack of water for irrigation.

"Siltation has hindered the canal's flow, leading to a shortage of water for irrigation, so we are unable to cultivate crops on our lands," said Ramjan Ali Sayem, a farmer from Uttara Housing area.

Abul Kalam, a resident of Dewannagar area, said, "Even a little rain triggers waterlogging as the canal cannot drain away rainwater."

Monjurul Alam Chowdhury, administrator of Hathazari municipality, said he has urged a high official of BWDB to re-excavate the canal and free it from occupiers.

Some structures including a culvert built by grabbers over the canal were demolished in 2023, he added.

Contacted, Mohammed Sohag Talukder, sub-divisional engineer of BWDB (Hathazari sub-division), said the canal was filled up by siltation due to natural causes.

"At present, there is no fund for re-excavating the canal. However, we are trying to get allocation for it as the canal is important for local agriculture and drainage in the area," he said.

Uphold ideals

FROM PAGE 3

Layla Nawshin, staff correspondent of Channel i, received the award in the electronic media category.

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, who chaired the programme, emphasised the need for continued journalism on the Liberation War.

Dr Sarwar Ali and Mofidul Haque, trustees of the Liberation War Museum, also spoke at the event.

SHEIKH RUSSEL PARK IN N'GANJ

Once abandoned, now a green haven

SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM, *N'ganj*

Sheikh Russel Park stands as a lush green oasis, providing much-needed respite to residents of the densely populated Narayanganj city.

Once an abandoned 18-acre plot beside a waterbody in Deobhog area, the park is now a vital recreation space under the supervision of the Narayanganj City Corporation.

Originally owned by Bangladesh Railway, the land was left unused for years before plans emerged to sell it as residential plots.

Protests by city dwellers led to a change in plans, and Rajuk identified it as a recreation space in its 2010 Detailed Area Plan.

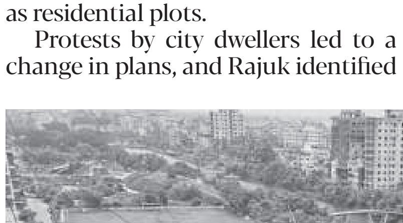
In 2011, Mayor Selina Hayat Ivy initiated the excavation of the waterbody and the establishment of the park at a cost of Tk 57.67 crore. The park was named after Sheikh Russel, the youngest son of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated it in November last year.

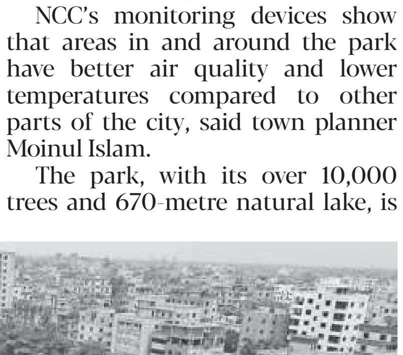
The park features a lake with clear water and blooming lilies, surrounded by a walkway. It boasts a playground, ample open space, a swimming pool with nominal fees, and a free swimming facility in Gymkhana Lake, an extension of the park.

"Earlier, there were hardly any open spaces to sit in peace in this city. This park has become a blessing in the middle of this concrete jungle," said Bithi Poddar, a visitor.

NCC's monitoring devices show that areas in and around the park have better air quality and lower temperatures compared to other parts of the city, said town planner Moinul Islam.

The park, with its over 10,000 trees and 670-metre natural lake, is also set to include bamboo bushes and fruit trees to create a sanctuary for birds and other species.





Jahirul Islam, joint secretary of Narayanganj Nagorik Committee, said, "For making a positive impact on the overall environment, it would be apt to call the park the lungs of city."

Locals urged the authorities to keep the park accessible by avoiding commercialisation.

Contacted, Mayor Ivy said, "This park is a major step towards making the city more child and eco-friendly."

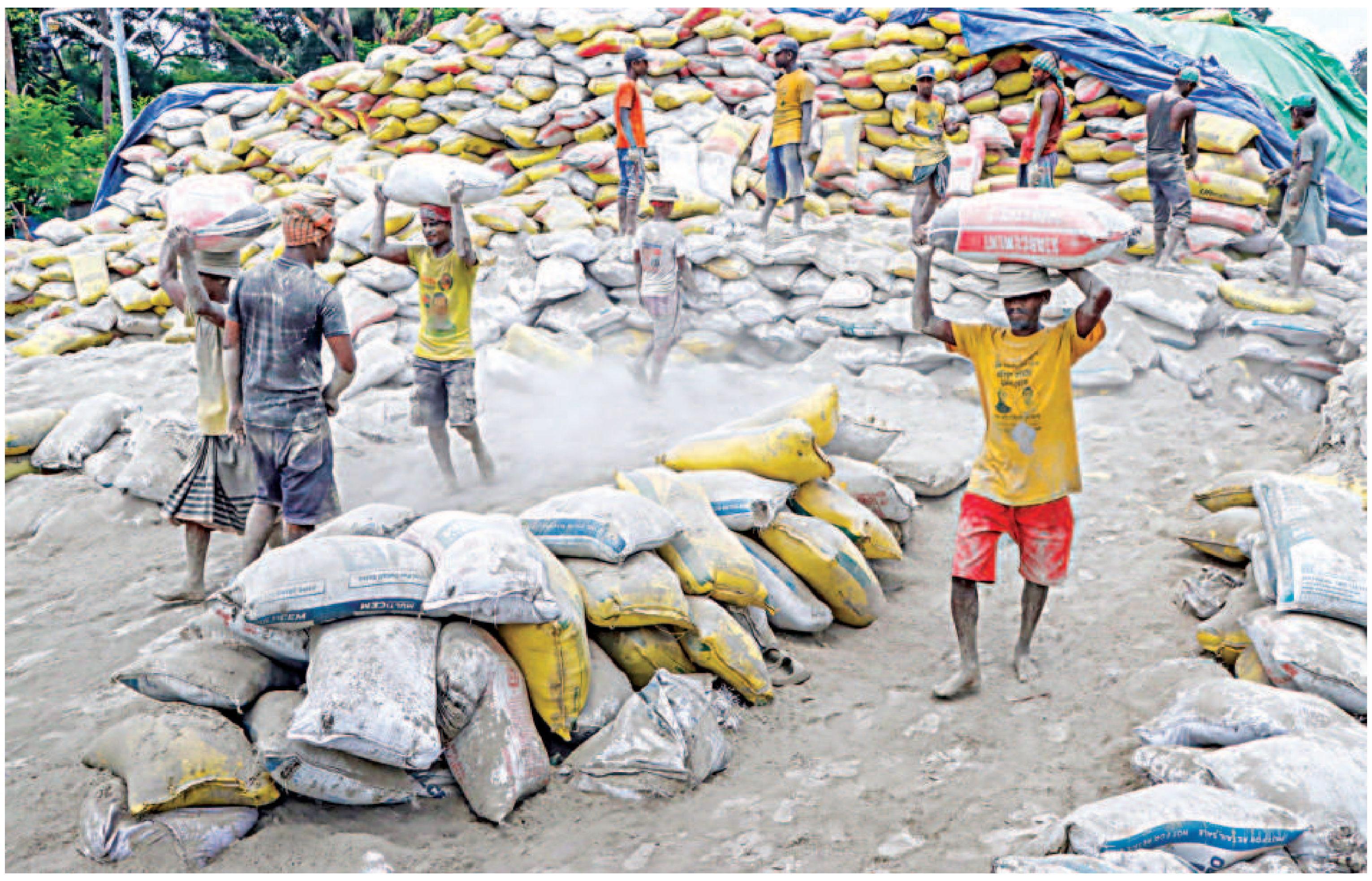


PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

Workers load bags of fly ash, imported from India, onto trucks. For each truck they load, the group is paid Tk 1,200. Fifteen workers load around eight trucks per day, meaning the group earns Tk 9,600, leaving each worker with Tk 640 to their name. This labour intensive task often leads to these workers suffering from respiratory problems and other diseases. The photo was taken at Chai Point in Khulna recently.

Heavy vehicles putting Teesta bridge in danger

S DILIP ROY, *Lalmonirhat*

Due to excessive plying of stone-laden trucks, the Sheikh Hasina Teesta Bridge over the Teesta river and its connecting roads are getting dilapidated and risky.

Even two months ago, the 15-kilometre connecting roads on both sides of the bridge had three barrier posts to prevent heavy vehicles from plying it. The authorities of Local Government Engineering Department removed those and opened the bridge to all types of vehicles.

Since then, around 300 trucks, loaded with 30-50 tonnes of stones each from Burimari Land Port, started using the bridge daily. Due to this, the bitumen cover of the bridge's road, as well as of the connecting roads, is getting removed, leaving the road surface dilapidated and prone to accidents, said locals.

Kakina-Mahipur road is a very important route for residents and traders of four upazilas in Lalmonirhat to connect to the land port and other areas including Rangpur city.

More than 10,000 light vehicles ply the bridge daily.

Since the past two months, the bridge and connecting roads have become risky for lighter vehicles due to the damage to the roads caused by the stone-laden trucks.

The 850-metre bridge was constructed over the Teesta River at a cost of about Tk 131 crore at Mahipur in Rangpur' s Gangachhara upazila.

The prime minister inaugurated it on September 16, 2018. Its connecting roads were widened and renovated spending over Tk 22 crore this year.

"Businesspersons with political backing pressed the LGED authorities to remove the barrier posts and allow heavy vehicles to ply the bridge and use the connecting roads. The move has led to the roads getting damaged and making it risky for lighter vehicles," said Shamsul Alam, a trader in Mahipur area.

Nazrul Islam, a truck driver, said, "We use this route as it reduces our distance by around 50km, saving us time and money, instead of going to Rangpur through Lalmonirhat town. There is also no toll on the bridge, which benefits us."

Contacted, Mohammad Shahjahan Ali, executive engineer of LGED in Rangpur, said, "We are taking preparations to repair the bridge's bitumen cover. Also, heavy vehicles will be barred from using the bridge. A meeting was held at Rangpur divisional commissioner's office in this regard recently."

'Be united to ease misery of Gazans'

Foreign minister calls for strong Muslim Ummah

UNB, *Gazipur*

Criticising the Israeli occupation in Gaza, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said what's going on in Gaza is unbearable and such incidents occur because of lack of unity among Muslim Ummah.

He made the remarks at the 36th convocation of the Islamic University of Technology in Gazipur yesterday morning.

Addressing students, the minister said, "Currently, people have become self-centered. As a result, humanity is nonexistent now. I urge you not to become like machines."

The convocation ceremony, held at the university's auditorium, was presided over by Vice-Chancellor Prof Mohammad Rafiqul Islam.

Organisers said 543 students from 14 countries graduated in the convocation. Of them, 480 were from Bangladesh and 63 international students.

WATERLOGGED KULAURA HEALTH COMPLEX

Walkway brings relief to patients, visitors

MINTU DESHWARA

Persistent rain in Kulaura of Moulvibazar district has left the upazila health complex severely flooded over the past 15 days.

The entire area is now waterlogged, causing immense hardship for patients and their families.

In response to this crisis, a group of volunteers took swift action and constructed a temporary 250-foot walkway in front of the hospital. This initiative has greatly alleviated the suffering of those affected, earning widespread praise from locals.

Three traders of Kulaura took the initiative to construct the makeshift platform on the upazila health complex premises.

They are Atiqur Rahman Akhoi, Iqbal Hossain Sumon and Abdul Qayyum.

Seeing their initiative, members of some social organisations also came forward with support. The long walkway was built with everyone's efforts, said locals.

Dipak Biswas, a relative of a patient, said he was regularly getting sick after having to cross knee-deep dirty water in the hospital yard. If he crossed using a rickshaw, then he had to pay triple the regular fare. However, this platform has alleviated the issue.

Mifta Mia, a resident of East Karergram area, said her grandson was admitted to the hospital due to pneumonia. It was difficult for her to travel to the hospital amidst flooding for over five days.

Now, she is able to visit her grandson without any challenges.

Another patient's relative, Husna Begum said her daughter was under treatment in the hospital for four days. She had already spent excessive rickshaw fare a few times to visit her daughter. However, construction of the platform spared her further unncessary expenses.

Atiqur Rahman Akhoi said the walkway was built voluntarily.

By doing this, people's suffering was reduced to some extent.

Even during the flood of 2022, the traders association took the same initiative in this hospital, he added.

Dr Ferdous Akhtar, upazila health and family planning officer in Kulaura, said as the hospital premises is about one and a half feet lower than the main road, waterlogging occurs even if it rains a little.

In the last financial year, a proposal was sent to the ministry through the health engineering department to raise the drain and road in front of the hospital, but it was not addressed, she said.

The matter has been informed to the local lawmaker, she added.

Mithachhara on DEATHBED

Excavated 4 years back, siltation and encroachment fill up canal again

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*

The Bangladesh Water Development Board excavated a six-kilometre stretch of Mithachhara canal in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila in 2019 at a cost of Tk 49.96 lakh.

However, within just four years, the canal has been filled up with silt, hindering its flow of water and triggering waterlogging in adjacent areas.

The seven-kilometre-long canal, which flows through the upazila and Chittagong University's hilly areas to join Boalia canal to fall into the Halda river, was vibrant around 30 years back, with local farmers largely dependent on it for irrigation.

Rampant encroachment, including by two brick kilns in Dewannagar area, alongside siltation, left it shrunk and gradually dying between 1995 and 2010.

After the excavation, the canal briefly returned to its former glory around 2020, before siltation began filling it up once again, said farmers.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Due to siltation and encroachment, the canal has turned into a drain in many places, while agricultural lands on its banks lie barren due to a lack of water for irrigation.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Resist all evil forces: Quader

BSS, *Dhaka*

The country's young generation should come forward to resist all evil forces, said Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday.

He made the call while inaugurating a cycle rally, marking the 75th founding anniversary of the AL.

The AL second-in-command also kicked off the "Cycling for Health" campaign during this time.

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Md Atiqul Islam organised the campaign at Manik Mia Avenue in the capital.

Speaking on the occasion, Quader said India is a tested friend of Bangladesh.

He also called upon the youth to join AL, saying AL led the country's independence struggle.

"We will honor our commitment to creating job opportunities for the youth. The Awami League is dedicated to guiding the nation's youth towards a brighter future," he said.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 29

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-17
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-57	8-45

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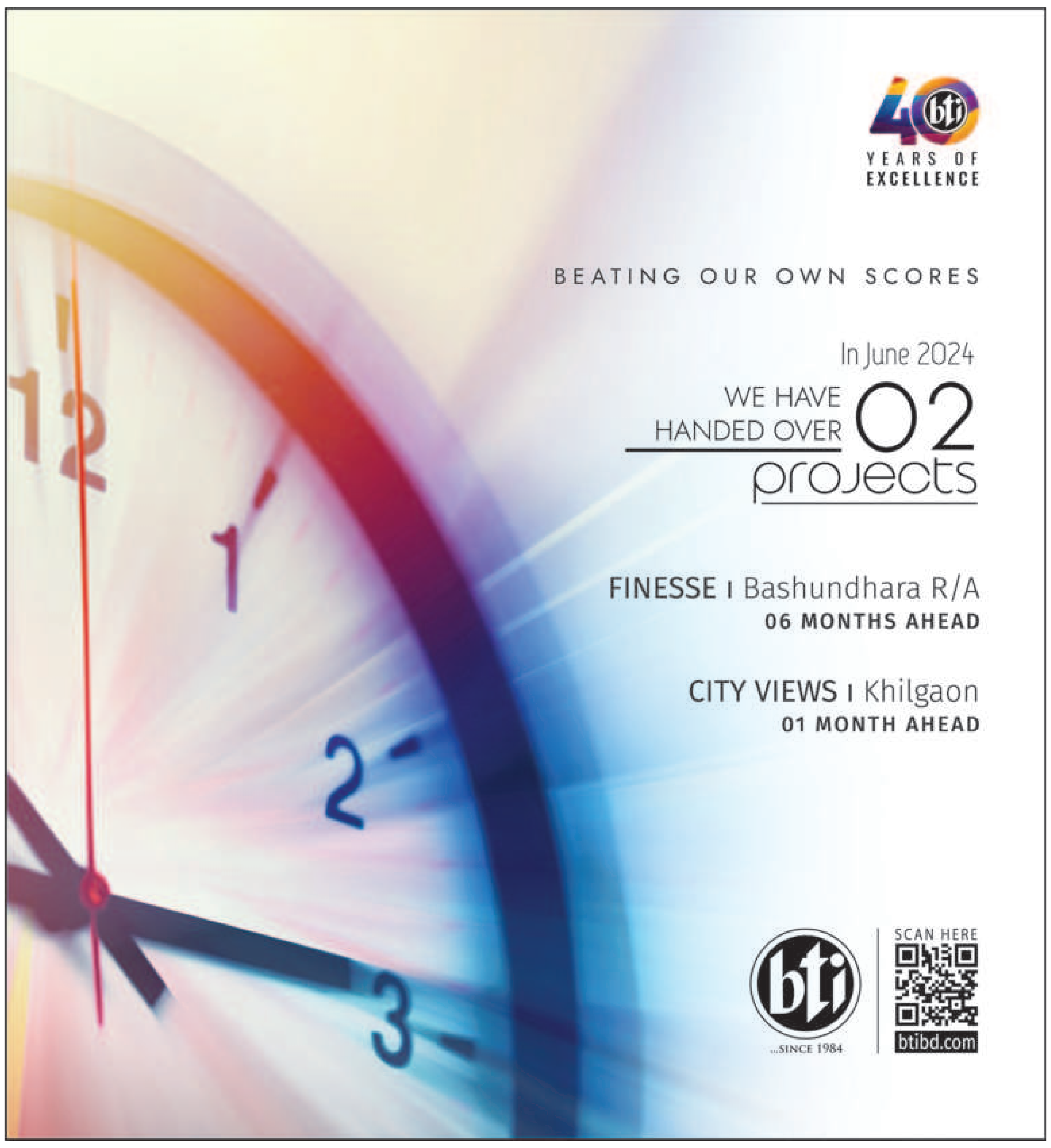

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06 MONTHS AHEAD
CITY VIEWS | Khilgaon
01 MONTH AHEAD
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China planning 'major' reforms

Says Xi Jinping

AFP, *Beijing*

Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday said the ruling Communist Party was planning and implementing "major" reforms, ahead of a closely watched political conclave that is expected to put economic recovery high on the agenda.

The world's second-largest economy is beset by a debt crisis in the property sector, low consumption and high youth unemployment.

Xi said in a speech policymakers "are planning and implementing major measures to further deepen reform in a comprehensive manner".

It was announced on Thursday that the Third Plenum -- a meeting historically watched for signals on economic policy direction -- will take place in Beijing in mid-July.

Rescuers work at the collapsed terminal roof of New Delhi's international airport after heavy rains in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Roof collapse at Delhi airport kills one, injures 8

Heavy rain disrupts Indian capital

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

Heavy rainfall and winds brought down a roof at the main airport in New Delhi yesterday, killing one person and disrupting flights from a domestic terminal, while flooded streets and traffic snarls threw daily life out of gear in India's capital.

The airport area received about 148.5 millimetres of rain over three hours in the early morning, more than the average for all of June, according to India's weather office. Experts blame climate change for extreme heat followed by heavy rain.

The city of 20 million people, who faced searing heatwaves earlier this month, received 228.1 mm (9 inches) of rainfall at its main Safdarjung weather station in the 24 hours ending 8:30am (0300 GMT) on Friday, a 266 percent departure from normal.

A portion of the canopy and supporting beam at the departure area of Terminal 1 collapsed and flight operations were shut down until 2:00pm (0830 GMT), India's aviation minister told reporters.

The entire terminal, one of three at the country's biggest and busiest airport, was evacuated and an inquiry ordered into the collapse, said the minister, Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu.

Rescue work had been completed and eight injured people were taken to hospital, Atul Garg, the director of Delhi Fire Service, said.

At least eight flights were cancelled and 47 were delayed while departures from Delhi airport were running late by an average of 40 minutes, according to data from flight tracking platform Flightradar24.

3 die in Ctg market fire

FROM PAGE 12

Razzaq, deputy assistant director of the Fire Service and Civil Defence in Chattogram.

"Eight fire engines rushed to the spot and doused the blaze around 5:30am."

Razzaq also said the fire gutted five shops and caused a loss worth Tk 30 lakh.

Since the market remained closed on Fridays, most employees and owners closed up shops on Thursday night and headed back to their village homes, with some staying back.

Minhazur Rahman, a resident on the fourth floor, first smelled smoke and alerted others of the fire around 1:40am. Thick smoke blocked the stairs, so around 20 residents went to the roof and escaped to an adjacent building.

Sajjad Miah, owner of Ajwad Telecom of the market, also a resident on the fourth floor, said he had gone to his village home at Satkania on Thursday night.

The deceased Shahed was a staffer of his shop and also his roommate.

"Shahid's friend Ismail was staying the night with him as I was not there."

Sajjad said Shahed had called him after the fire broke out.

"Shahed told me a fire caught on the ground floor of the market. I told him to go to the roof, but he said he could not see anything due to thick smoke.

"I was on the phone with him for around 20 minutes before the call got disconnected."

Children dying of starvation

FROM PAGE 12

city of Rafah as Israel ramped up its attacks there. These days, they struggle to survive, living along the polluted coastline of Asda'a — near the Al-Mawasi tent camp — where they cannot find enough food, water, or even shade from the Gaza heat.

"We have to keep moving from one area to the other because of the war and the invasion... Life is difficult," his mother said. "We don't even have a tent over our heads."

Israel's war in Gaza has depleted the territory's health system, leaving staff unable to treat malnourished children. Doctors told CNN they are being forced to turn away parents begging for baby milk, unable to even triage young patients with chronic illnesses compounded by severe hunger.

And as Israel continues its siege on Gaza, preventing aid groups from getting enough food into the enclave, parents say they have no choice but to watch their children starve to death. More than eight months of bombardment has shredded infrastructure, wiped out communities and laid waste to entire neighbourhoods. Sanitation systems — already stressed by water shortages from extreme heat — have been heavily destroyed, according to the UN, diminishing access to clean water.

A report published Tuesday by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), which assesses global food insecurity and malnutrition, warned that almost all of Gaza will face famine within the next three months.

Almost all of Gaza will experience crisis or worse levels of food insecurity in the next three months, according to a projection by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. And nearly half a million people are at risk of starvation amid Israel's siege of Gaza.

The UN's food agency earlier warned that southern Gaza could soon see the same "catastrophic levels of hunger" recorded previously in the north, where Israel concentrated its military offensive in the early days of the war.

At least 34 children have already died of malnutrition in Gaza, the government media office reported on June 22. The true number could be higher, as limited access to Gaza has impeded aid agencies' efforts to fully assess the crisis there. More than 50,000 children require treatment for acute malnutrition, the UN's agency for Palestine refugees (UNRWA) said earlier this month.

Since October 7, Israeli offensive in Gaza killed 37,658 Palestinians and injured another 86,237 people, according to Gaza health officials.

As Younis suffers in his mother's arms in Gaza's south, children in the north have been dealing with food shortages even longer. In the Jabalya refugee camp, they queue at a water truck, beads of sweat rolling down their faces, as they weave through the rubble-filled streets.

Dozens of other Gazans crowd together to access water as aid workers nearby distribute thick, steaming red soup from large saucepans.

It's rare access to food and clean water. Those in the north told CNN they have resorted lately to drinking polluted water, which does little to help dehydration and spreads infectious diseases.

Earlier this year, the UN warned that Israel is creating an "entirely man-made disaster" in Gaza. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has denied allegations by the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor that he has used "starvation of civilians as a method of warfare."

The impact on the ground is visceral.

Newborn babies and pregnant women are among the most at risk of malnutrition and dehydration in Gaza, according to aid agencies and health workers. Undernourished mothers are more likely to give birth prematurely, with newborns dying because they weigh too little.

At the Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza, doctors were unable to keep baby Amal alive just four days after her birth.

CNN filmed the moments before her death, showing Amal drawing heavy breaths in an incubator, after her mother, Samaher, gave birth two months prematurely. Her tiny pink toes are covered in plastic tubes.

"These babies are dying. It is God's decision, but it is caused by people," her father, Ahmed Maqat, told CNN, after she died on Saturday. Samaher had endured months of her pregnancy without sleeping, eating or drinking, Maqat said.

"Everyone in these beds today is at risk of dying. We are waiting for them to die one by one," he added, his voice quivering with grief. "We have no life."

Israeli warplanes

FROM PAGE 12

strikes that killed "dozens" of militants in the north.

Hamas's armed wing, the Al-Quds Brigades, yesterday said it was fighting in the northern Gaza neighbourhood of Shujaiya and had targeted Israeli troops with mortar shells.

Meanwhile, Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli forces had targeted the agency's headquarters while advancing in western Rafah.

Multiple agency staff were wounded, while two fire engines, an ambulance and an excavator used for rescuing people from under rubble were damaged, one of the agency's officials Mohammad al-Mughair told AFP.

On Thursday, a military spokesman told residents and displaced Gazans in a social media message to leave "for your safety".

Climate change

FROM PAGE 12

did not explain the extent of this month's heatwave and that climate change had made it more intense.

The assessment also found that similar past events in Saudi Arabia occurred in May and July, but now June experiences more severe heatwaves.

"The deadly heat during this year's hajj is directly linked to fossil fuel burning and has affected the most vulnerable pilgrims," said Davide Faranda, a scientist at France's National Centre for Scientific Research who worked on the ClimaMeter analysis.

Climate change has made heatwaves hotter, more frequent and longer lasting. Previous findings by scientists with the World Weather Attribution group suggest that, on average globally, a heatwave is 1.2 C (2.2 F) hotter than in preindustrial times.

Rain likely as low

FROM PAGE 12

centre of the Low and thence northeastwards to Assam across southern part of Bangladesh. Monsoon is active over Bangladesh and strong elsewhere over north Bay.

Panchagarh logged the country's highest rainfall of 51mm in 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday.

The country's highest temperature was recorded in Chuadanga at 37.5 degrees Celsius over 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday while the lowest temperature was in Madaripur at 23 degrees Celsius.

Day and night temperatures may fall slightly over the country in the next 48 hours beginning at 9:00am today.

Bielsa wants more

FROM PAGE 12

but Bielsa feels they still have much to prove.

"Without underestimating the strengths of the two teams we faced, those teams are not among the main competitors for the title," the former Leeds United boss said.

"Respectfully, I think that there are some very significant steps to be taken. Drawing conclusions today would be incorrect.

"Winning two games without facing the best teams in the competition does not allow us to define ourselves as one of the most important teams, that is a long way from being confirmed."

Uruguay now have a three-point cushion at the top of their group after the United States lost 2-1 to Panama, meaning a draw against the hosts in their final match will secure top spot.

Asked how well the players were adapting to his style, Bielsa added: "As for the identification with our way of playing, that is being verified game by game.

"In the previous match we had 15 minutes of the second half with a different performance than the rest of the match, today there was also a similar period where the production was different, for a certain time we stopped creating danger for the opponents."

Two brothers

FROM PAGE 12

his injuries around 9:30am.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Tajul Islam of Cantonment Police Station said the truck driver fled the scene after the accident and efforts were underway to identify the vehicle.

The bodies were handed over to the family without autopsy, as per the family's request, he said.

The other victim, Alfaz, lived in Mirpur-12 area with his family. He was travelling on a pickup truck when the driver of the vehicle lost control, causing it to overturn in Khilkhet area around midnight.

With severe injuries, he was rushed to a local hospital from where he was shifted to DMCH, where he was declared dead around 1:00am, his brother Mahfuz Hossain said.

Office of the Benapole Pourashava
District: Jashore.

Memo No.41.08.02.001.070.00.2024-271 Date: 26.06.2024

e-Tender Notice (OTM) No-05/2023-24

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (http//:www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of works as mentioned in the following table:

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of Work	On-line (e-GP System) tender publication date & time	On-line(e-GP System) tender closing date & time
1000018	LGCRRP/Benapole/2023-24/W-07	a) Up grading of BC Road from Daulatpur road Abu Sham's moor-Hapu's house at ch. 0.00-425.00m. b) Construction of RCC road from Altaf sarder's house to Jiaur Rahman's house at Boro Anchra Dakhin Para at ch.0.00-125.00m.c) Construction of RCC Drain from Altaf sarder's house to Jiaur Rahman's house at Boro Anchra Dakhin Para at ch.0.00-125.00m under Benapole Pourashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000100	LGCRRP/Benapole/2023-24/W-08	a) Upgrading of Uni-Block Paver road from Boro Anchara Hamid's House to Julu's house at ch. 0.00- 160.00m.b) Construction of RCC Drain from Boro Anchara Hamid's House to Julu's house at ch. 0.00- 170.00m.c) Up Grading of RCC Road from Sadipur-Namazgram main Road to Namazgram Slum at ch.0.00-165.00m d) Upgrading of Uni-Block Paver Road from Boro Anchara Mayor's House to Eidgha Boundary wall at ch.0.00-68.00 m under Benapole Paurashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000161	LGCRRP/Benapole/2023-24/W-09	a) Up grading of Uni-block Paver road from Boro Anchara Behey's house Mastafa's house via Doctor Kota's House at ch. 0.00-195.00m b) Construction of RCC Drain road from Boro Anchara Behey's house Mastafa's house via Doctor Kota's House at ch. 0.00-195.00m under Benapole Paurashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000179	LGCRRP/Benapole/2023-24/W-10	a) Upgrading of Uni-Block Paver Road from Boro Anchra Eidgah To Doctor Haider's house at ch. 60.00- 294.00 m b) Upgrading of Uni-block Paver Road from Boro Anchra (1) Ebras's House to Mostafa Alom Molla Sarder house at ch. 0.00-78 m and (2) Polash's house to adam's house at ch.0.00-67.00m under Benapole Paurashava	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000187	LGCRRP/Benapole/2023-24/W-11	a)Up Grading of RCC Road at Gazipur from Fisharies office to hakor river (Near H/O Chair Boxlur Rahman) at) at ch. 0.00-90,00m b) Construction of RCC Drain at Gazipur from Fisharies office to hakor river (Near H/O Chair Boxlur Rahman at) at ch. 0.00-90.00m c) Up Grading of RCC road from Jashore-Kolikata road at Gazipur (H/O Faruk to H/O Babul) at ch.0.00-78.00m d) Construction of RCC Drain from Jashore Kolikata road at Gazipur (H/O Faruk to H/O Babul) at ch 42.00.00-99.00m e) Upgrading of RCC Road from Jashore-Kolikata road (Shamoli N-R Counter) to Hakor river at ch. 0.00-130.00m f) Construction of RCC Drain from Jashore-Kolikata road (Shamoli N-R Counter) to Hakor river at ch. 0.00-130.00m g) Up Grading of RCC road from Jashore-Kolikata road (Saidur's Market) to Hakor river at ch. 0.00-106.00m h) Construction of RCC Drain from Jashore- Kolikata road (Saidur's Market) to Hakor river at ch. 0.00-106.00m under Benapole Paurashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000206	LGCRRP/Benapole/2023-24/W-12	a) Up Grading of RCC road from Tripurapara road Habib Molla's house to Haider's house at ch. 0.00-173.00m b) Up grading of RCC Road from Durgapur road (H/O Kabir Ahmed to H/O Ahsan kabir) at ch. 0.00-68.00m c) Construction of RCC Drain from Durgapur road (H/O Kabir Ahmed to H/O Ahsan Kabir) at ch. 0.00-68.00m d) Up grading of RCC Road from Durgapur road (H/O Nazrul to H/O Abul Hossain) at ch. 0.00-40.00m e) Construction of RCC Drain from Durgapur road (H/O Nazrul to H/O Abul Hossain) at ch. 0.00-40.00m under Benapole Paurashava	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000211	LGCRRP/Benapole/2023-24/W-13	a) Upgrading of Uni-Block Paver Road at Sadipur Road (H/O Sajedul) to Nazmul's house at ch. 0.00-334.00 m b) Upgrading of Uni-Block Paver Road at Sadipur Primary school (H/O Julfikar Fakir)) to Khoka's house at ch.0.00-318.00 m under Benapole Paurashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000215	LGCRRP/Benapole/2023-24/W-14	a)Up Grading of RCC Road from Dighirpar-Goira road (H/O Mithu Master) to abdul ahad's house and shahin's house to Jamser's house at ch.0.00-213.00m & part A=20.00m, part B 108.00m Part C 20.00m b) Construction of RCC Drain Up from Dighirpar-Goira road (H/O Mithu Master) to abdul ahad's house and shahin's house to Jamser's house at ch.0.00-213.00m & part A-20.00m, part B 108.00m, Part C 20.00m under Benapole Paurashava	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000217	LGCRRP/Benapole/2023-24/W-15	a) Up Grading of RCC road from Kagospukur- Gaira road (H/O Abul) to Serajul's house at ch. 0.00-361.00m & ext ch. 0.00-30m b) Construction of RCC Drain from Kagospukur-Gaira road (H/O Abul) to Serajul's house at ch. 0.00-361.00m & ext ch. 0.00-30m under Benapole Paurashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000219	LGCRRP/Benapole/2023-24/W-16	a)Up Grading of RCC Road at Bhababer west para from Serazul's house to Tipon's house via Ansar and Moshiar's house at ch. (part a) 0.00-302.00mm & (part B) Ch 0.00-71.00 m b) Construction RCC Drain at Bhababer west para from Serazul's house to Tipon's house via Ansar and Moshiar's house at ch. (part a) 0.00- 302.00mm & (part B) Ch.0.00-71.00 m Under Benapole Pourashava	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000222	LGCRRP/Benapole/2023-24/W-17	a)Up Grading of RCC road from Choto Anchra H/O Councilor Tazin to Mosque at ch. 0,00-125m b) Construction RCC Drain at the side of from Choto Anchra Putkhali road from Saidul's house to Rasel's store part ach. 0.00- 168.00m & part b ch.0.00-125.00m c) Construction of RCC Stair (Ghatla) at Choto-Anchra Mondir pond, Under Benapole Pourashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00

There are an online tender, where only, e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no off line/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender registration in the National e-GP system portal (http//:www.eprocure.gv.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-tendering documents from the national GP portal have to be deposited on line through any registered banks branches up to 30-07-2024 at 12.00 AM. Further information and guideline in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure gov.bd).

26.06.24
(Md. Mosharaf Hossain)
Executive Engineer
Benapole Pourashava

GD-1050

TRUMP-BIDEN DEBATE
FACT CHECK

AFP, *Washington DC*

US President Joe Biden and Republican challenger Donald Trump traded barbs Thursday in the first debate of the 2024 election campaign.

AFP fact-checked what the candidates said on key issues.

'MIGRANT CRIME'

Trump falsely claimed that under Biden, "we don't have borders anymore."

"Because of his ridiculous, insane and very stupid policies, people are coming in and they're killing our citizens at a level that we've never seen. We call it 'migrant crime.' I call it 'Biden migrant crime.'"

Following criticism over record border crossings and a bipartisan immigration bill that faltered in Congress, Biden signed an executive order early this month to temporarily shut down the border to asylum seekers after certain daily limits are hit.

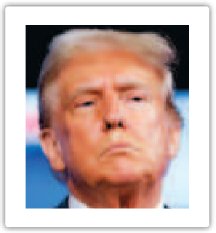
Violent and property crimes are near the lowest levels in decades, according to FBI data from 2022, the most recent year for which figures are available.

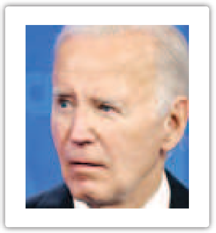
Other research has also found migrants commit fewer violent crimes than US citizens, including a Cato Institute report published this week that found migrants are less likely to be convicted of murder in the state of Texas.

INFLATION BLAME

Both Trump and Biden sought to defer blame for rising prices by criticizing each other's economic policies.

"He causes inflation. I gave him a country with essentially no inflation," Trump said after reciting his favorite, but false, line about ushering in the greatest economy in US history.





Biden countered by saying Trump "decimated the economy" and there were "no jobs" when he took office.

When Trump left office, inflation was around 1.4 percent.

Unemployment was about 6.4 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, down from its peak of 14.8 percent in April 2020.

Inflation started to climb in April 2021. It continued to balloon under Biden's presidency, hitting a peak of around nine percent in June 2022 before falling to its current level of about three percent.

REWRITING JANUARY 6

Trump attempted to deflect blame for the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol, over which he was impeached, by pointing to former House speaker Nancy Pelosi.

"I offered her 10,000 soldiers, or National Guard, and she turned them down," he falsely claimed.

The House committee that investigated the January 6 attack wrote in its final report that Trump "never gave any order to deploy the National Guard."

Trump also insisted again that "the fraud and everything else was ridiculous" in the 2020 election he lost to Biden, claims officials from both parties have refuted.

Dozens of lawsuits aimed at overturning the election failed, while audits and recounts in battleground states reaffirmed Biden's win.

An injured girl is comforted by her relatives at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah yesterday, following Israeli bombardments in the central Gaza Strip. PHOTO: **AFP**

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
Limited choices as Iranians vote
Vote unlikely to alter policies, may shape Khamenei succession

REUTERS, *Dubai*

Iranians yesterday voted for a new president following the death of Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash, choosing from a tightly controlled group of four candidates loyal to the supreme leader at a time of growing public frustration and Western pressure.

The election coincides with escalating regional tension due to war between Israel and Iran's allies Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, as well as increased Western pressure on Iran over its fast-advancing nuclear programme.

While the election is unlikely to bring a major shift in the Islamic Republic's policies, its outcome could influence the succession to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's 85-year-old supreme leader, in power since 1989.

Khamenei called for a high turnout to offset a legitimacy crisis fuelled by public discontent over economic hardship and curbs on political and social freedom.

"The durability, strength, dignity and reputation of the Islamic Republic depend on people's presence," Khamenei told state television after casting his vote. "High turnout is a definite necessity."

The next president is not expected to usher in any major policy shift on Iran's nuclear programme or support for militia groups across the Middle East, since Khamenei calls all the shots on top state matters.

However, the president runs the government day-to-day and can influence the tone of Iran's foreign and domestic policy.

A hardline watchdog body made up of six clerics and six jurists aligned with Khamenei vets candidates and approved only six from an initial pool of 80. Two hardline candidates subsequently dropped out.

Three candidates are hardliners and one is a low-profile comparative moderate, backed by the reformist faction that has largely been sidelined in Iran in recent years.

Critics of Iran's clerical rule say that low and declining turnouts in recent years show the system's legitimacy has eroded. Just 48% of voters participated in the 2021 presidential election and turnout plumbed a record low of 41% in a parliamentary election in March.

State television showed queues inside polling stations in several cities. Polls were due to close at 6:00pm. (1430 GMT), but are usually extended as late as midnight. Authorities said the result would be announced today.

If no candidate wins at least 50% plus one vote from all ballots cast, including blank votes, a run-off between the top two candidates is held on the first Friday after the result is declared.

Prominent among the remaining hardliners are Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, parliament speaker and former commander of the powerful Revolutionary Guards, and Saeed Jalili, a former nuclear negotiator who served for four years in Khamenei's office.

All four candidates have vowed to revive the flagging economy, beset by mismanagement, state corruption and sanctions re-imposed since 2018, after the United States ditched Tehran's 2015 nuclear pact with six world powers.

ELECTION IN FRANCE
Far-right extends lead ahead of polls

REUTERS, *Paris*

France's far-right National Rally (RN) extended its lead in a poll published on the last day of campaigning before tomorrow's (Sunday) first round of parliamentary elections, with another survey showing it in sight of a slim majority.

Marine Le Pen's anti-immigrant, eurosceptic party has led polling since President Emmanuel Macron called a surprise snap election this month that has plunged France into uncertainty and unnerved European neighbours and financial markets.

A new OpinionWay poll published by Les Echos newspaper on Friday showed the RN could reach as much as 37 percent of the popular vote, up two percentage points on its score a week ago.

Macron's centrist bloc Together party was seen reaching 20 percent, down by two points from the last publication. The New Popular Front leftwing alliance stood at an unchanged 28 percent of the vote.

BFM TV, in a different poll compiled by Elabe, calculated that the RN and allies could end up with 260-295 seats in the new parliament - potentially crossing the 289-seat bar for an absolute majority giving them a clear mandate to govern.

Accurate seat projections are tricky because the outcome depends on results in 577 constituencies across France. Moreover, after Sunday's first round, rivals to the RN may team up and withdraw candidates in tactical moves to defeat far-right candidates in the July 7 second round.

TOP EU COMMISSION POST
EU leaders back Von der Leyen for 2nd term

AFP, *Brussels*

EU leaders struck a summit deal Thursday to return Ursula von der Leyen as head of the powerful European Commission, while tapping Estonia's prime minister Kaja Kallas as the bloc's top diplomat.

The late-night accord carves up the EU's top institutional jobs for the five years to come, with former Portuguese prime minister Antonio Costa to head the European Council bringing together member states.

All three nominees hail from the centrist alliance that dominates the EU parliament following elections this month, despite gains by the far right including Italy's Giorgia Meloni, who put up public resistance to the top jobs deal.

While Costa, 62, will automatically succeed Council president Charles Michel this year, both von der Leyen, 65, and Kallas, 47, need to lock in majority support in the European Parliament, starting with a July vote on the commission chief that is predicted to be tight.

Von der Leyen expressed her "gratitude" to the leaders gathered in Brussels for backing her for a second term -- telling reporters she would soon outline her political priorities with a view to winning the confidence of parliament.

POST-COUP MYANMAR CRISIS
Rebels battle junta in ruby mining hub
MSF to halt work in northern Rakhine

AFP, *Yangon*

A Myanmar ethnic minority armed group was battling junta troops in a ruby and gem-mining hub yesterday, the group and residents told AFP, with reports of civilian casualties in shelling and air strikes.

The Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) launched attacks on junta troops earlier this week in Mandalay region and neighbouring Shan state, shattering a ceasefire brokered by China in January.

Its fighters were inside Mogok, a town surrounded by hills rich with rubies, sapphires, spinel, aquamarine and other semi-precious stones, General Tar Bhone Kyaw told AFP, without giving details.

Mogok residents told AFP the town had been hit by artillery shelling and air strikes by military planes since fighting in the area started on Tuesday. Fighting was ongoing in Kyaukme town in neighbouring Shan state, a local rescue worker told AFP yesterday.

At least 10 civilians had been killed and more than 20 wounded there since clashes broke out on Tuesday, he said.

Meanwhile, the charity Doctors Without Borders will halt medical activities in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state due to an "extreme escalation of conflict" between an ethnic armed group and the military, it said.

Clashes have rocked Rakhine state since the Arakan Army (AA) attacked security forces in November, ending a ceasefire that had largely held since a military coup in 2021. AA fighters have seized swathes of territory, piling further pressure on the junta as it battles opponents elsewhere in the country.

MSF was suspending "medical humanitarian activities" in northern Rakhine due to the "extreme escalation of conflict, indiscriminate violence, and severe restrictions on humanitarian access," it said on Thursday.

People carry the body of a protester in a procession in Nairobi yesterday. Hundreds of people attended the funeral ceremony of the 19-year-old who was one of 20 people killed during a nationwide protest against a controversial now-withdrawn tax bill. PHOTO: **AFP**

S OUTH AFRICA
Tensions delay unveiling of new gov't

AFP, *Johannesburg*

South Africa's weakened African National Congress (ANC) and its biggest coalition partner are squabbling over key jobs in the new cabinet, media reports say, nearly a month after elections.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has called for the opening of the new parliament on July 18 to address MPs, the government said yesterday.

But no indication was given on when the announcement of a new cabinet would be made.

The ANC has accused coalition partner Democratic Alliance (DA) of making "outrageous demands" for cabinet positions in documents leaked to the press.

Several other documents detailing disagreements on positions between Ramaphosa and DA leader John Steenhuisen have circulated on social media.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Has Dhaka's fate become sealed?

Govt cannot keep ignoring the city's woes

Every year, we are reminded that Dhaka is one of the worst cities to live in, and this year is just slightly different, as the metropolis has reportedly gotten worse. In the Economist Group's Global Liveability Index 2024, Dhaka has slipped two notches, from last year's 166th to 168th. To illustrate just how abysmal that is, Kyiv, the war-torn capital of Ukraine, ranks three places higher. Like before, experts and citizens have expressed their grievances, but successive rankings show that these concerns have fallen on deaf ears. This means the government has not done what it can to build a liveable Dhaka, and for the umpteenth time, we ask: why?

The annual global survey assessed the liveability of 173 cities based on stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and infrastructure. A cursory glance at newspapers will reveal how we are failing at these sectors. Take the environment, for instance: Dhaka continuously ranks among the cities with the worst air quality. The situation is so terrible that air pollution has become the leading cause of death in the country, even surpassing high blood pressure, poor diet, and tobacco use. Meanwhile, heatwaves have taken the city hostage, in absence of any semblance of greenery. And yet, government agencies cut down over seven lakh trees across the country last year in the name of development work, Dhaka being among the victims. All this has happened amid dwindling playgrounds, from 150 to only 24 over the last 22 years.

In fact, Dhaka has garnered many other "unliveable" attributes. Indexes report that the city is extremely expensive, for both locals and foreigners. But we don't need to look at rankings for that; the sky-high inflation, 9.89 percent as of May 2024, is evidence enough. It's also the slowest in the world in terms of vehicular movement, while still somehow achieving high numbers of road fatalities. And let's not forget that Dhaka is one of the biggest hotspots for Aedes mosquitoes, which took 1,705 lives in the country last year, breaking all records and crippling our healthcare system.

In many instances, the government has either ignored or even aggravated all these perennial issues, while many ill-thought initiatives have failed. While the metro rail is certainly a step towards creating a liveable city, the authorities have forgotten the basics: bringing discipline to the roads and improving public transport. Instead of addressing these structural issues, they opted for shortcuts, like banning battery-run rickshaws. Regarding air pollution, it achieved very little to tackle the sources: construction dust, traffic fumes, factory emissions, and illegal brick kilns. Meanwhile, the new budget reportedly lacks concrete measures to address economic concerns, which means Dhaka will continue to be just as expensive or even more. Therefore, it's time for the government to admit its failures and prepare plans that can truly resolve this city's woes to make it liveable.

Alarming trade of Indigenous women

We need to address the root cause of trafficking

It is concerning that Indigenous women are falling victim to trafficking gangs who smuggle them to China under the pretext of marriage, lucrative jobs or education opportunities. A report published in this daily mentioned several cases filed with police about gangs who forced women to marry Chinese nationals and then trafficked them to China. According to the report, these local gangs, some of which are operative in the capital's Uttara area, sell the women for Tk 10-20 lakh.

While Bangladeshi women and children are trafficked mostly to India and the Middle East, human trafficking to China came to focus six years ago when three women were rescued and brought back home. China's decades-long one child policy has created an imbalance in the country's sex ratio, which has driven the illicit trade of foreign women, mostly from Southeast Asia. In recent times, it appears that traffickers are also targeting Indigenous Bangladeshi women.

In an email responding to the most recent trafficking cases, the Chinese government reiterated its stance against human trafficking to protect the rights of women and children, which is undoubtedly a positive sign. However, law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh, too, should increase their vigilance against local trafficking gangs that are arranging these fake, coerced or exploitative marriages. We need to address the low rate of conviction and inadequate sentencing of perpetrators of human trafficking. In addition to revamping the legal process, the government as well as organisations working to curb human trafficking must run awareness campaigns on social media and in targeted areas where Indigenous women from marginalised communities might fall into traffickers' traps.

Finally, the government must address the root causes of trafficking in person: poverty, inequality, and education. Given the historical and political reality of our country's Indigenous communities, young women especially from the Chittagong Hill Tracts are vulnerable to exploitative practices. Historically, sexual violence and abuse have been used against CHT women to dispossess the community of their resources. It is not surprising that in the absence of justice for those crimes, the false promise of a better life elsewhere would interest CHT women and thus increase their vulnerability to human trafficking. To establish a sense of security among Indigenous women, the government needs to truly empower the communities and fulfil the promises of the CHT Peace Accord.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

The first iPhone goes on sale

On this day in 2007, Apple Inc's first mobile "smartphone," the iPhone, went on sale, and it revolutionised the industry.

COSTS OF HIGH-LEVEL CORRUPTION

Further down the kleptocratic route

Dr Iftekharuzzaman
is executive director at Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN

Mahatma Gandhi's quote that there is enough in this world to meet everyone's need but not for anyone's greed is aptly illustrated by the ongoing media and other credible exposures of evidence of corruption in Bangladesh. Confirming that sky is the limit, these revelations of high-level abuse of power, known as grand corruption, though nothing new except the procession of disclosures, have shocked and awed the nation.

Several key institutions, apparently sanctuaries of high-level corruption and related criminalities, have been exposed to risks of kleptocratic capture. These include the army, police, Rab, National Board of Revenue (NBR) and, not the least, the country's major political parties. A former army chief and his immediate family have been slapped with sanctions for "significant corruption," including assistance in evasion of accountability for criminal activity, facilitating improper awarding of military contracts, and acceptance of bribes. His actions have been assessed to have "contributed to undermining Bangladesh's democratic institutions and the public faith in public institutions and processes."

Having retired after gaining the dubious distinction of topping the list of kingpins behind sanctions against Rab for gross human rights violations, the former police chief has managed to flee the country with questionable ease, arguably as part of a suspected sinister deal. This at a time when he has been publicised to be under the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) radar for amassing unbelievable amounts of income and wealth acquired across the country by ruthlessly violating entrusted institutional power coupled with political blessing, fraud and criminal extortion. In so doing, he applied the skills acquired over the years as a crime control professional and transformed himself from his mandated position of protector of law to a role model of lawbreaking. As widely expected, he was not the only instance of such brazenly normalised corruption in the police force as many other similar exposures followed, including that of the former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner.

A member of NBR and president of its Customs, Excise and VAT Appellate Tribunal came to the spotlight, catalysed by his son's goat scandal and subsequent exposure of grotesque details of his and his family's accumulation of income and properties. He did so abusing his oversight role of revenue generation for the state, which he converted into that of the tax evasion guru as an illegitimate source of income. It is again obvious that he is not the sole X person in the NBR, nor is it possible that he operated in isolation without collusion and protection of many others.

No less troubling is the case of the brutal killing of an MP allegedly as an example of infighting of political power abusers over the share of booties of gold smuggling and the related illicit business facilitated and protected over the years by those mandated to control such criminalisation of politics. Again, this is no isolated case of political corruption, as symbolised by the case of an MP serving prison term in Kuwait for transnational crimes, including money laundering and human trafficking. Nor is criminalisation of politics a monopoly of the current ruling party, as its arch-rival left behind a legacy of no less grand corruption, arms smuggling and ruthless political criminalisation, including several attempts at the life of the top leader of their rival political party, causing multiple deaths.

As scandalous as these examples are, it is no surprise at all because successive regimes have driven the state to this level through their desperate bids to ensure partisan capture of the institutions to facilitate, promote and protect power abuse and thereby grant impunity to high-level perpetrators.

Implications of such grand corruption are destabilising for the state. Their money value can be concretely measured only by the government and relevant agencies, only if done with integrity, free from conflict of interest. For some general idea, one may consider the value of compromise of the least cost, best quality principle in procurements and other public expenditures in which the officials were involved and received kickbacks or shares; value of concealed and laundered income and wealth; undervalued price of acquired properties and taxes evaded, etc.

CORRUPTION
CORRUPTION
CORRUPTION

VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

On the other hand, a close look at the files of clients of NBR officials will take independent investigators to a gold mine of data to explain why Bangladesh's tax-GDP ratio is one of the lowest in the world; why the target of increased pressures for higher revenue collection are the common people through indirect taxes; and why honest taxpayers are most often treated as enemies of unscrupulous NBR officials while tax evaders as close allies. Tax officials' bribery and kickback are more directly damaging for the state than any other sector. Irrespective of the amount a tax official collects to facilitate illicit tax evasion, the evaded tax amount is a direct loss of revenue. Add to this, the unabated problem of money laundering, the lion's share of which takes place through trade-based illicit transfers allegedly with the knowledge, facilitation and collusion of the revenue authority.

Collusive abuse of power in all these cases is also among the reasons why nothing has happened to the perpetrators. The former NBR member, for instance, conveniently outsmarted several initiatives for departmental procedure in response to allegations over the years, nor could the ACC proceed with concrete action. It's also no secret that he has been enjoying the patronage and protection of the business-politics-bureaucracy power structure, which also helped invincibility of the overall illegal tax evasion system.

Non-monetary costs of corruption are no less ominous for the state, the worst victim of which are the institutions in general and particularly those at the centre of recent focus. None of them has yet shown the courage to come up with any action or concrete pledge against those within their own ranks, who have pushed the respective institutions to severe reputational damage. None of them seem to care that it is time to face the mirror and undertake strategies to ensure accountability and justice in the short term, and overhaul themselves in the medium and long terms, which is indispensable to restore their credibility and uphold the spirit and values of Bangladesh's independence.

What has happened instead has only added to the already existing atmosphere of intimidation to the media, as demonstrated by the infamous statement by the BPSA, which has been viewed as nothing but an effort to grossly curtail media freedom guaranteed by the constitution. Aggrieved by the disclosures and with an apparent sense of insecurity as birds of the same feather, the association adopted the "shoot the messenger" tactic and blamed media reports as motivated, while in fact the statement itself was a motivated act to suppress disclosure of corruption information. It is also no coincidence that the home ministry reached out quickly to the information ministry with a note that practically endorsed the BPSA position.

Coming as all these do simultaneously with the creation (once again) of the provision in the national budget for an unconstitutional, discriminatory and corruption-friendly reward system for black money, the key message given to the people is that corruption enjoys systemic guarantee of impunity. Little do the power holders seem to care that by converting the commitment of zero tolerance against corruption in election manifestos and other public pronouncements into useless rhetoric, floodgates are being opened to further kleptocratic disorder of the state.

Why we need a landscape design ministry

Asif Khan
is a Bangladeshi landscape architect based in Florida, US.

ASIF KHAN

A little over a week ago, more than 16 lakh people in Bangladesh's Sylhet and Sunamganj districts found themselves marooned by escalating floodwaters. Despite the strikingly similar climates of Bangladesh and Miami in Florida, US, where I work as a landscape architect, the outcomes of heavy rainfall in these two regions are starkly different. Miami's approach harnesses nature's inherent mechanisms through creative and proactive solutions, turning challenges into opportunities. Meanwhile, the Sylhet region endured devastation due to flash floods, prompting the urgent question: why does Bangladesh still face such situations in 2024?

Bangladesh is a treasure trove of untapped landscape potential. It can transform its current challenges into opportunities by leveraging its natural assets. This requires a shift from reactive disaster management to proactive landscape design and management. Flood prevention is only one aspect; optimising the terrain and balancing human settlement with nature are equally crucial.

For Bangladesh, establishing a dedicated ministry for landscape design and management is not just visionary, but necessary. This ministry would oversee the comprehensive planning, development, and maintenance of the country's diverse landscapes, addressing long-standing challenges. For one, the country's extensive network of rivers could be harnessed for transportation, irrigation, and flood management. Currently neglected and polluted, these rivers need strategic rejuvenation. Drawing inspiration from the Netherlands, where river systems are integral to national infrastructure, the Bangladesh government could revitalise the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna delta.

Properly managed natural resources could drive tourism, agriculture, and cultural activities, fuelling economic growth. The Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, exemplifies this potential. As a biodiversity hotspot and potential ecotourism destination, its proper management and promotion could attract global tourists, generate revenue, and create jobs. Costa Rica's ecotourism success through sustainable practices serves as a model for Bangladesh.

Urbanisation and climate change threaten Bangladesh's rich biodiversity and natural habitats. Sustainable practices are essential to conserving and protecting these areas. For example, conserving the Chittagong Hill Tracts, known for their unique flora and fauna, could preserve biodiversity while supporting local communities through eco-friendly tourism and sustainable agriculture.

Effective water resource management is critical in a flood-prone country like Bangladesh. Designing and maintaining infrastructure for efficient water management could also promote water-based tourism and recreational activities. Italy's Venice showcases how waterways can become major tourist attractions while managing complex water infrastructure.

Promoting landscape innovation and modern agricultural practices can boost productivity and sustainability. Integrating vertical farming and aquaponics into urban areas can combat food insecurity and reduce pressure on rural lands. Singapore's advancements in urban farming illustrate how Bangladesh could innovate in agriculture.

> **Landscape architects can guide the nation's landscape policies and projects with their expertise. Singapore's green, sustainable urban environments highlight the benefits of skilled landscape architects. They can design resilient cities that harmonise with natural systems, ensuring urban development does not come at the expense of environmental degradation.**

Raising awareness about landscape management's importance and engaging citizens in conservation efforts is vital. Educational initiatives can foster a culture of stewardship, where every citizen feels responsible for the environment. Programmes modelled after Japan's Satoyama Initiative, which promotes sustainable rural-urban linkages through community participation, could be effective.

To realise this vision, Bangladesh must recognise the critical role of landscape architecture. Landscape architects can guide the nation's landscape policies and projects with their expertise. Singapore's green, sustainable urban environments highlight the benefits of skilled landscape architects. They can design resilient cities that harmonise with natural systems, ensuring urban development does not come at the expense of environmental degradation. They can lead projects that integrate green infrastructure, enhance biodiversity, and create public spaces that improve quality of life.

Establishing a ministry for landscape design and management symbolises a collective commitment to transforming Bangladesh's landscape. It heralds a new era where design and nature work in harmony, elevating the quality of life and dignity of every citizen. This vision transcends flood prevention and resource management—it's about creating a nation where every individual feels a sense of pride and responsibility towards their environment. A specialised ministry would help realise this vision, emphasising the optimal use and preservation of the country's natural resources. By adopting this perspective, design can significantly enhance the quality of life and sense of dignity for the people. It's time for Bangladesh to build a future where development and conservation of nature take place simultaneously.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Subscription:
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bangla.thedailystar.net/

OPINION

This trust between fans and cricket players in Bangladesh has not deteriorated in one innings against Afghanistan; it has taken years of disappointment.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Our men's cricket team is suffering from a crisis of trust

Azmin Azran
is digital features coordinator at The Daily Star.

AZMIN AZRAN

Before this year's T20 World Cup, if the Bangladesh men's cricket team and its fans were offered a situation where they found themselves in the last game of the Super Eight with the opportunity to go to the semifinals, having full control of their own destiny, they would bite the hands off the person offering it. The truth is, the Tigers have exceeded pre-tournament expectations. Yet, at the same time, they have left fans bitterly disappointed.

Normally, it would be difficult for a team to do these two things at once, but this strange mess of feelings fans have been left with is possibly indicative of what the men's cricket team really is right now: a big mess.

They got the obvious things right. The squad picked was close to the best we had to offer. The captain was given a series or two before the world cup to get his team combinations right. The team even featured a couple of young, exciting talents like Towhid Hridoy, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, and Rishad Hossain.

A lacklustre series win against Zimbabwe and a shock series defeat against the USA tempered expectations too. Everyone knew that nothing should be expected of this team, and anything positive that comes out of this world cup would be a bonus. By the time the team was lining up to play Sri Lanka in Dallas, everyone was prepared for the worst.

But the thing with the Bangladesh men's cricket team these days is that it's very difficult to understand what's actually going on with them. The brilliance of young Rishad and the new-found grit of an out-of-sorts Litton Das won the game against Sri Lanka, and when Bangladesh pushed South Africa to the last ball for a narrow defeat, suddenly, they were playing well.

The Netherlands and Nepal were promptly defeated in efficient displays, and fans who expected nothing were rewarded with a surprise Super Eight appearance. The coach even came out in the press and said that the goal for this team was to get to the second round, whatever came after would be a bonus.

Fans understood that the team had exceeded expectations. The good feelings from the three victories in the group stage duped everyone into thinking that this team could be expected to do the bare minimum that one might expect from a national sports team. Yes, they were not in form before the tournament. It's true that the senior players in the team were becoming burdens. The cricket board, at this point an entity that is as dysfunctional as it's immovable, couldn't provide the team with the perfect platform. Despite all this, the national cricket team at the world stage was expected to do only one thing—try. And they failed us at that too.

There have always been fans and haters of the men's cricket team in Bangladesh. Fans keep hoping that they will come up with the goods, while haters remain sceptical about whether they have the ability to do so. Some of us believe that one day, they will do something truly remarkable, while others believe that such a day will never come. The one thing, however, that everyone for the longest time assumed to be true is that these professional athletes will keep trying until loss is inevitable, and do their best to postpone that inevitability. If they're not good enough (or strong enough, as we keep hearing), it's natural that they will lose. But the mentality to give something an honest go is not dependent on muscles or talent.

Against India and Australia, who are clearly superior opponents, the losses felt digestible. The lack of an impetus to post a big score against Australia, or to chase one down against India was a sore sight. But most fans were still thinking that this is all extra, this team was never supposed to be here. When the difficult equations for semifinal qualification in the game against Afghanistan were revealed, then too fans might not have felt malice towards the team. The Afghans make an excellent T20 team; beating them by such margins was not likely.

But once again, this mess of a Bangladesh team surprised with a good bowling display, giving the batters a chance to chase 115 runs in 12 overs, a perfectly doable task in today's cricket. How the team reacted to this golden opportunity, however, has opened, deepened, and festered the wounds of trust between the cricket team and its fans.

Everyone knows what followed. According to the captain in a press conference following the match, the team apparently tried for six overs out of the 12. Once they lost three wickets and figured that the task at hand was too difficult, they decided that giving up semifinal aspirations and going for a comfortable consolation win was the better course of action, something they failed to do anyway by losing the game.

Herein lies the problem. The team admittedly stopped trying at a point where it was realistically possible to reach the semifinals. Whether they did it out of fear of failure or embarrassment or lack of belief can be discussed later, but what's certain is, once again, this team breached whatever trust it had left with its fans—the people of Bangladesh.

Supporting a sports team is a fundamentally illogical act. These gifted athletes who live in a bubble of mainstream popularity don't care about you or me. Their lives and realities are disconnected and different from everyone else. Yet, what makes the illogical act of supporting a sports team worth it is the fact that we assume these people who represent our colours want the same things we do—to win, and if they lose, to do so with heads held high. This is the trust between fans and players that is the basis of the sports industry worldwide.

This trust between fans and cricket players in Bangladesh has not deteriorated in one innings against Afghanistan. While the batters' inexplicable surrender in the face of possible victory was a truly humbling blow to loyal followers, the team has chipped away at the fans' perseverance constantly since the 2019 ICC World Cup. When our best player, Shakib Al Hasan, was banned for failing to disclose an approach from a betting syndicate, this trust took a blow. When the much loved captain of the team, Mashrafe Mortaza, chose not to see his own failings and retire with grace, the trust was pegged down a notch. When Tamim Iqbal chose himself over the team by creating pathetic off-field drama, and Shakib Al Hasan participated in it and took it further, the trust was shattered. The 2023 ICC World Cup performance was so bad that as fans, supporting this team felt criminal. This year's T20 World Cup has obliterated any goodwill left among fans.

> **Supporting a sports team is a fundamentally illogical act. These gifted athletes who live in a bubble of mainstream popularity don't care about you or me. Their lives and realities are disconnected and different from everyone else. Yet, what makes the illogical act of supporting a sports team worth it is the fact that we assume these people who represent our colours want the same things we do—to win, and if they lose, to do so with heads held high.**

Still, cricket in Bangladesh won't die. People may not love the team as much, but the love of the sport prevails. Whether it is this team under this inept board, or some future team under the stewardship of a more capable administration, fan trust will need to be earned back. This is not unprecedented in cricket. India went through this after Mohammad Azharuddin's match-fixing scandal in the early 2000s. Australia did it recently following a ball-tampering incident. Their players did it by playing good cricket, and by presenting a version of themselves to the public that resembled genuine human beings who understood what their efforts meant to the people of their countries. The future of cricket in Bangladesh possibly hinges on the ability of our players to do the same.

Breaking chains through whistleblowing

BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza
is professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

"Julian is free." The headline of Democracy Now! sent shivers up my spine. The news broke, unleashing a wave of chemical messengers in my brain. The system kept the WikiLeaks founder incarcerated for more than a decade. A woman in Sweden accused him in a sexual assault case in 2010, soon after his whistleblowing platform published a report on US military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Julian Assange jumped bail and took refuge in London's Ecuador embassy in 2012, seeking political asylum. He lived in a tiny cell in that embassy compound for seven years, during which period the rape charges were found meritless. However, the British government arrested Assange and placed him in the high-security Belmarsh Prison, forcing Ecuador to revoke its asylum decision. The US wanted him extradited on charges of espionage and leaking sensitive documents. The Australian government finally intervened, saying the case had dragged on for too long. Julian Assange is finally free after pleading guilty to one count of espionage. The court determined that he had already served his five-year sentence, given his prolonged imprisonment. Justice is restored.

FILE PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Why does it matter for us when a foreign individual is free after such a long time? The short answer is: Julian Assange is a symbol of hope, just like Nelson Mandela and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were during their imprisonments. What good is symbolism when realpolitik demands much more direct action or intervention when millions are dying? When is "one" more than one? When does a man become many?

It takes real courageous individuals to blow the whistle and alert the community. WikiLeaks, responsible for what has come to be known as Cablegate, released confidential files on human rights abuse, political machinations, and corruption, leading to a diplomatic fallout and a stringent reassessment of the information gateway. The repercussions faced by Assange are not unique. Character assassination, social ostracisation, and legal battles are some of the known weapons used to castigate whistleblowers. They provoke the system's anger by raising concerns about institutional corruption or moral injustices. Still, they dare to share information to ensure transparency and accountability and become the catalysts for change.

WikiLeaks has brought to light numerous cases of bribery, extortion, corruption, murder, and other crimes committed by Bangladeshis, enabling them to amass a staggering amount of money, which they then syphoned out of the country. And to think that some of our culprits have more money abroad than our foreign exchange reserves speaks volumes about our institutional weaknesses. The whistleblowers' bravado often forces the system to address its leaks. Their bullheadedness gives us hope—a hope that is contagious.

When Bangabandhu was in prison during the Ayub Khan regime, he realised that the whole of East Pakistan was in prison. His obstinacy gave us hope and prepared us for the freedom fight. When millions of refugees displaced by our Liberation War took shelter in India, our country began with the realisation that we could be a poor country, but we needed to be rich in soul. Years later, we witnessed our prime minister providing shelter to hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees, reflecting on our common experience of displacement during wartime. The same is true for Mandela, who believed that his struggle for freedom would be incomplete without the freedom of Palestine. Years later, South Africa, inspired by the words of their visionary champion against apartheid, has taken Israel to the International Court of Justice.

Analogously, Assange's freedom can have far-reaching impacts. That makes me hopeful. I listen to Yanis Varoufakis' passionate speech, detailing the background of resistance that conditioned his freedom. The former Greek minister recounts how their allies began abandoning them under the guise of opposing an alleged rapist, despite the later exoneration of the charges. Now that Assange is free, the system will need to undergo numerous adjustments and deal with the consequences. Similar systemic readjustments were required in the political arena after Edward Snowden exposed the National Security Agency's (NSA) mass surveillance programmes. Or when Frances Haugen, a former Facebook employee, exposed her company's harmful practices by leaking internal documents. There are many other instances.

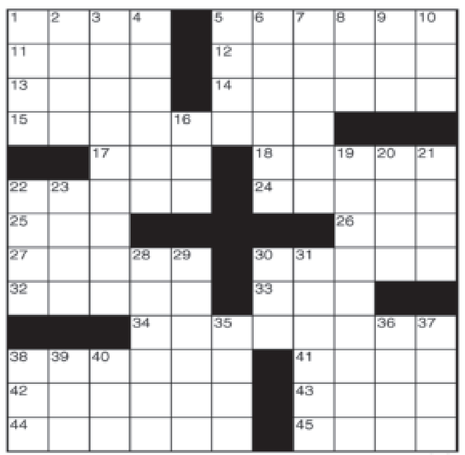
Let me end on a lighter note, though. A hill of corruption collapsed when a goat turned out to be a whistleblower. An animal trader was running a notorious racket, adding pedigree to his stocks to inflate their prices. Like a true trickster, he would boost his clients' egos by creating a false consciousness about his cattle. He would charge a crore for a cow and about Tk 15 lakh for a goat. Somehow, the price of the goat was too much to stomach for the audience. People were curious about the individual who was willing to spend such a significant amount of money on a goat. The goat became the unlikely whistleblower to expose the buyer and his family, who were relishing a mountain of ill-gotten wealth. The drama did not end with an incomplete purchase. The trader who boasted about his animals' pedigree is now on the run, as the whole system has come after him, possibly for exposing one of their own kin. The ordinary public, which lacks decent earnings and livelihoods, enjoys the show as the goat becomes the unsung hero.

I hope there is no connection between the recent announcement of lower loan rate incentives given to goat farming and the practice of goatheadedness as a form of resistance to corruption. It will take more than a goat to break the chains through whistleblowing.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Gone under
5 Ax wielders
11 Huron neighbor
12 Twist of fiction
13 Sneaker part
14 Central American nation
15 Waving in the breeze
17 Old roadster
18 Number unit
22 Tangle
24 Clue room
25 Summer mo.
26 Swiss peak
27 Turns about
30 San —, California
32 Shop tool
33 Day before
34 Gum flavor
38 Central American nation
41 Unexciting
42 Makes amends
43 Guinness of film
44 Correct an online comment
45 Army level

DOWN
1 Egotist's focus
2 River of Russia
3 Central American nation
4 Quarterback play
5 Pueblo people
6 African grazers
7 Improvise
8 Longoria of TV
9 Sleep state
10 Mrs., in Madrid
16 Campaign pro
19 Central American nation
20 Not busy
21 Keyboard goof
22 Shocked sound
23 Empty
28 Los Angeles suburb
29 Grabs
30 Gents
31 Film set on Pandora
35 Forest home
36 Sign
37 Bottle part
38 Butter unit
39 Summer, in Paris
40 Cut off



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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

O	D	O	R	■	S	Q	U	A	R	E
M	A	U	I	■	C	U	R	S	O	R
A	L	T	O	■	R	A	I	S	E	S
N	E	O	■	O	A	K	S	■	■	■
■	■	F	R	A	M	E	■	O	I	L
L	O	W	E	R	■	S	A	U	C	Y
I	R	O	N	■	■	■	E	T	O	N
Z	E	R	O	S	■	B	R	O	N	X
A	S	K	■	P	R	O	O	F	■	■
■	■	■	J	O	I	N	■	P	A	T
A	B	O	U	N	D	■	A	L	V	A
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L	A	R	G	E	R	■	H	Y	D	E

Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to
dsopinion@gmail.com

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Are you thinking of getting into VOLUNTEERING?

ADRIN SARWAR

Many students have opted for volunteering as an activity to enhance their CVs and better equip themselves for securing future opportunities. Universities and employers value volunteer experience as it demonstrates commitment and a willingness to help others. However, many often jump at the first opportunity without considering whether it aligns with their goals and values. This is one of the reasons why many students are unable to make the most of their volunteer work. After all, it requires constant dedication and effort into a cause that a lot of people feel strongly about. So, finding a volunteering role that aligns with one's interest is important. Here's what you should know before diving in.

Find your passion

Volunteering entails that you aren't bound to carry out any specific tasks. This means that there is a chance you may lose interest in the work over time. To prevent this, search for organisations that work towards a cause that aligns with your passions. Whether it's helping children, supporting environmental causes, or aiding disadvantaged communities, choose work that resonates with you. This alignment will keep you motivated and engaged for a long time.

Be ready to adapt

Most volunteering positions don't have rigid work hours. However, in crucial times, immediate action is required. In such situations, showing responsibility and dedication can be an opportunity for growth. Be prepared for challenges and for taking on an increase in workload as you become a more active member of the organisation.

> **Whether you want a small break or need to take on fewer responsibilities, communicate with the team and be sensitive about it. As a privileged member of society, you should acknowledge that you have the luxury of distancing yourself from these issues as opposed to entire communities who do not. And these very issues impact all facets of their lives.**

Mind your mental health

A lot of volunteering work involves dealing with issues like humanitarian crises and social injustice. These are tough issues and have severe consequences on the people that it affects.

Even if it's an issue that you feel strongly about, you can feel emotionally drained from working around them. In such cases, consider what you need to do. Whether you want a small break or need to take on fewer responsibilities, communicate with the team and be sensitive about it. As a privileged member of society, you should acknowledge that you have the luxury of distancing yourself from these issues as opposed to entire communities who do not. And these very issues impact all facets of their lives.

Staying motivated

While public recognition of volunteers' efforts is a huge motivation boost, it may not be enough to keep everyone incentivised. Oftentimes, there isn't any tangible recognition, which can feel rather demotivating. This is precisely why you should work towards a cause that you care about and spurs you on. There is no greater reward than striving to make a positive difference, especially when it involves a noble cause.

Understanding these aspects of volunteering will prepare you for what to expect and how to navigate the challenges that may arise. While volunteering can be emotionally taxing, it's also gratifying. Your commitment and dedication can make a real difference in the lives of others.

Adrin Sarwar is a writer, a student of Printing and Publications, and an illustrator

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ADOPT, DON'T SHOP

The case against buying pets

A love that transcends language and understanding – sounds imaginary, but is very easily obtained when you have a four-legged best friend. There are hundreds of Facebook groups and resources promoting adoption, and it takes only one to realise Dhaka's massive problem of overpopulation of animals.

TINATH ZAEBA

Stray cats and dogs live a life marred by abuse and normalised cruelty, often passing away from extreme starvation and malnutrition. One adoption is one more animal saved from a short life and a painful death. Adopting a pet is the obvious choice in a city overpopulated by stray animals constantly looking for food and safety. After all, it could save their lives, and you have a loyal buddy for life. Yet, there are still uncountable families purchasing animals while adopting none – developing a new problem and leaving an old one unsolved.

A common reason for purchasing a pet is for the "aesthetics" – the claim that a foreign breed will look nicer. But it's important to realise that a living creature is not an accessory. A pet is a living thing, not a showpiece, and most rescue animals flourish under a caring hand. Each animal has its own unique beauty and personality when loved and cared for.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

When it comes to affordability, adoption is entirely free of charge. It requires no payment to welcome a pet into your home, and in the long term, they require less maintenance as there is generally little to no need for professional grooming or fur maintenance. On the other hand, purchasing a pet, such as a Persian cat, could cost up to BDT 30,000-40,000 and in the long run, grooming and maintenance become a regular financial investment, as they are more prone to risks of developing fungal infections if not taken care of properly.

Additionally, adoption is the more ethical choice as well. The business of breeders in Dhaka is revolting. Breeders purchase kittens and puppies, and as soon as they are of age, they are forced to be in proximity to the opposite gender to produce litter as quickly as possible. After the offspring are born, they only spend a few weeks with their mother before they are whisked away to be sold, and the cycle almost immediately repeats, disregarding any health concerns of the mother or their babies. Neglect of pets is ordinary and not even a secret in the breeding industry. When you adopt a pet, you are not condoning this practice and ensuring that you are not contributing to the endless cycle of abuse that could be easily prevented.

We share the city with these animals. They are voiceless, subject to abuse, and yet have so much love to give. Choosing to purchase rather than adopt is choosing to abandon them when all they want is to be our best friend forever. It's time for us to start a new generation of compassion and adopt our new furry family member.

> **A common reason for purchasing a pet is for the "aesthetics" – the claim that a foreign breed will look nicer. But it's important to realise that a living creature is not an accessory.**

Tinath Zaeba is an optimistic daydreamer, a cat mom of 5, and a student of Economics at North South University. When she is not cuddling with her pets, you can contact her at tinathzaeba25@gmail.com

Star
SPORT
DHAKA SATURDAY JUN 024, ASHAR 15, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV
T20 World Cup final
India vs South Africa
Live from 8:30 pm

T SPORTS
Euros Last 16
Italy vs Switzerland

Live from 10:00 pm
Germany vs Denmark
Live from 1:00 am (Sunday)
Copa America
Argentina vs Peru
Live from 6:00 am
(Sunday)

The final showdown between India and South Africa in the grand finale of the T20 World Cup 2024 will be the ninth final of the showpiece event. This will be the first time that the two sides will meet in an ICC final. They did face off in the semifinal of the 2014 edition in which India came out victorious but the Men in Blue lost against the Proteas in the 2022 edition in Australia.

VENUE: **KENSINGTON OVAL, BARBADOS** TIME: **8:30 PM** BANGLADESH TIME

HEAD-TO HEAD

INDIA: 14
SOUTH AFRICA: 11
NO RESULT: 1
IN T20 WORLD CUPS
INDIA: 4
SOUTH AFRICA: 2

SOUTH AFRICA

T20 world ranking: 5
Best result: Semi-finalists (2009, 2014)
Coach: Rob Walter
Captain: Aiden Markram
Top-ranked batter: Markram (8)
Top-ranked bowler: Anrich Nortje (9)

ROAD TO FINAL

GROUP-STAGE
Wins against Sri Lanka, Netherlands, Bangladesh, Nepal

SUPER 8
Wins against USA, England, West Indies

SEMIFINAL
Win against Afghanistan

INDIA

T20 world ranking: 1
Best result: Champions (2007)
Coach: Rahul Dravid
Captain: Rohit Sharma
Top-ranked batter: Suryakumar Yadav (2)
Top-ranked bowler: Axar Patel (8)

ROAD TO FINAL

GROUP-STAGE
Wins against Ireland, Pakistan, USA
*Match abandoned against Canada

SUPER 8
Wins against Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Australia

SEMIFINAL
Win against England

More than a title at stake

REUTERS

India will be out to end their global title drought while South Africa will be seeking to bury their 'chokers' tag at Kensington Oval on Saturday when the tournament's two unbeaten sides clash in the Twenty20 World Cup final.

Their blemish-free campaigns and comprehensive victories in the semifinals leave no doubt that the 20-team tournament's best two sides have made the final in Bridgetown, but both sides will still have a point to prove as they look to get rid of their own ghosts in the final showdown.

A day after South Africa stopped Afghanistan's fairytale run in the first semi in Trinidad, India ended England's title defence in Guyana to make the third consecutive final of a global event across all formats.

Skipper Rohit Sharma will hope India, who lost in the finals of the World Test Championship and the 50-overs home World Cup last year, will make it third time lucky.

Both Rohit, 37, and stalwart Virat Kohli, 35, are playing what could be their last T20 World Cup, and winning the trophy would be a perfect farewell for them.

It will be a test of nerves for their opponents as well as South Africa look to shed their baggage from having reached their first World Cup final in any format after seven semifinal heartbreaks.

Their pace attack has been on the money, bailing them out whenever their batters failed.

Opener Quinton de Kock has used his Caribbean Premier League experience to good use, while there is significant firepower in their middle order.

In Aiden Markram, South Africa also have a composed leader who has gone 10 matches unbeaten as captain.

"We feel and we believe that we can compete with the best in the world and we can win trophies," said Markram.

- It is a historic occasion for South Africa as they will be playing in their first-ever final in ODI or T20 World Cups.
- India have not won a World Cup title since their triumph in the 2011 ODI World Cup at home.
- India are also without an ICC silverware since the 2013 Champions Trophy.
- This is the first time that both T20 World Cup finalists have made it through unbeaten -- South Africa have won all eight matches while India won seven and saw their group game against Canada washed out.
- South Africa skipper Aiden Markram is yet to lose a game while in charge in World Cups. He guided the Proteas to victories in all six matches in the Under-19 World Cup in 2014, won two as a stand-in captain in the 2023 ODI World Cup before marshalling his troops to this World Cup final unbeaten.
- The average first-innings total at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown for completed matches in this World Cup is 150.

Rain, not again!

According to AccuWeather, showers are expected and will likely delay the toss and interrupt play later. While there is a 50 percent chance of rain in the morning, it is expected to come down to 30 percent come toss time with the probability jumping back to 50 percent in the afternoon.

A total of 190 minutes (three hours and 10 minutes) of extra time has been allocated to try to complete the game if it faces rain delays.

Both sides will need to bat at least 10 overs for a champion to be decided.

A reserve day (on Sunday) has been allotted if the match cannot be finished on Saturday.

If the match starts and cannot continue due to inclement weather then it will pick up on the reserve from where it was left off on the previous day.

A 20 percent chance of rainfall was forecasted for the reserve day.

*If the match cannot be completed on the reserve day, then both sides will be announced as joint-winners.

Only courage can take Tigers forward

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's performances in the Super Eights of the T20 World Cup showed that team is lacking in many crucial aspects. But lack of courage was again evident, especially in how Bangladesh threw in the towel thinking they would not be able to chase down Afghanistan's total in 12.1 overs in the third Super Eight fixtures, with semifinals at stake.

The team returned home yesterday following a disappointing campaign despite picking up three wins in the group stages. Vice-captain Taskin Ahmed, while talking to media, spoke highly of the youngsters. The youngsters in the bowling unit played to their potential and held their own in a campaign where a lot of the experienced names did not fire.

Rishad Hossain picked up 14 wickets in seven matches while Tanzim Sakib took 11 and both youngsters gave a positive image of themselves.

"Tanzim Sakib, Rishad [Hossain] were among the top wicket takers and in top five. Rishad is still there. Overall they did well and it's a positive for Bangladesh that youngsters for the future will come up. It will show the world that we have different kinds of abilities," Taskin said.

A bulk of the blame for the effort in the Afghanistan game would fall on the coaching staff and think tank, including head coach Chandika Hathurusingha. The batting unit looked like they were chasing a moving target, their plans changing from over to over. Taskin said they tried as a batting unit.

If the coaches did not however plan for it, individual batters' intent will not always pave the way. Bangladesh failed to use Towhid Hridoy or Rishad Hossain further up the order in the game. Many believe that Hridoy, who had performed sporadically but not without impact in this World Cup, could have been promoted up the order and not sent in at number six where the game had already become difficult.

If Bangladesh are to bring in youngsters, coaches too must have belief in fearless cricket. Thus while Hathurusingha should be credited for playing Rishad, he will have to bear responsibility for baffling planning during the Super Eights.

Following Australia's loss to India, some former and current players were talking about an overhaul. Taskin said that senior stars Shakib Al Hasan and Mahmudullah Riyad not performing had an impact. It remains to be seen if Bangladesh do move on from them.

"Both seniors not being in flow had an impact, although not outside the field since they are great teammates out of it. It's normal when key players do not perform," he said.

The batting unit altogether did not find form in the tournament. "I haven't seen such a long bad patch for the batters in my 10 years playing for Bangladesh. I hope it goes away quickly," Taskin added.

In T20s, however, one or two batters can often make the difference. Bangladesh need courage going forward, backed by actual skill. A lot of restructuring needed as well, and it has to begin with the think tank which failed to use resources tactically and plan a better World Cup.

Euro knockout kings Germany ready for another deep run

AGENCIES

Germany's remarkable record in the knockout stages of the European Championship enters a new chapter in Dortmund on Saturday, with Denmark standing in the way of more glory for "Die Mannschaft", as they are known at home, at the tournament.

Of the 10 times the Germans have made it out of the group stage at the Euros, they have gone on to reach the semifinals on nine occasions and the final six. They are level with Spain with three titles.

Germany also boast the only man to win the tournament as a player and a coach in Bertie Vogts, who was victorious in 1972 and as manager in 1996, beating the Czech Republic 2-1 after extra time at Wembley.

However, that victory, almost 28 years ago to the day, remains the last time the Germans lifted the Henri Delaunay trophy, but even if Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann does not bring the cup home, his job is likely secure.

Their only three group-stage exits came in 1984, 2000, and 2004, and a round-of-16 loss in 2020 coupled with another group-stage departure at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar had lowered expectations ahead of this tournament.

A 5-1 win over Scotland and a dramatic late equaliser against the Swiss sent them through as Group A winners, however, setting them up for their last-16 clash with Denmark and igniting fan hopes of another deep run in the competition.

"I think we've already shown what we are capable of in this tournament," striker Niclas Fuellkrug, who scored stoppage time header to snatch a draw against the Swiss, said after that match.

Germany won just three of 11 games in 2023 but are yet to lose in 2024, winning five times and drawing twice, thanks at least in part to Nagelsmann picking the same starting XI.

The coach only deviated from his starters when forced through injury or unavailability.

The policy may have given Germany stability, but it cost him centre-back Jonathan Tah for the Denmark clash, after the defender picked up a second yellow card against Switzerland.

In his place, Borussia Dortmund's talented yet unpredictable central defender Nico Schlotterbeck will line-up on Saturday.

What bodes well for the Germans is that defender Antonio Rudiger returned to training on Friday ahead of their clash with Denmark, having missed earlier sessions with a hamstring strain that he picked up towards the end of Germany's 1-1 draw with Switzerland but managed to complete the game.

Denmark however will be forced to sweat on the fitness of midfielder Christian Eriksen, who did not take the pitch in the Danes' pre-match training session.

Key Italy midfielder Nicolo Barella (L) and forward Federico Chiesa (R) were in jovial mood in training yesterday alongside centre-back Gianluca Mancini, who is likely to replace the suspended Riccardo Calafiori, ahead of tonight's Last 16 tie of Euro 2024 against Switzerland. The defending champions will need a much-improved performance from their group-stage showing against the Swiss, a side they beat 3-0 in group stages of the last edition before drawing twice on their way to be eliminated from the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers. PHOTO: **INSTAGRAM**

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Rain likely as low-pressure area forms in the Bay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department predicts light to moderate rainfall in all divisions, including the capital, over the next 48 hours, beginning at 9:00am today.

"Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over Rangpur, Mymensingh, Chattogram, Barishal, and Sylhet divisions and at many places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Khulna divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over the country," said a met office bulletin yesterday.

A low-pressure area has formed over the northwest Bay and adjoining areas. The axis of the monsoon trough runs through Bihar,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

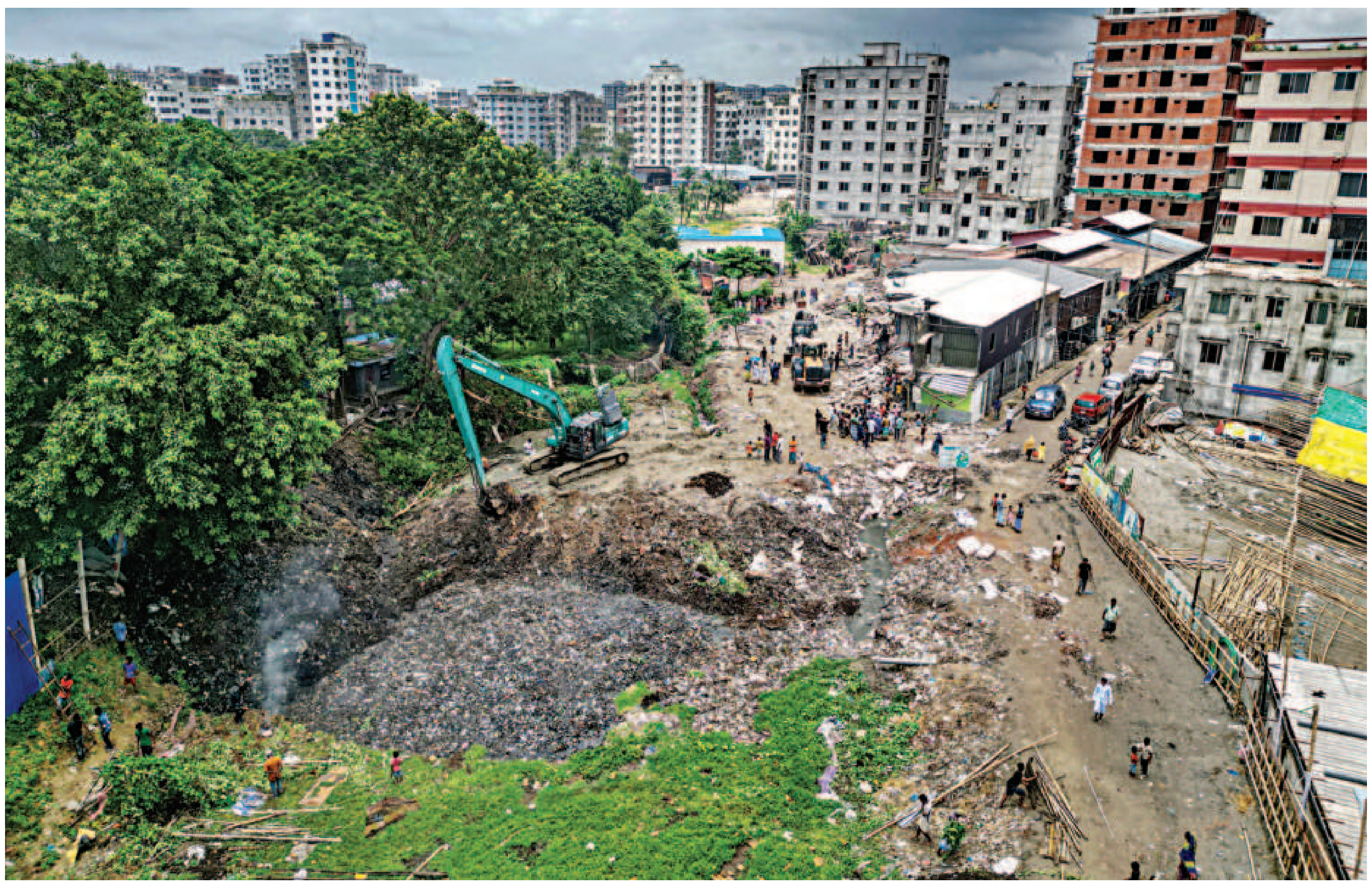


PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

An excavator of the Dhaka North City Corporation removing waste from the Ramchandrapur canal in the capital's Mohammadpur yesterday. The move came a day after the corporation knocked down illegal structures of Sadeeq Agro for encroaching on the canal.

3 die in Ctg market fire

5 shops gutted; electrical short circuit caused the blaze

ARUN BIKASH DEY

Three people were killed in a fire that broke out at the six-storey Mohammadia Plaza in the port city's Riaz Uddin Bazar area early yesterday.

Mobile phone repair and accessory shops occupied the first three floors of the building, while its employees and other bachelors lived on the floors above.

The deceased were identified as Md Ridwan, 45, Md Shahed, 18, and Ismail Hossain, 19, of Satkania upazila, said police.

Kotwali Police Station Sub Inspector Toma Akter said Ridwan and Shahed worked at shops in the market and lived on the floors above; while Ismail was Shahed's friend, who was staying the night in his room.

The victims died due to asphyxiation, said a physician of Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

A 35-year-old woman and a nine-year-old girl, who lived in the residential building next to the market, fell sick after inhaling smoke from the fire and were admitted to CMCH's burn and plastic surgery unit.

Later, the woman was shifted to the intensive care unit (ICU) as her health condition deteriorated, said Rafique Uddin Ahmed, head of the burn unit.

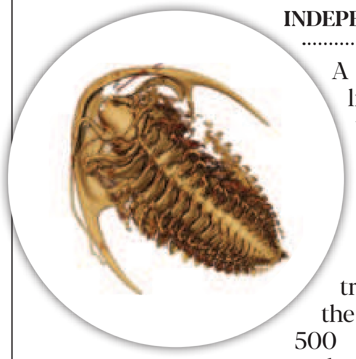
"The two injured suffered inhalation injuries."

The fire originated from a shop on the ground floor around 1:35am due to an electric short circuit, said Abdur

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

500-million-year-old sea creature discovered

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



A sea creature that lived 500 million years ago has been discovered in a "remarkable state of preservation" by scientists.

Even though trilobites swam the oceans some 500 million years ago, researchers said the animals still look as though they "died yesterday".

The creatures met their end after becoming completely encased in ash after a volcanic explosion, preserving soft tissue and other parts of the body in pristine condition.

Dr Greg Edgecombe, a palaeontologist at the Natural History Museum, said: "I've been studying trilobites for nearly 40 years, but I never felt like I was looking at live animals as much as I have with these ones."

"I've seen a lot of soft anatomy of trilobites, but it's the 3D preservation here that is truly astounding," he added.

Trilobites are some of the most widely studied fossil marine animals, with more than 20,000 species identified over the past 200 years.

Dr Edgecombe said studying trilobites is important because they provide scientists with "one of the most comprehensive datasets" for analysing the evolutionary history of an extinct species.

The creatures were also geographically diverse, making them excellent index fossils for geologists calculating the age of the rocks in which they are found.

Two brothers among three killed in road crashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two brothers were among three people who died early yesterday hours after being injured in accidents in Dhaka's Cantonment and Khilkhet areas.

The deceased were identified as Sifatur Rahman Safin alias Rahul, 21, a delivery man, his brother Md Rafi, 18, a transport worker, and Alfaz, 25, an employee of an event management organisation.

In Cantonment on Thursday night, the two brothers were heading towards Kalshi area from their house in Mirpur Bawniabandh area to refuel their motorcycle, their uncle Monir Hossain said.

On their way, a speeding truck hit their motorcycle near ECB Chattar area around 11:30pm, leaving them critically injured.

Passersby took them to Kurmitola General Hospital. From there doctors referred them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Rahul was pronounced dead shortly after midnight while Rafi succumbed to

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

FAMINE IN GAZA

Children dying of starvation in parents' arms

CNN ONLINE

Younis lays disorientated on a green mattress in Nasser Hospital, in southern Gaza. His long brown eyelashes rest delicately on his pale sunken face, as he drifts in and out of sleep.

The 9-year-old Palestinian boy lies in his mother's arms, clearly wasted from severe malnutrition and suffering from dehydration. His blue jogging bottoms hang off his emaciated legs, as his tiny ribcage protrudes from his billowy orange T-shirt.

"I call on people with conscience to help me find health care for my son, so that he can go back to normal," his mother, Ghanima Juma'a, told CNN last week at the hospital in Khan Younis. "I am losing my son in front of my eyes."

Two months ago, the family was forced to flee the southern

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Israeli warplanes strike north Gaza

Numerous casualties reported

AFP, *Palestinian Territories*

Israel's military on Friday said it was conducting raids backed by air strikes in northern Gaza, killing "dozens" of fighters in an area where it had declared the command structure of Hamas dismantled months ago.

The operation in Shujaiya, on the edge of Gaza City, caused numerous casualties, witnesses and medics said on Thursday when it began.

Renewed fighting in Gaza's north followed comments on Sunday by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in which he said the "intense phase" of the war was winding down after almost nine months.

Israeli forces targeted the headquarters of Gaza's civil defence agency while advancing in western Rafah.

Experts say they foresee a potentially prolonged next phase.

Omer Dostri, a military expert at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, said he expects the army to reduce its ground presence and to increasingly use drones and fighter jets "to further dismantle Hamas".

Yesterday in the Shujaiya area, an AFP correspondent witnessed an air strike and saw smoke rising. Artillery fire boomed.

In a statement, Israel's military said that, overnight Thursday, troops "started to conduct targeted raids" in the Shujaiya area as part of an operation that began earlier in the day.

Intelligence had indicated "the presence of terrorists and terrorist infrastructure in the area of Shujaiya", the military said, in its first details of the operation.

As troops went in, warplanes struck dozens of Hamas targets, it said, following other "significant"

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

COPA AMERICA

Bielsa wants more from 5-star Uruguay

AGENCIES

Marcelo Bielsa believes Uruguay have more to do to mark themselves out as one of the favourites to win the Copa America, despite crushing Bolivia 5-0 to make it two wins from two games.

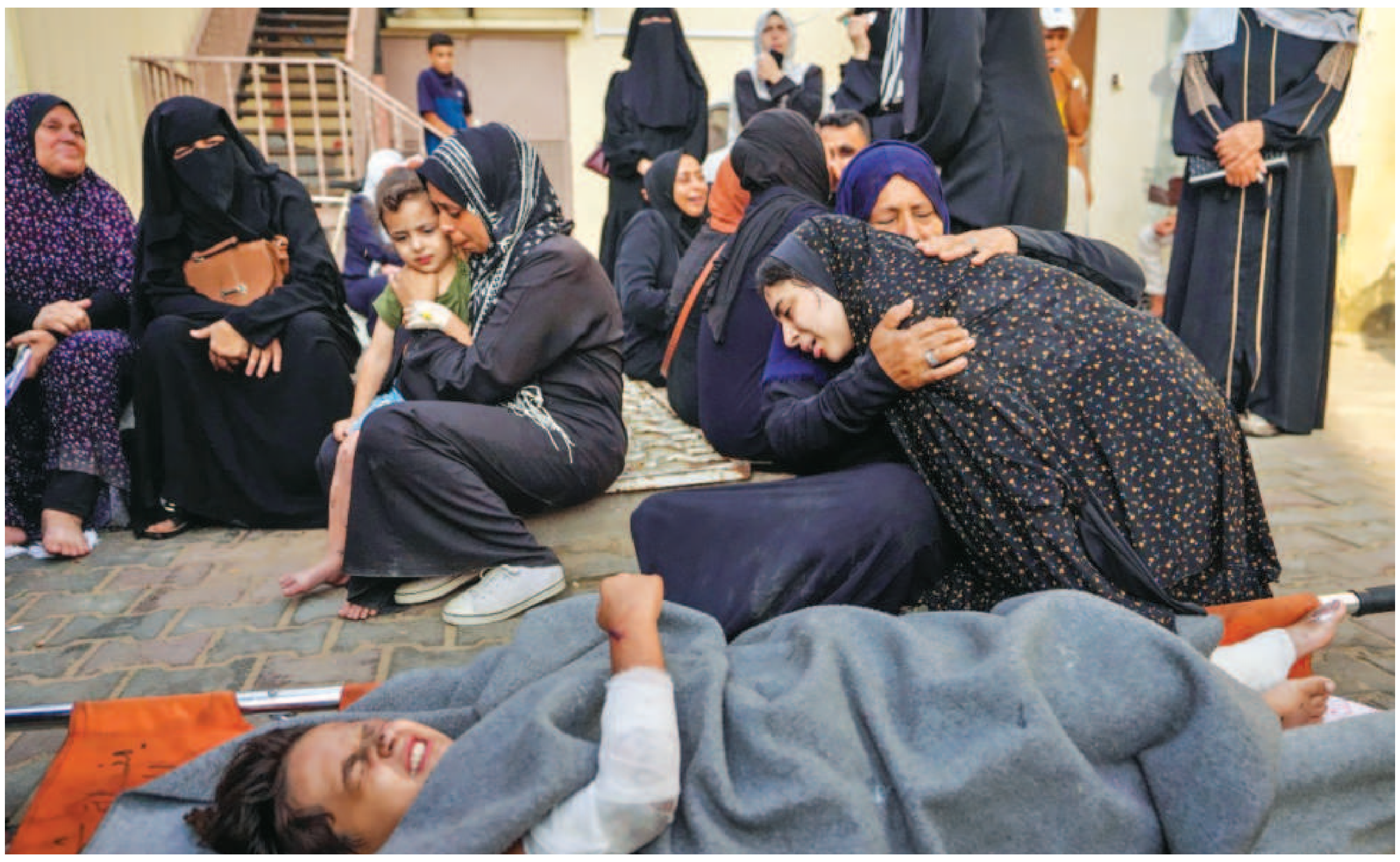
Facundo Pellistri, Darwin Nunez, Maximiliano Araujo, Federico Valverde and Rodrigo Bentancur all scored as Bielsa's team ran riot in their second Group C game on Thursday.

It was Uruguay's biggest win in the Copa America since 1959, when they beat Argentina by the same scoreline in the group stage.

Having opened their campaign with a 3-1 win over Panama, they have won their first two matches at a Copa America tournament for the first time since 1995, when they went on to lift the trophy.

A figure of 2.74 expected goals (xG) from 18 shots to Bolivia's 0.06 (four shots) spoke to Uruguay's dominance,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



An injured girl reacts while lying on a stretcher on the ground as women mourn the death of their relatives at the Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah yesterday, following Israeli bombardments in the central Gaza Strip.

PHOTO: AFP

Climate change boosted deadly Saudi hajj heat by 2.5C

REUTERS, *London*

The heatwave in Saudi Arabia blamed for the deaths of 1,300 people on the hajj pilgrimage this month was made worse by climate change, a team of European scientists said yesterday.

Temperatures along the route from June 16 to 18 reached 47 degrees Celsius (117 degrees Fahrenheit) at times and exceeded 51.8 C at Makkah's Great Mosque.

The heat would have been approximately 2.5 C (4.5 F) cooler without the influence of human-caused climate change, according to a weather attribution analysis by ClimaMeter.

ClimaMeter conducts rapid assessments of the role of climate change in particular weather events.

The scientists used satellite observations from the last four decades to compare weather patterns from 1979 to 2001 and 2001 to 2023.

Although dangerous temperatures have long been recorded in the desert region, they said natural variability

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Star WR
WEEKEND READ
DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 29, 2024
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The Daily Star

Coastal women and their woeful walk for water

> I have to walk more than two kilometres to fetch water from a pond. Since I can't make the trip twice a day, I carry a bigger pitcher, which causes back pain and sometimes makes me sick.
>
> Sushama Sarkar

DIPANKAR ROY

At the break of dawn, women of all ages -- daughters, mothers, homemakers -- set out in search for safe drinking water.

They carry not one, but several large water pitchers, balanced on their heads and backs.

Their journey stretches for hours, and often ends in a different village far away from home, where they can finally find some water that is safe to drink.

For many years now, such has been the case for many women in Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat. In recent years, rising sea levels and erratic weather patterns have pushed saltwater further inland, contaminating more groundwater sources.

For these women in Southwestern Bangladesh, reaching a source of safe water, however, is only half the battle. There, they join a long line of equally affected women, all waiting their turn to fill their pitchers. The wait can be agonising, stretching into more hours stolen from their day. Finally, after securing their precious water, they begin the long trek back, with fully loaded pitchers on their backs and heads.

For these women in Southwestern Bangladesh, reaching a source of safe water, however, is only half the battle. There, they join a long line of equally affected women, all waiting their turn to fill their pitchers. Many coastal women carry not one, but several large water pitchers, balanced on their heads and backs.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

This daily struggle comes at a heavy cost. Backache and fatigue are their constant companions.

Walking under the harsh sun everyday takes its toll, leading to frequent bouts of illness.

Yet, they cannot afford to rest. Skipping this daily "pilgrimage" means their families go thirsty. And there is always the risk of waterborne diseases.

The freshwater crisis across the southern coast of Bangladesh affects over 40 lakh people. But it is the marginalised women who bear the brunt of the suffering.

Experts say climate change and shrimp enclosures have not only stolen their clean water, but also amplified the existing inequalities, leaving these women on the frontline of a battle for survival.

> **Experts say climate change and shrimp enclosures have not only stolen safe water, but also amplified the existing inequalities, leaving these women on the frontline of a battle for survival.**

Sushma Sarkar, 53, from Dacope upazila of Khulna, said, "I have to walk more than two kilometres to fetch water from a pond. Since I can't make the trip twice a day, I carry a bigger pitcher, which causes back pain and sometimes makes me sick."

"Can you imagine someone carrying a 25-litre pitcher along a four-kilometre road on a sunny day? It's really unbearable for us," she added.

The rich buy water. But this is not an option for people like Sushma. So, they keep their eyes on the sky for rain, which allows them to harvest rainwater.

But climate change has also led to less rainfall, pushing people like Shushma into further despair.

Rina Sarkar, who also struggles to find potable water, said they often drink saline water from the pond directly out of desperation.

"If the government could supply drinking water through pipelines, we would be saved from this curse. They supply electricity through poles and wires, so why not water through pipes?" she asked.

Panchanon Mondal, chairman of Sutorkhali Union Parishad in Dacope, Khulna, said, "Almost 70 percent people in my union lack access to safe drinking water and rely on pond water or other sources."

"Urgent action is needed to alleviate their sufferings, including increased investment in water infrastructure and sustainable solutions to combat salinity intrusion," he added.

According to Dr Md Mehedi Newaz, vice principal of Khulna Medical Hospital, illnesses linked to salinity, like hypertension and kidney ailments, are becoming more common, particularly among women."

Gouranga Nandy, researcher and chairman of the Center for Environment and Participatory Research, said climate change is gradually extending salinity into inland water and soil, threatening coastal biodiversity and human health, especially for women.

CURSE OF SHRIMP ENCLOSURES

The large-scale shrimp cultivation since the 80s has increased soil and water salinity in the coastal region, said Gournanga Nandy.

Shrimp enclosures need saline water to thrive and as a result, salinity intrusion increases with the expansion of shrimp culture. The extent of salinity in groundwater is also increasing because of continuous shrimp cultivation in the fresh agricultural land.

When Sonaban Bibi, 62, got married 46 years ago, there was a pond next to her house, from which she managed to fetch drinking water.

However, some 20 years ago the water of that pond in Betbunia village of Khulna's Paikgacha upazila became unsafe for consumption, due to salt intrusion caused by a nearby shrimp enclosure.

So, for the last 20 years, Sonaban has been fetching drinking water from a pond in nearby Golbunia village, 1.5km away from her house.

Fetching three to four pitchers of water daily for her family of nine is a strenuous task.

"It's a year-round routine, whether it's winter, summer, or rainy season, we need to fetch water from Golbunia," said Sonaban, when she was returning home after fetching water with a big pitcher last week.

Rafuza Begum, a resident of Betbunia, said, "Earlier there were five ponds around our village. Now you can't drink water from any of them. Saline water from shrimp enclosures has contaminated the ponds."

The story is the same for around 34,000 people living in 32 villages of Soladana union.

Abdul Mannan Ghazi, chairman of Soladana union, said, "All 32 villages are saltwater-prone areas. Saltwater shrimps are cultivated everywhere, which has caused the water in the ponds to become salty."

Saikat Mallick, fisheries officer of Paikgacha, said shrimp farming is being conducted on a large scale in 10 unions and one municipal area of the upazila.

"It is the largest saltwater shrimp farming zone in Khulna. This year, 3,940 saltwater shrimp gher [enclosure] is being cultivated on 17,075 hectares of land. Out of this only Soladana Union has 1,037 shrimp enclosures on a plot of 3,495 hecrates," he added.

According to the Khulna Divisional Office of the Water Development Board, local shrimp traders have constructed approximately 3,000 unauthorised sluice gates in the Khulna division, leading to the drilling of at least 10,000 holes in river protection dams. The embankments have significantly weakened, making them prone to breaches under increased water pressure, particularly during cyclones.

The area affected by salt intrusion has expanded dramatically from 833.45 hectares in 1973 to 1,056.26 hectares in 2009.

SALINE WATER AND GENDER INEQUALITY

Men, traditionally paddy field workers, have been forced to migrate to urban areas in search of better opportunities, leaving women to shoulder the increasing burden of household and farm responsibilities.

This out migration has left the women who stayed back alone under increasingly difficult circumstances.

Besides, those men who stay back mostly don't help out their other halves in collecting water, due to gender stereotypes.

Shamima Sultana Shilu, a woman leader and activist in Khulna, said, "Women have to do all the housework. Waterborne diseases are very common for rural women who are in contact with saline water for household chores and other work like netting, fishing, or agricultural tasks."

The migration of men has also left women vulnerable to gender-based violence.

Outsiders, who settled in villages for the shrimp business, have harassed and committed violence against women, especially when they are alone.

Besides, reproductive health problems due to prolonged exposure to saline water are common in coastal Bangladesh, she said.

To escape these health problems, many women undergo surgeries to remove their ovaries. Besides, child marriage is also increasing, Shilu said.

She emphasised the need for societal change. "Men should come forward to assist women and help with household chores."

During a recent visit, this correspondent also spoke to Sonaban Bibi's husband Abdul Majed Dafadar.

He said they got married when he was 22. Sonaban was much younger, although her parents did not mention her exact age at the time of their wedding.

"For 46 years, Sonaban has been fetching water for our family. She now suffers from headaches, hypertension, and breathing difficulties," he said.

"Our two daughters-in-law now help her. I have told my sons to help their daughters, which I regret not doing. I should have been more aware. I don't want the two young girls to end up like my Sonaban," he added.

Contacted, Md Akmol Hossain, executive engineer of Department of Public Health Engineering, told The Daily Star that deep tube wells are not functioning anywhere in 10 unions and one municipal area of the upazila.

There are 42,00 shallow tube wells in all the upazilas, one-third of which are functional, while others are lying idle, he added.

He said they are trying to come up with alternative solutions to potable water such as setting up water tanks for rainwater harvesting, pond sand filters and reverse osmosis.

FICTION

Storm child

SARAZEEN SAIF AHANA

> **Then you stirred. Your tiny forehead wrinkled, and you cried. That first, piercing cry that announces the arrival of a new soul in this world. And then your mother shivered at that sound, and she opened her eyes.**

You must have heard the story of your birth a thousand times by now, sweetheart. Your mother and I—home alone. The others were out watching Ana's dance recital, but your mom had been feeling tired, so she stayed back, and I stayed with her. She was just seven months along, but she went into labour. The storm struck, and the rest of the family were forced to stay at the school. Your father ignored the weather warnings and drove home anyway, to find he now had a beautiful little girl to love. Your parents' joy was immense.

What we never told you was that you were stillborn.

Your mother went into labour, and it was the fastest delivery I've ever seen in my life. She bled like a river, and I thought I might lose my own daughter.

I lifted you from her and quickly wrapped you in towels and placed you on the bed. I was panicking, and your mom was bleeding and she had fainted. The storm was raging, and I was watching my own baby girl die in front of me.

DESIGN: **MAISHA SYEDA**

And then I realised you hadn't cried.

You were lying there, in those towels, ashen-faced and as silent as the grave. This tiny, beautiful little angel. And beside you was your mother, bleeding her life away.

I held you in one arm and her in the other, and I stared out of the window into that hurricane, and I begged for your lives. You know I was never very religious, but I guess there comes a point in every person's life where you give up trying to be strong and just want some higher power to help you. I cried like a madwoman and I begged for the lives of my daughter and granddaughter, whatever the cost.

I do not know how long I stayed that way. I do not remember what I offered for your lives. It did not matter. As long as my family was safe and happy, nothing else mattered.

"My life for theirs. My soul for theirs. Whatever it costs, I'll pay it a thousand times over. Just give them back to me. Let them live. Let them be healthy and happy and whole." I said it like a mantra, again and again until my voice gave out.

Then you stirred. Your tiny forehead wrinkled, and you cried. That first, piercing cry that announces the arrival of a new soul in this world. And then your mother shivered at that sound, and she opened her eyes.

"The baby?"

My joy was a thing so vast it drained me. I carefully, wearily, placed you on her chest. She held you, and she began to cry. Your father burst into the room and started laughing and crying at the same time. I left the three of you there, but just before I closed the door, I met your gaze. It was not the gaze of a newborn infant at all. It was the look of a soul a thousand years older than me.

I went to my own room and slept. Never before had I felt so tired, and never since. When I woke up, the storm had cleared and everyone was home. We took you and your mother to the hospital because you were premature, and I was still worried about the blood your mom had lost. You were both released from the hospital a few weeks later, safe and healthy.

Yet every time I looked at you, I knew. I knew I'd done something terrible. I knew I'd called on something I did not even understand in my desperation to protect you and your mother. And I knew, if I were to keep you safe, everyone had to be aware. I sat them around the dining table and told everyone clearly what had happened. We swore to keep this secret. We locked the door of the room you were born in, and we agreed never to let you in there. When your little brother was born a year later (normally, thank goodness, in a bright hospital full of doctors and nurses), we waited until he was old enough to understand, and then we told him about you.

And we kept a very careful eye on you as you grew.

You could feel things. Strange things. Your Grandda's friend was a madman who attacked and murdered a little boy, wrapped the body in curtains and threw him into a landfill. You sensed the evil in him and told us.

Your Uncle Sam began associating with a rough crowd, and he was slowly being drawn into their world. You heard their voices, and you asked about them. He stopped hanging out with them shortly afterwards. They were human traffickers.

The house next door caught fire a few days after you told Cam you'd seen smoke coming from under the door of the locked room.

Two bullies attacked a little boy in your school six months after you ran to your teacher, saying someone was hurt in the stairs. We convinced the principal to install a security camera there. Your teacher got to the child just before he fell down the steps.

A woman broke into the zoo when you were a child and attacked a lot of the animals there. You knew that, somehow, and you told your father to look for the tiger's tail. The police found the woman's tooth, and she confessed.

Your sister overheard you talking in your sleep one night, that your father and one of your uncles were going to have a terrible argument. A fight that would tear the family apart. Your parents moved out just days later.

And then, last week, sweetheart, you left a message on my phone. Here...

Gramma held out her phone, and I took it from her.

I was shaking. My thoughts were a mass of chaos, chasing each other, screaming wordlessly. My mouth was painfully dry, and I couldn't swallow past the lump in my throat. My heart was a drum in my ears. Very dimly, I could hear a high-pitched keening, like someone screaming. Maybe it was my mind, rebelling at what I'd just heard. Maybe it was nothing. Maybe it was everything. Because the keening burst from my throat in a roar of horror and disbelief when I looked at my Gramma's phone.

It was a selfie of me holding up one of my sketches. I remembered sending her that picture, very proud of the mountain scene I'd worked for days over. But it was not a peaceful river valley I'd drawn at all. It was Gramma's living room, done up in Christmas decorations with the tree in the background, and fairy-lights everywhere. In the foreground was my family. My parents, sister, brothers, uncles, aunts and Gramma–on the floor. Their throats slashed open. Their eyes staring sightlessly forward. And there stood I, in the middle of those bodies, smiling serenely, blood on the knife in my hand, blood dripping down to my white dress from my mouth.

I broke the phone.

This is part two of "Storm Child", to be serialised here on Star Literature.

Sarazeen Saif Ahana *is an adjunct member of the faculty at Independent University, Bangladesh where she teaches English and has a small cult of friends similarly obsessed with genre fiction.*

POETRY

All that I shouldn't have known

DESIGN: **AMREETA LETHE**

MAISHA SYEDA

What I wish I didn't know is that when your dear friends whisper the word "psycho" behind your back, you'll grow up accepting it. / I wish I didn't know that cats sometimes eat their newborns for nutrients and that human beings sometimes kill their daughters when they are born; that, I wish I knew why. / I wish I didn't have to know that parents grow old and at some point, we're meant to take care of the child version of them and not the other way around. / I wish it didn't know that would make me angry (don't ask me why). / I wish I didn't know that when you don't have a parent, everyone tries to be your missing parent; they would somehow know what's best for you even though they were never around and they hardly know you; and would point out all the ways your missing parent failed to "parent the right way" because they were away most of the time (figuratively or literally). But what they don't know is that your missing parent taught you everything you needed to know to survive before they went missing—either themselves or by being away. Regardless, you turned out great. / But, I really wish I didn't have to know what it's like to be in what is now half of what was once a beautiful and happy home.

I wish I didn't know that beautiful flowers wither sometimes even after a rainy day. / And that some of those magnificent looking flowers stink–because, well, what a waste. / And I wish I didn't know that when you give up yourself to make a home in the palm of someone's hands, your home is bound to wash away. And you'll end up trying to build that same home forever.

Maisha Syeda *is a writer, painter, and lecturer at North South University.*

Omniscient

H. AZAD

Skin sticky with perspiration from a long month of June
I sit in the ruins of half of this year that has left
I am a ghost, fuzzy and melted down to a whirlpool
Passing through walls of people that walk, waltz, run, or crash into me as I drift Like a bus with its rotating wheels akin to Bambi's flailing legs
I know anger like they know grief
Watching kids grow into these fleshy bits, lanky limbs
They grieve the death of kids that they once loved
It's tragic/ but see, change is beautiful
As long as you *grow* as you change
Two sides of a same coin to represent it that would let you grow/or not Cause when a thing doesn't grow, it starts to rot
I know rotten people/I know lack of consideration
I know entitlement and lack of reciprocation
I know things you put up in a shelf for later/ just so that it doesn't seep into your skin, from some three to four millimeters under
I know that your words meant for me are sharp and that you don't mean for them to be but I know compassion
And I know what's it like to keep a secret because I know when the heart of a friend who lives thousands of miles away flutters
And I know when a friend who lives close presses across her bony wrist the sharp blade of a cutter
I know of women close to me staying in loveless contracts/ and that they didn't bump into a door when they talk about bumping into one as a response to the burning question/ they say it doesn't really matter
And I know of infidelity that sinks its claws into a ripe chest filled with love only to hollow it out into the gutter
I *knowknowknowknow*
All I do is know things
Things/secrets that float into my ears like razored confetti and make them bleed And I hear the honeyed words that do nothing to soothe the grating feeling of the omniscience that for the longest time I have fathered
You know how to handle things so well, very reliable
Lips splitting in two/in false gratitude/as something inside me screams I left people to bleed because it's simply not my battle to win
And then as it dies down, a small voice in the back of my mind mutters The less I know, oh, the less I know the better

H. Azad *is a poet from Central Dhaka. They deal with themes of grief and gore, and they do hope to walk readers through it with them one day, rather than just holding the readers' chins and forcing them to stare it in the face. Find them on Instagram @qo2375_.*

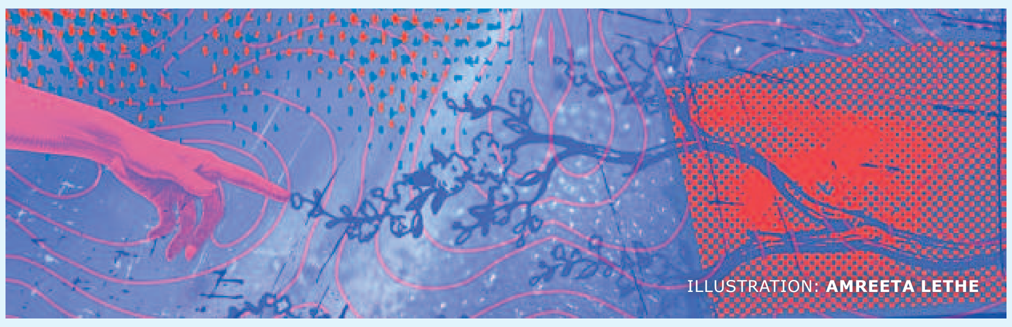


ILLUSTRATION: **AMREETA LETHE**

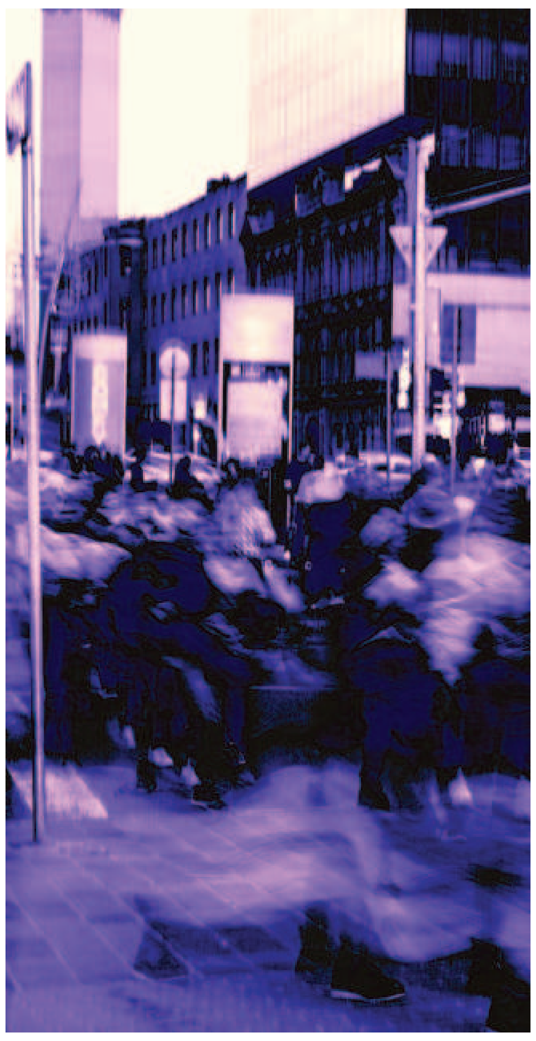


PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

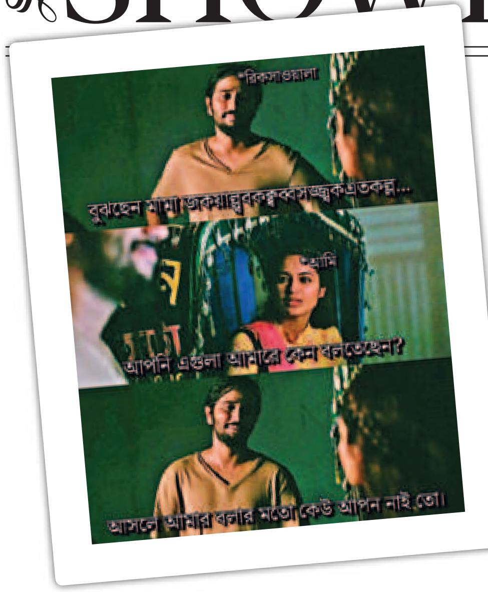
POETRY

All that I'd despicably known / Things I wish I didn't know

TABASSUM HASNAT

All that I'd despicably known / Things I wish I didn't know–
That my childhood would be a prelude
to the calamitous chronicles
of this adulthood.
That the then enticing eagerness to grow up
would become today, one nonchalant noose
around my adult self.
That the melodies my younger self mindlessly hummed
and cavorted about, would become so hard to even
call to mind as I manoeuvred through life.
That the embers of curiosity
once coruscating through my mind
would be extinguished by the everlasting
bouts of over-scrutinising.
That the heart that used to pulsate
a few beats harder in wonderment of the world
would become hardened to the ways of that very world.
That my favourite person who breathes at the core
of all my tenderest tales of life, would become
a stranger one day with the bitterest aftertaste
in my mind.
That the opportunity I spend my whole life looking for,
would knock upon my threshold as if a trouvaille
in the middle of some random day–
only to slip off my fingers,
emulating the classic trope of "almost"
from movies and novels.
That I'd inevitably become a daughter
drinking from my mother's fountain of sorrow,
onboarding the selfsame passengers of pain,
putting upon pedestals the parasites that have
only known to dine on the dainty life I hold.
That grief would always find its way to me,
even in moments of grave bliss, even midst
bustling crowds, even in the arms–
of my loved ones, even when the light
at the end of the tunnel seemed
unblemished and brilliant.
That to be able to crusade against the travails
of the world outside, would require me to cease
being at a war with my insides.
That the unloved, crestfallen whiff of the little girl
from my childhood would still tantalisingly,
wheeze out her dearth of tenderness
in my instances of lovingness,
leaving them marred.
That all the love every thread of my being retained,
after being poured into the heart of a wrong person,
would render me incapacitated of loving–a terrible
lover, is all I must have become now.
That all the wrong trains do not end up at right stations,
for here I am–pursuing pursuits yet to make sense
to myself, chasing chaos in the name of having purposes,
checking myself in at starting points
only with no finishing lines in sight.
That the fairytales I grew up reading
before my stubborn eyne gave in to sweet slumber
would grow edges like knives becoming anecdotes
of detestable realities that keep rewinding behind
the same eyes leaving me now sleepless.
That the girl who only walked
holding her father's pinky, would become a woman
dragging her way through her life with fists clenched.
That loving myself is something
I needed to learn everyday for the world
makes me abominate my own skin every other day.
That my words would fail me,
as mortals become unkind, and life–
a running radio of grating malice, and as
I write this unending list of all that I'd despicably known.

Tabassum Hasnat *is a Bangladeshi freelance content and creative writer of short form fictitious genres. Aside from having her own personal blog on the global platform of Storymirror Pvt Ltd, she has co authored multiple anthologies and book compilations that have been published on Amazon, Kindle, Google books, Kobo, Barnes & Noble, and Notion Press.*


রিকশাওয়ালা
আমি
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আসলে আমার বলার মতো কেউ আপন নাই তো।

AN UNLIKELY PARTNERSHIP

How internet humour is reshaping film marketing

Cultural sensitivities must be navigated carefully, as a meme that misses the mark can quickly backfire, generating negative publicity.

MAHIYA TABASSUM

In an era where attention spans are shrinking and social media dominates, film studios are turning to an unexpected ally in their promotional arsenals: memes. Once dismissed as mere online frivolity, memes have become a potent force in the marketing arsenals of production houses and streaming platforms worldwide. This shift is particularly evident in the burgeoning entertainment industry of Bangladesh, where meme marketing has propelled several productions to unexpected heights of popularity.

Meme marketing involves creating and sharing humorous, relatable content that can spread rapidly across social media platforms. For film projects, this often means crafting images or short videos that reference the movie in a way that resonates with online communities.

The appeal is clear: memes are shareable, adaptable, and can quickly go viral, potentially reaching millions of viewers at a fraction of the cost of traditional advertising. They also allow for a more organic, word-of-mouth style of promotion that can feel more authentic to younger audiences who are often sceptical of conventional marketing tactics.

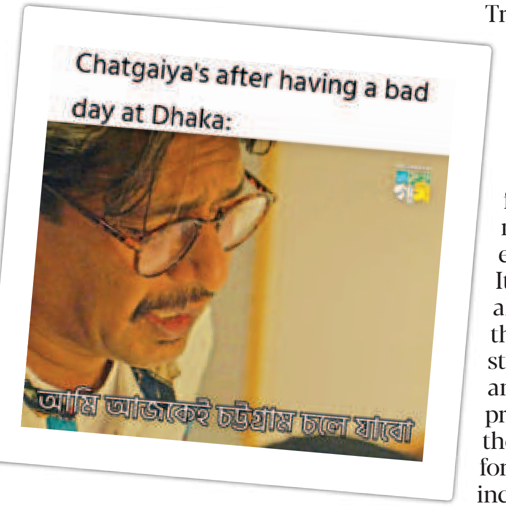
VISUAL: MAHIYA TABASSUM

In the global arena, there are numerous examples of TV and film projects that have seen tremendous success with meme marketing. For example, the simultaneous release of ***Barbie*** and ***Oppenheimer*** in 2023 sparked the "Barbenheimer" phenomenon, a meme-driven marketing bonanza that boosted both films' profiles.

Take, for instance, last Valentine's Day special release– Shihab Shaheen's directorial web-film ***Kacher Manush Dure Thuiya***. What began as a modest release quickly snowballed into an online cultural phenomenon, driven largely by a flurry of memes that flooded social media platforms. These bite-sized pieces of humour, often featuring stills or short clips from the film overlaid with witty captions, did more than just amuse – they intrigued. Viewers, including this author, found themselves drawn to watch the film; if only to understand the context behind the memes that had become ubiquitous in their social media feeds. This curiosity-driven viewership represents a new paradigm in audience engagement, one where the line between marketing and entertainment is increasingly blurred.

Sheikh Korashanee from Chorki, one of the spearheads behind the OTT platform's strategists, provides insight into how this meme marketing approach evolved. "It all started with ***Syndicate***," Korashanee explains. "We found the character Allen Swapan intriguing and made a few memes based on him and launched them from our house. It became a hit, leading to a significant increase in the series' engagement."

This initial success laid the groundwork for their future meme marketing strategies. The show's release was accompanied by a meme competition hosted in partnership with Rantages, a popular Bangladeshi meme-sharing platform. The result? An astounding two crore minutes of viewership in just eight days, setting a new record for the streaming platform.


Chatgaiya's after having a bad day at Dhaka:
আমি আজকেই চট্টগ্রাম চলে যাবো

Rumman Kalam, the founder of Rantages, sheds light on the mechanics behind this success. "The first step is for OTT platforms to reach out to us for their new releases, which Chorki did last year," Kalam explains. "And then we coordinate with them to make the content." This collaboration allows for the creation of timely, relevant memes that are ready to deploy as soon as the content is released. It's a strategy that extends the lifespan of promotional content far beyond traditional marketing methods.

Korashanee elaborates on their process, explaining, "Upon finalisation of a project, we provide the meme platform around 15-20 templates, and then memes are made adding a variety of contexts to those templates." This approach comes in response to the meme platform's active cooperation in ensuring the well-timed dispensation of readily formed memes across social media.

The genius of meme marketing lies in its ability to circumvent the limitations of traditional social media promotion for audio-visual content. While platforms typically restrict the sharing of clips from streaming services, memes offer a workaround. "Memes allow us to reuse the same clip multiple times and keep the content on the top of our minds," Kalam notes. This repetition, far from being monotonous, keeps the production firmly in the public consciousness, driving continued interest and viewership.

However, the path to meme marketing success is not without its pitfalls. The rapidly changing nature of internet culture means that what's viral today may be passé tomorrow. Cultural sensitivities must be navigated carefully, as a meme that misses the mark can quickly backfire, generating negative publicity. Moreover, as Kalam candidly admits, "Over the years, Rantages worked with many campaigns, but success wasn't always a guarantee."

Budget constraints also play a significant role in the adoption of meme marketing. Traditional production houses often lack the resources for extensive marketing campaigns. This financial limitation has, paradoxically, fueled the rise of meme marketing as a cost-effective alternative. It's a strategy that aligns perfectly with the needs of emerging streaming platforms and independent productions, allowing them to compete for attention in an increasingly crowded media landscape.

Looking to the future, the integration of meme marketing into film and series promotion strategies seems set to deepen. We may see the emergence of AI-generated memes, tailored to individual viewer preferences, or interactive meme experiences that blur the line between promotion and content. There's even speculation that the popularity of memes might influence content creation itself, with writers and directors crafting scenes with "meme-ability" in mind.

As the entertainment industry continues to grapple with changing viewer habits and the dominance of social media, meme marketing stands out as a uniquely 21st-century solution.

In Bangladesh and beyond, the success of productions like ***Kacher Manush Dure Thuiya*** and ***Myself Allen Swapan*** suggest that meme marketing is more than just a passing trend. It represents a fundamental shift in how audiences interact with and share content. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, those in the film and streaming industry who can master the art of the meme may find themselves with a significant advantage in capturing the ever-elusive attention of modern viewers.

Ultimately, the future of film promotion via meme marketing is bright, but it requires a delicate balance of creativity, cultural awareness, and technological savvy. When done right, meme marketing has the power to turn a modest production into a cultural phenomenon. In the coming years, we can expect to see this approach refined and expanded, potentially revolutionising the way films and series are promoted in the digital age. In this new landscape, the next viral sensation could be just one clever meme away.

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Kota Factory

Amazon Prime
I am Celine Dion

I AM
CELINE DION

Hoichoi
Boka Bakshote Bondi

Disney Plus
The Acolyte

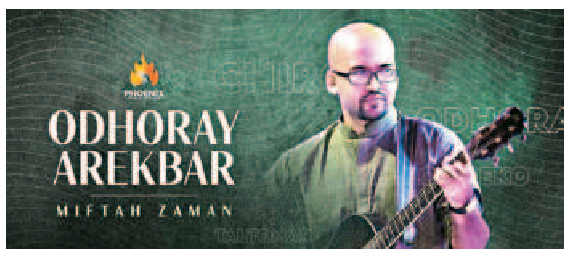
Hulu
The Bear

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA

Shesher Kobita- Photo Story Exhibition
June 29-30| 11 pm-8 pm
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka

LET'S
VIBE
Banter & Beats

Let's Vibe Banter & Beats
July 4| 7 pm
Cielo Rooftop Banani, Dhaka



Miftah Zaman: Odhoray Arekbar
July 5| 5 pm-10 pm
KIB Complex, Dhaka

WHAT'S PLAYING

PERFECT DAY

PERFECT DAY
THE BEST OF
LOU REED

Lou Reed's ***Perfect Day*** is a deceptively simple ballad that has become one of his most iconic works. Released on his 1972 album ***Transformer***, the song presents a stark contrast to Reed's typically edgy and experimental style. On the surface, it's a tender portrayal of a romantic day out, inspired by Reed's experiences with his then-fiancée in New York City.

However, the song's apparent simplicity belies deeper, more complex themes. Reed's somber delivery and the repeated line ***You're gonna reap just what you sow***, referencing biblical text, adds a layer of foreboding to the otherwise idyllic scenario.

This multifaceted nature of ***Perfect Day*** has led to ongoing debates about its true meaning, while making it a timeless classic that continues to intrigue and resonate with listeners decades after its release.

WHAT'S ON THE GRAM

ALIA BHATT AND RANBIR KAPOOR

Bollywood's cutest couple Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt brought their A-game at Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's masquerade party, on the basis of Bhatt's recent Instagram post.

Alia looked stunning in the long gown in a light teal dress regally displaying the greyish green hues, adorned with olive green and silver embroidery. The flowy chiffon gown features a draped dupatta in the same colour. She wrapped up the look with minimal jewellery, and a sleek bun, making for a classy appearance.

Ranbir Kapoor, on the other hand, was dressed in a flamboyant maroon velvet blazer paired with a white shirt, a bow tie, tuxedo pants, and a sleek black masquerade mask - opting for a classy look.

1-MINUTE REVIEW

Monkey Man's tale of retribution

Dev Patel brings a frenetic energy to his remarkable debut as writer and director in ***Monkey Man***, with Jordan Peele serving as producer. The film is an outrageously over-the-top action thriller set on the bustling and refreshingly unconventional streets of Mumbai.

Patel plays "Bobby", named ominously after a bleach brand. Raised in a forest by his single mother, who fascinated him with tales of Lord Hanuman, their peaceful life is shattered when a greedy property developer, posing as a spiritual guru, conspires with a populist right-wing politician to seize the forest.

Corruption under the police chief played by Sikander Kher leads to tragedy. Seeking vengeance, Bobby eventually joins a criminal group through underground bare-knuckle boxing matches - wearing a monkey mask.

The fight choreography throughout remains phenomenal, enhanced by a sweaty, improvised dynamic energy. Moreover, the unpredictable narrative grips your attention, thanks to editors David Jancso and Tim Murrell, along with cinematographer Sharone Meir's fluid camera work.

LDC EXIT

A win for the nation, but a loss for trade

Experts suggest more homework to offset potential losses

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Bangladesh's graduation from the group of least-developed countries (LDCs) to a developing nation in 2026 has become a point of national pride, underlining the substantial economic strides that the country has made.

Not only does the accomplishment signify that the nation has improved income levels, reduced poverty, and raised living standards, but it also represents improvement in social conditions.

Bangladesh was included in the LDC group in 1975 by the United Nations, with the country languishing from the havoc wreaked by the Pakistani army during the Liberation War of 1971.

The UN Committee on Development Policy, the body which assesses the graduation process, has confirmed Bangladesh will graduate in November 2026. It examined the country's economic performance across three criteria: gross national income (GNI) per capita, human assets index (HAI), and economic and environmental vulnerability index (EVI).

Bangladesh has outperformed all previously graduated LDCs in the three criteria in all reviews.

Although the exit will brighten the image and prestige of the country, it will also bring serious challenges for exports, especially due to the erosion of trade benefits.

BENEFITS FOR LDCs

Since becoming an LDC, Bangladesh has enjoyed zero-duty benefits on exports to different countries, including developed and developing nations. It receives preferential treatment in 38 countries. Of the total merchandise shipped from Bangladesh annually, 73 percent is LDC-induced.

It also qualifies for trade preference on shipments to its largest destination, the European Union, under its generous "Everything but Arms (EBA)" scheme. It has helped Bangladesh turn into the second-largest garment supplier to the bloc after China.

Except for the US, all other developing and developed countries have granted Bangladesh zero-duty benefits under the declaration of the Hong Kong Ministerial of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), where global leaders agreed to implement the Doha Development Agenda by approving duty exemptions for all goods originating in LDCs.

The US government did not comply with the declaration and had instead allowed duty-free access for 97 percent of the products of the LDCs. Unfortunately, garment items, the mainstay of the export basket of Bangladesh, were included in the three percent that was subject to duties.

As a result, Bangladeshi garment exporters have always had to face a 15.62 percent duty on apparel exports to the markets in the world's largest economy.

Washington suspended Bangladesh from the generalised system of preference (GSP) in June 2013 for its failure to meet statutory eligibility requirements related to worker rights. The US GSP programme for all countries expired in December 2020 and the US Congress is yet to take up a new scheme. As a result, it has no duty benefit for LDCs currently.

Since gaining the LDC status, Bangladesh has been performing strongly in merchandise exports, especially in the shipment of apparel. Now, the country is the second-largest garment exporter worldwide, accounting for a 7.9 percent share of the global market.

Bangladesh is also the biggest beneficiary of the duty privileges afforded to LDCs, with the country alone availing more than 67 percent of the benefits extended to the group.

Furthermore, Bangladesh enjoys trade benefits on a broader scale. For instance, it gets a 12 percent preferential margin on its sales to European countries, which provide a substantial price advantage.

WHAT AFTER LDC GRADUATION

Since Bangladesh will lose preferential market access, the loss of exports may primarily be worth $7.77 billion annually if merchandise exports of the fiscal year 2022-23 are considered.

"LDC graduation will have the greatest impact on the exports of Bangladesh," said the WTO in a study report. Bangladesh is projected to lose 14.28 percent of its exports.

Once the country leaves the bloc, local exporters may face an 11.5 percent duty in major export destinations in the EU if the GSP Plus facility can't be secured.

This duty will not only be imposed on exports to the EU but also to some emerging markets. For example, duties will be levied at 20 percent in India and 18 percent in Japan.

Apart from the impact of direct tariffs, the industrial sector, especially the garments industry, will face consequences. This may be reflected in workers losing their jobs as exports fall and exporters lose their competitiveness in global trade.

IS THERE ANY SILVER LINING?

The graduation will act as a source of pride and serve as recognition for the nation as it becomes a member of the developing countries.

On the positive side, Bangladesh may witness a higher inflow of foreign direct investments after it becomes a developing nation because the change in the status will brighten the country's image. There will also be enhanced access to finance because of better credit ratings.

But the real question is whether the country will be eligible for the same trade facilities once it exits the group and whether there is any possibility of retaining the benefits in the years after 2026. The straightforward answer is no, but two important developments need to be considered.

First, the EU will grant a three-year grace period to graduating LDCs, meaning Bangladesh will be allowed duty-free access up to 2029.

Second, at the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi this year, it was decided that graduating LDCs would be given the facilities for three more years. In this case, graduating countries will have to negotiate with trading partners and it will not be flat like it is today.

Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said the think-tank's study found that around 14 percent of Bangladesh's exports will be affected following graduation. "Moreover, Bangladesh will have to rationalise tariffs for other countries by withdrawing regulatory and customs duties."

In the absence of the duty-free export facility, Bangladesh will have to sign trade pacts with other countries in order to keep the preferential market access. However, such deals will come at a cost. For example, if free trade agreements (FTAs) are signed, the country may lose a major source of revenue in the form of import duties.

The country's income from import duties stood at Tk 96,259 crore in the last financial year, accounting for 29 percent of the total revenue collections.

Experts suggest the government make the most of the trade benefits of the LDCs and continue negotiations with major partners to sign FTAs, Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreements (CEPAs), Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), and Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs).

If a graduating nation can negotiate efficiently, it may enjoy trade benefits for more than three years after the transition. For example, China has retained benefits for Samoa although the latter graduated in 2014. Therefore, the extent to which preferences can be availed will depend on the negotiation capacity of Bangladesh.

The EU and some countries such as Canada, Australia and the UK have already agreed to continue LDC-linked benefits for Bangladesh for three more years after 2026.

HOW TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE

According to experts, if Bangladesh can take proper steps, the country will be able to offset the financial losses from graduation. "The government has formed seven sub-committees on LDC graduation, and they should work efficiently so that the country can ensure a smooth transition," Prof Rahman added.

Once the country graduates, it will lose foreign assistance. So, the government has initiated measures and is bringing in changes to the budget and policies.

The principal secretary of the Prime Minister's Office has constituted a committee and seven sub-committees involving private sector stakeholders and researchers to identify potential challenges in the post-LDC era and carry out reforms in order to insulate the economy.

In order to tackle challenges stemming from the loss of preferential market access, Bangladesh is considering penning agreements with 13 major trading partners, including China, India, Japan, and the US. In December 2020, Bangladesh signed an PTA with Bhutan, its first bilateral trade deal.

The government has been active in formulating a nine-point action plan to be implemented by 2026 to continue trade benefits in the EU by availing GSP Plus facility.

Export-oriented industries are expected to take a beating owing to graduation since developing and developed nations are not allowed to provide direct cash subsidies on export receipts as per WTO rules.

Therefore, the government aims to provide subsidies in different forms to ensure competitiveness and revenue inflows from international markets.

The government plans to remove and reduce import and supplementary duties on 282 products in 2024-25 in order to prepare the nation for graduation. However, experts have termed the measures inadequate.

COSTS OF LDC GRADUATION

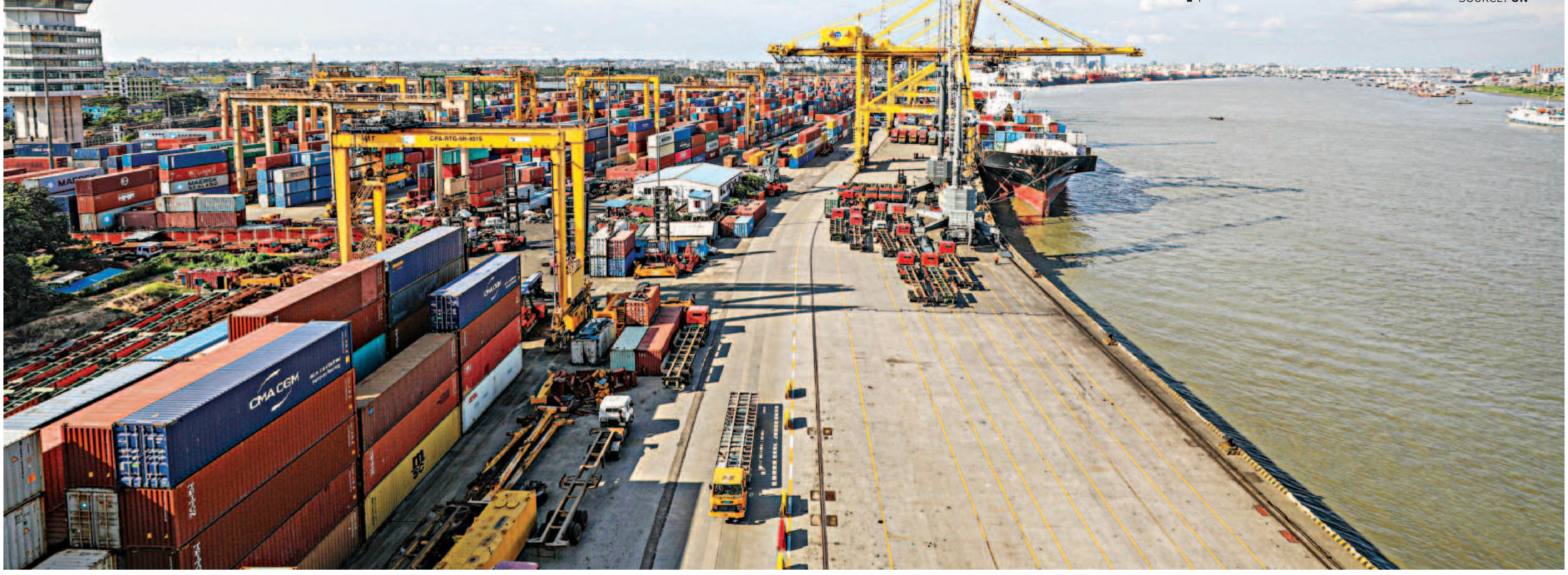
- Bangladesh will lose access to LDC-specific duty-free and quota-free schemes
- LDC-specific preferential rules of origin will go
- Significant impacts are expected in the EU, Japan and other markets, affecting especially garments
- No significant impacts are expected in the US considering current rules
- Bangladesh will no longer benefit from extension given to LDCs on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)
- The TRIPS-related development may lead to higher medicine prices in Bangladesh and other countries

- LDC graduation may leave limited impact on development cooperation in Bangladesh
- Bangladesh may lose international support measures in trade, official development assistance and others
- There will be no travel support to UN meetings and no benefit from LDC-specific support measures

BENEFITS OF LDC GRADUATION

- Achieving the status will be an important development milestone though the gain is sometimes unquantifiable
- More FDI is expected due to better image of the country
- Bangladesh may obtain easy loans because of better credit ratings

SOURCE: **UN**



WALTON
Smart Fridge
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মিলিয়নিয়ার

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW
The Daily Star
SECOND EDITION
DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 30, 2024
REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 158 | ASHAR 16, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | ZILHAJJ 23, 1445 HIJRI | 16 PAGES: TK 15.00

KSRM
শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

No one will be spared in drive against graft

PM tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said no one indulging in corruption will be spared, irrespective of their identity, and vowed to continue the ongoing drive against graft.

"We will catch the corrupt," she said during the discussion on the proposed 2024-25 budget in parliament.

The comments came at a time when former and current government officials facing allegations of corruption are making headlines.

Responding to criticisms of the scope to legalise black money, she said, "Everything is pricier now. Someone owning one katha of land in Dhaka has a few crores of taka... They can neither show the money nor pay income tax. Sometimes these opportunities are given in order for them to pay income taxes and join the mainstream... and not do such things anymore."

The PM said, "The country will not go backwards. No matter how many efforts they make, no one will be able to destroy the country."

Stating that the power and energy sector was highly subsidised, she said, "Why do we subsidise this sector? I will do everything necessary to change the fate of the people of the country. Those who consume more must pay the cost of production. But we are not doing that overnight. It is being done slowly and patiently. We are providing uninterrupted electricity and energy."

"... Those who consume [power] more must pay the cost of production. But we are not doing that [reducing subsidy on power sector] overnight. It is being done slowly and patiently. We are providing uninterrupted electricity and energy."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BLACK MONEY HOLDERS GET AMNESTY -- PAGE 12

India players and officials celebrate with the trophy after winning the ICC Men's Twenty20 World Cup following a thrilling seven-run victory against South Africa in the final at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Glitch stops power supply from Adani plant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Electricity supply from the Adani power plant in Jharkhand has stopped, exacerbating the ongoing power crisis in Bangladesh.

Power generation in the 1,496-megawatt coal-fired power plant is on halt now.

The Adani power plant authorities said they found a leak in a valve of the circulating water pump of the plant, said Khandaker Mokammel Hossain, member (generation) of Bangladesh Power Development Board.

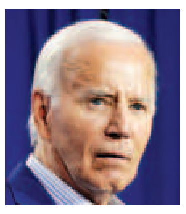
"They forcibly shut down the unit of the plant. It will take at least two to three days to start the maintenance

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Calls for Biden to step aside grow louder

Some Democrats, NYT urge him to drop out of race; Biden admits bad debate performance

AGENCIES



US President Joe Biden is facing a brutal reckoning after he repeatedly stumbled during Thursday night's debate, with some Democrats calling for him to step aside ahead of the November election.

Biden was incapable of swatting down a stream of falsehoods from Donald Trump, who appeared calm and energised in contrast to a bewildered looking President who struggled to maintain thoughts.

"This was like a champion boxer who gets in the ring past his prime and needs his corner to throw in the towel," said a Democratic lawmaker, adding that he meant Biden should exit the race.

It's "time to talk about an open convention and a new Democratic nominee," said a second Democratic lawmaker who has been a solid Biden supporter.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Kohli, Rohit lead India's redemption

AFP, *Bridgetown*

India won the T20 World Cup title with Virat Kohli starring in a thrilling seven-run victory over South Africa in a classic final at Kensington Oval on Saturday.

Kohli, who later announced his retirement from T20 internationals, steadied the India innings with his fine 76 taking them to a strong 176-7.

When Heinrich Klaasen blasted a superb 52 from 27 balls, it looked as though South Africa, appearing in first final, were closing in on victory but they were halted by some outstanding Indian bowling and catching at the end.

South Africa ended on 169-8 with Hardik Pandya taking 3-20 for India to the delight of the huge Indian following at the stadium.

The win is the second T20 World Cup title for India following their triumph in the first edition in 2007 and it also ends their 11-year wait for a major title going back to the 2013 Champions Trophy.

T20
ICC
MEN'S T20
WORLD CUP
WEST INDIES & USA 2024

Veteran Kohli had struggled in the tournament, coming into the final with an average of just 10.7, but he delivered his best innings at the perfect moment with his balanced batting ensuring India won the title after an unbeaten tournament.

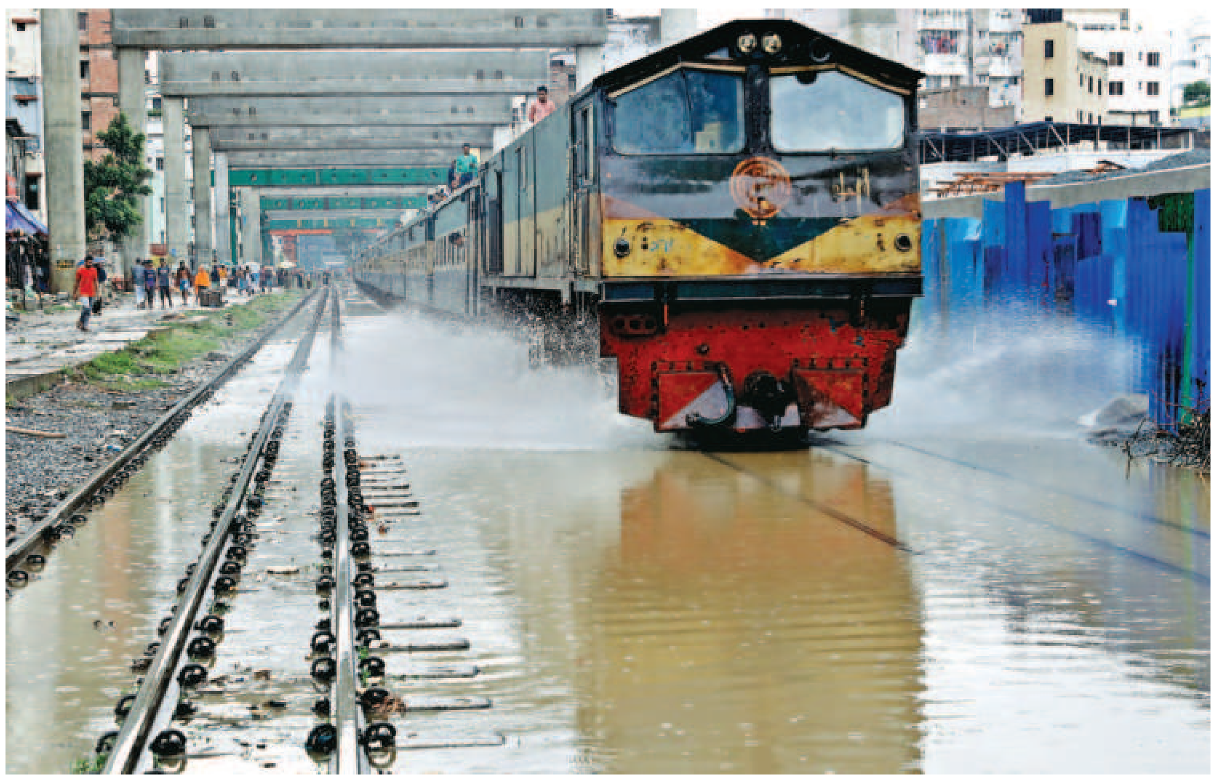
"I am so proud to get the runs for the team the day it mattered most," said Kohli.

"The occasion prompted that change for me, I felt like it was now or never. We have wanted to lift a trophy for a long time.

"The occasion made me put my head down, respect the situation and play the innings that the team needed from me.

"I wasn't feeling myself before today. I wasn't confident. So I am very grateful and humble right now. It has been difficult, so there are a lot of emotions," he added,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

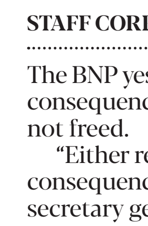


A train runs on the flooded lines in the capital's Malibagh following heavy rain yesterday morning. Locals say this area started experiencing waterlogging after the construction work of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway commenced. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Get organised, avoid excess

Quader asks AL leaders, activists at rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday instructed his colleagues to get organised and avoid taking things too far.

"I am telling all [party men] not to flaunt muscle power. No one will be spared. Sheikh Hasina has a strict "zero-tolerance" policy against corruption."

Quader made the remarks at a discussion organised by AL's Dhaka City (South) unit in front of the party headquarters in the capital's Gulistan, marking its 75th founding anniversary.

The AL second-in-command said that corrupt people are the ones who are most vocal against corruption. "If you look around, you will find many such people."

Addressing the BNP, Quader said they have no moral ground to talk

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Free Khaleda or face consequences

Fakhrul tells govt; urges all opposition parties to unite

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday warned the government of facing consequences if party Chairperson Khaleda Zia was not freed.

"Either release Khaleda Zia or be ready to face any consequences," said Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the BNP.

He was addressing a rally in front of the party headquarters in the capital's Nayapaltan. The BNP organised the programme demanding unconditional release of Khaleda.

Fakhrul said people will not accept the sentencing of Khaleda in graft cases and the government must keep it in mind.

"Khaleda Zia is the symbol of democracy, symbol of movement. She needs to be saved and protected. All the opposition political parties must unite to save her," he said, urging the parties to get united to intensify the movement to defeat the government.

Talking about the agreements signed between Bangladesh and India during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to the neighbouring country, the BNP leader said those are against the interest of Bangladesh.

"We want water [from transboundary rivers]. We want fair share of water. We don't want to see any killing at the border. We want to resolve the pending issues. But the government gave everything to them [India] without having anything," he said.

PHOTOS ON PAGE 3

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Pubali Bank Achieved
Highest Credit Rating

Ratings	2024	2023
Long Term	AAA	AA+
Short Term	ST-1	ST-1
Based on Audited Financial Statements	31 December 2023	31 December 2022

RATING DESCRIPTION

	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM
Rating Outstanding Declared on 24 June 2024	AAA Best Quality Highest Safety Highest Credit Quality	ST-1 Highest certainty of timely payment
Validity of Outstanding Rating	Validity upto 23 June 2025	
Rating Outstanding Declared on 25 June 2023	AA+ (Double A Plus) Higher Safety High Credit Quality	ST-1 Highest certainty of timely payment
Validity of Outstanding Rating	Validity upto 24 June 2024	

Credit Rating was conducted by the Credit Rating Information and Services Limited (CRISL) on the basis of Audited Financial Statements of Pubali Bank PLC. for the year ended 31 December 2023.

পূবালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
PUBALI BANK PLC.

HSC exams begin today

UNB, *Dhaka*

The Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent exams begin across the country today.

A total of 14,50,790 students from 9,463 educational institutions are expected to sit for the exams at 2,275 centres.

Of the total examinees, 11,28,281 students are from the nine general education boards, 88,076 from the madrasah board, and 2,34,433 from the technical education board. Additionally, 281 students will take the exams from eight overseas centres.

This year's number of candidates has increased from last year's 13,59,342 examinees.

Earlier on June 20, the government deferred the HSC and equivalent exams scheduled up until July 8 under the Sylhet division due to the ongoing floods. The exams on July 9 and subsequent exams will be held as per schedule. The schedule for the deferred exams was to be announced later.

According to the original routine, HSC written exams will continue till August 11, and practical exams will be held from August 12 to August 21.

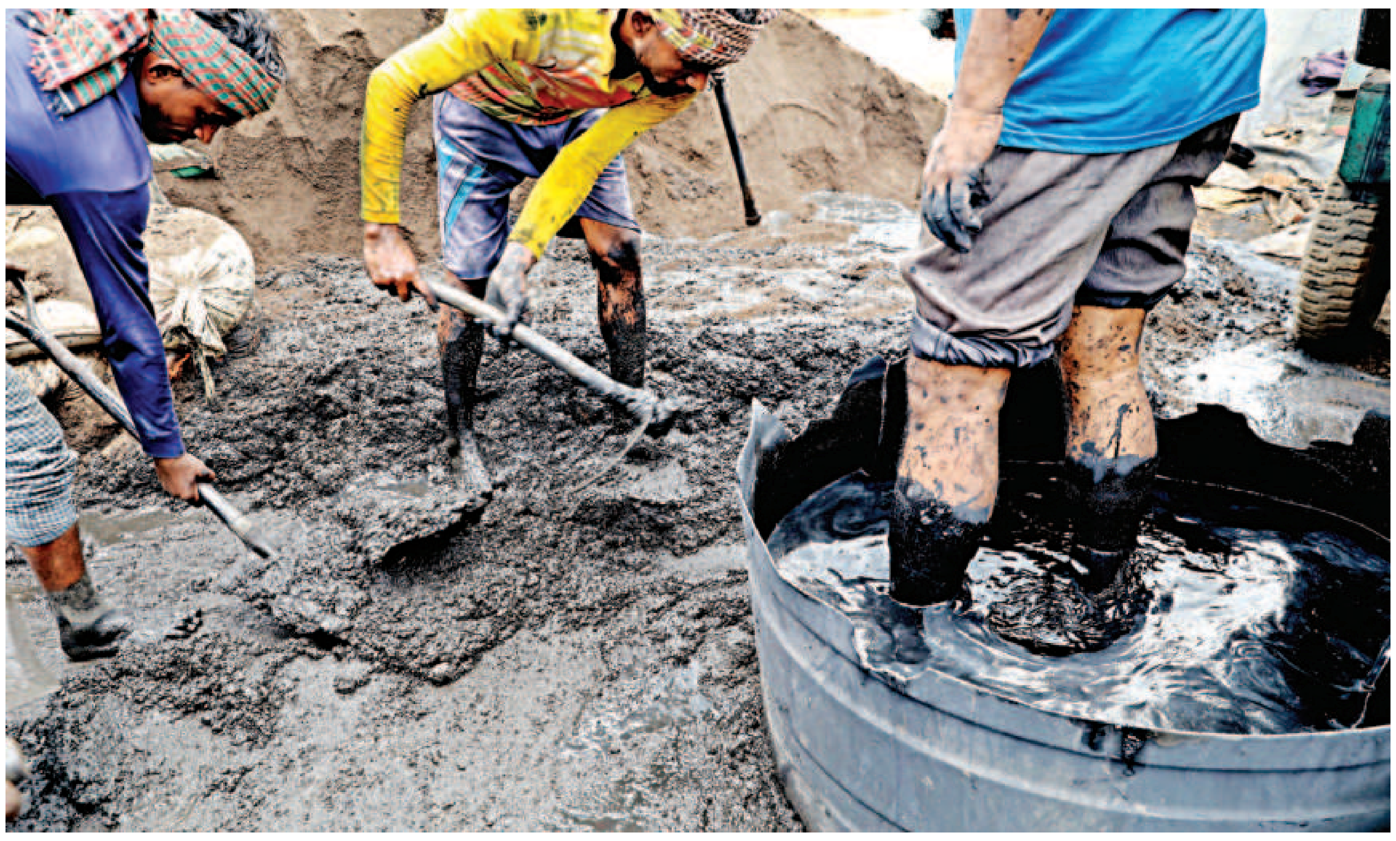
Besides, the exams under the technical board will continue till July 18 and their practical exams will begin on July 19 and will continue till August 4.

All examinees have been asked to enter the exam centres 30 minutes before the examinations start.

Mobile phones are strictly prohibited inside the exam centres, except for the in-charges, who are allowed to carry a mobile phone.

Besides, no one except examinees, centre invigilators, teams of the ministry, teams of boards, local administration and upazila administration teams, and security personnel will be allowed in the exam centres.

To ensure smooth conduct, a Quick Response Team (QRT) from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) will be on standby to assist examinees.



At a makeshift recycling shop, workers separate scrap metal and a cement-like substance from waste generated by steel re-rolling mills. While the recycled materials find their way back to steel mills and construction industries, the recycling process itself raises serious health concerns. The photo was taken in Kutubpur area in the capital's Shyampur yesterday. PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

Ukraine drone attack kills 5 in Russian village

Moscow claims east Ukrainian village in offensive on Toretsk

AFP, *Moscow*

A Ukrainian drone attack on a house in a Russian border village killed five people, including two children, the regional governor said yesterday.

The drone hit a house in the village of Gorodishche, a tiny village in Russia's Kursk region, just a few metres from the border with Ukraine.

"To our great grief, five people were killed ... including two small children. Another two members of the family are in a serious condition," Kursk governor Alexei Smirnov said in a post on Telegram.

The attack was with a "copter"-style drone, he added, a small device that can be fitted to carry grenades or other explosives that are dropped over targets.

Both sides have used drones, including larger self-detonating craft with ranges of up to hundreds of kilometres, extensively throughout the conflict which began in February 2022.

Meanwhile, Russia yesterday claimed another village in eastern Ukraine as it pushes towards the city of Toretsk in a fresh local offensive in the embattled Donetsk region.

Toretsk lies north-west of the city of Gorlivka, which has been under separatist control since 2014.

Ukraine has stepped up its attacks on Russian territory this year, targeting both energy sites that it says fuel Russia's military, as well as towns and villages just across the border.

Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a major new land offensive on Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region last month in what he said was an operation to create a "buffer zone" and push Ukrainian forces back to protect Russia's border Belgorod region from shelling.

The Kursk region, where yesterday's attack occurred, lies further north, across from Ukraine's Sumy region, which Kyiv controls.

Transwoman found dead in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

Police recovered the body of a transwoman who was murdered at her home in Jashore's Manirampur upazila on Friday night.

The deceased, identified as Poly, 30, of Khanpur village, had her throat slit, said police.

According to locals, Poly bought land and built a house in Khanpur. On Friday evening, she had come home and had not left the house for a while. When neighbours knocked on her door, they got no response, so they informed the police.

Police then broke into her house and found her dead around 11:00pm.

Her body was later sent to Jashore General Hospital for an autopsy.

ABM Mehdi Masud, officer-in-charge of Manirampur Police Station, said, "The victim was killed sometime between 8:00pm and 11:00pm. We suspect the killer was someone close to her. An investigation is underway."

Three drown in Sylhet, Habiganj

STAR REPORT

A teenager and two children died by drowning in Sylhet and Habiganj yesterday.

In Sylhet, the body of a 17-year-old was recovered from the Motorgate area of Ratargul swamp forest around 7:00am.

The deceased is Shamim Ahmed, son of Shahjahan Ali, of Sylhet city's Baghbari area. On Friday. he along with three of his friends cycled from the city to the entrance of Motorgate in the forest. They then went to bathe in the Chengerkhal river, where Shamim was swept away by the strong currents.

Nunu Mia, officer-in-charge of Sylhet Airport Police Station, confirmed the matter, reports UNB.

In Habiganj, two children drowned in a pond in Mahmudpur village in Ajmeriganj upazila in the afternoon.

The deceased are Pralay Das, 7, son of Gobinda Das, and Surya Das, 6, son of Rubel Das, reports our Moulvibazar correspondent.

Ajmeriganj Police Station OC Dalim Ahmed said Pralay and Surya and other children went to bathe in the pond next to a local field after playing football there. Pralay and Surya slipped from the steps of the pond and drowned.

Family members and locals took them to the Upazila Health Complex, where the doctor on duty declared them dead, he added.

No one will be spared in drive against graft

FROM PAGE 1

Referring to power outages, Hasina said she asked the authorities to ensure that the villages do not suffer.

She said outages should be in the wealthy neighbourhoods of Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara so that the well-off are reminded that the comfort of air conditioning, cars, elevators, come at a cost

Regarding quick rental power plants, Hasina said, "I am also hearing criticism about the special law that we enacted. My question is, what if we did not have this special law? If you had not built power plants, would there be electricity today?"

Referring to the economy, she said, "Some so-called intellectuals criticise everything. There is a lot of talk about loan defaults, a lot of talk about bad debts."

The GDP in 2009 was $102 billion, she said. The loan was only Tk 22,000 crore then, while bad loans were 10.5 percent, she informed.

"GDP size in 2023 is $460 billion. The loan amount is Tk 1 lakh and 55 thousand crore. The bad debt ratio is 9.9 percent. That means it has decreased."

She urged the "so-called intellectuals" not to mislead people.

If the construction of MRT Line-1, Line-2, Line-4 and Line-5 is done by 2030, there will be no traffic congestion in Dhaka city and people will be able to commute easily.

There are plans for metro rails in all divisional cities.

Speaking on the universal pension scheme, she said from July 1, 2025, new government officials and employees will be included under the scheme.

The PM said there will be an opportunity for all citizens to participate in the scheme and secure their future financially.

The Leader of the House said some termed the budget as highly ambitious, and a while ago, the opposition leader said this budget is not feasible.

"Taking challenges is our job... I do not think the budget is highly ambitious at all. We set goals. A target is never reached 100 percent. It's not possible. Yet, we have specific goals that we will achieve."

Referring to rising prices, Hasina said, "The results of the steps we have taken to control inflation will be in the market soon. We will be able to lower [inflation] according to our expectation."

Free Khaleda or face consequences

FROM PAGE 1

Though the rally was scheduled to begin at 3:00pm, BNP leaders and activists from different parts of Dhaka and adjacent districts started thronging the venue since noon braving heavy rain.

Carrying placards and posters, they came to Nayapaltan in small processions from different wards. They chanted anti-government slogans.

This was the first major demonstration organised by the BNP in nearly eight months.

Addressing the rally, BNP standing committee member Mirza Abbas said, "We are talking about Khaleda Zia after a long time. This voice will not fall silent. We will not compromise on her release. We will free her. We will not tolerate any obstacles, come what may."

He said the BNP continued its movement for the last 15 years but could not achieve success for the failure to "act at the right time".

"If we could have stayed on the streets on October 28 last year with a counter procession, we might have succeeded. But we were afraid of death," he said.

He said that more programmes will be declared in future to force the government to free Khaleda.

"We are tired of demanding proper treatment for her. There is no alternative to Khaleda Zia's leadership to protect the country's independence and sovereignty. We will realise our demands through waging movement without being disheartened," said Abbas, also the chair of the meeting.

Another BNP standing committee member Gayeshwar Chandra Roy said, "We had to fight a war to achieve the country's independence. We will not be able to free Khaleda Zia only by delivering speeches."

"Each of the agreements signed with India will spell doom for Bangladesh. We are not anti-India. We are in favour of our country's independence and democracy."

A large number of law enforcers were deployed in and around Nayapaltan to maintain law and order.

A total of 41 BNP leaders spoke at the event. They said that they were ready to make the party's upcoming demonstration programmes successful to ensure Khaleda's release.

On Wednesday, the BNP announced a three-day programme, including yesterday's rally, demanding release of the party chairperson.

The party will hold rallies at all metropolitan cities on July 1 and at district towns on July 3.

Khaleda was sentenced to 10 years in prison in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case. The government suspended her sentence on March 25, 2020 for six months on the conditions that she would stay in her house and not leave the country. Since then she stayed at her Gulshan house. She was moved to a Dhaka hospital several times for treatment.

The government later extended the suspension order several times.

Kohli, Rohit lead India

FROM PAGE 1

confirming that the game was his last T20 for India.

"This was an open secret. It's time for the next generation to take over."

Kohli's assured display was just what was needed for India who had slipped to 34 for three after their captain Rohit Sharma won the toss and opted to bat.

In what has been a low scoring tournament, the total looked to be a daunting one for South Africa but then Quinton de Kock (39) and Tristan Stubbs (31) set the Proteas on their way before Klaasen turned the game in their direction in the 15th over, smashing Axar Patel for 24 including two fours and two sixes.

When Klaasen was finally removed, caught behind off Hardik Pandya, the Proteas needed just 26 off the last 23 balls.

Knowing they had to take the initiative, Rohit turned early for Jasprit Bumrah's final over and he answered the skipper's call perfectly, bowling Marco Jansen and conceding just two runs in the 18th over.

That meant South Africa needed 20 from the final two overs and Arshdeep Singh bowled a superb length to allow just four.

With 16 to win off the last over, Pandya bowled a full-toss at Miller who smashed it high straight down the ground but Suryakumar Yadav produced a breath-taking catch on the boundary, throwing the ball back into play before he crossed the ropes and then returning to complete the catch.

Kagiso Rabada edged a four and Pandya showed some nerves with a wide but the seamer kept his cool to ensure silverware for India after they lost in last year's 50 Over World Cup on home soil.

For the 35-year-old Kohli it was the perfect way to bow out in the format.

"This was my last T20 World Cup and this is exactly what we wanted to achieve," he said.

"It was an amazing game. One day you feel like you can't get a run but one day, things just click. It hasn't quite sunk in for me yet."

It was a bitter end for South Africa who had reached their first World Cup final after ending a streak of seven defeats in semi-finals in both World Cup formats.

"Gutted for the time being, it'll take some time to reflect on a really good campaign, hurts quite a bit but incredibly proud," said captain Aiden Markram.

"We bowled well, not a lot to work with, it was a chaseable total, batted well, came down to the wire, gutted not to get over the line.

"Things happen quickly at the back end, but got into a great position to prove we were worthy finalists.

"South Africans are competitive, respectful and will go down with a fight. It's still a proud moment for us."

Glitch stops

FROM PAGE 1

work, as it would require the boiler to cool off," he said.

The other unit of the plant went into regular maintenance during the Eid holidays. That unit is expected to start operation by the first week of July.

"We are getting less electricity from the coal-based power plants. One of the two units of Payra Power Plant is also under maintenance. But with other options, the load-shedding situation is still stable at less than 1,000MW," he said.

World 'failing' to meet development goals: UN chief

AFP, *United Nations*

War and funding shortfalls have hampered progress toward the United Nations' flagship development goals which include action to combat climate change, the organization's Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned on Friday.

In 2015, UN member states adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, 17 targets to transform the world by 2030 including by completely ending extreme poverty and eliminating hunger.

But Guterres said Friday that "the world is getting a failing grade."

Man sued for raping neighbour's child

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

A 55-year-old man has been sued in a case filed over the rape of his neighbour's 5-year-old daughter in Jashore's Chougachha upazila.

The accused is Mansher Ali, 55, of Shahjadpur village of the upazila, is a rickshaw-van driver, said police.

According to the case statement, the child was playing in front of her house in Shahjadpur around 12:30pm on Friday, when her neighbour, Mansher, took her to his house and raped her.

Later, the child returned home and told her mother. That night, the child's father filed a case under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act with Chougachha Police Station.

Chougachha Police Station Officer-in-Charge Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury said a case has been registered. "The accused is absconding. A drive is underway to arrest him."

Get organised avoid excess

FROM PAGE 1

about corruption as they are the most corrupt party.

"The main leader of your party [Tarique Rahman] is leading a lavish life by laundering thousands of crores. He is now plotting against a legally elected government. He must be returned to Bangladesh and brought to book."

Criticising the media for terming the AL's programme a counter to the BNP's, Quader said, "We announced earlier that we will hold programmes around the year. But some [media] reported that we were holding counter programmes. We held a cycle rally yesterday [Friday]. Was there any BNP programme on that day?"

He further added that different party units will continue to hold various forms of programmes throughout the year as part of the platinum jubilee celebration of AL's founding anniversary.

Activists of various ward and thana units of Dhaka City South AL attended the discussion programme that began a little after 3:00pm.

Awami League presidium members Abdur Razzaque, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury (Maya), and Kamrul Islam; joint general secretaries Mahbub Ul Alam Hanif and AFM Bahauddin Nasim, among others, were also present.

Calls for Biden

FROM PAGE 1

The New York Times editorial board, which endorsed Biden in 2020, called on him to drop out of the race to give the Democratic Party a better chance of beating Trump by picking another candidate. "The greatest public service Mr Biden can now perform is to announce that he will not continue to run for re-election," the editorial said.

Democratic campaign spokesperson Michael Tyler said there were no conversations taking place about that possibility. "We'd rather have one bad night than a candidate with a bad vision for where he wants to take the country," he told reporters aboard Air Force One.

Biden, however, said on Friday evening he intended to defeat Trump in the November presidential election, giving no sign he would consider dropping out of the race.

"I know I'm not a young man, to state the obvious," an ebullient Biden said at a rally. "I don't walk as easy as I used to, I don't speak as smoothly as I used to, I don't debate as well as I used to," he said, as the crowd chanted "four more years."

"I would not be running again if I didn't believe with all my heart and soul that I could do this job. The stakes are too high," Biden said.

The campaign held an "all hands on deck" meeting on Friday afternoon to reassure staffers that Biden was not dropping out of the race, according to two people familiar with the meeting.

Though Trump, 78, put forward a series of falsehoods throughout the debate, the focus afterward was squarely on Biden, especially among Democrats.

Hakeem Jeffries, the Democratic Party leader in the US House of Representatives, avoided answering directly when asked whether he still had faith in Biden's candidacy, reports Reuters.

Some other Democrats likewise demurred when asked if Biden should stay in the race. "That's the president's decision," Democratic Senator Jack Reed told a local TV station in Rhode Island.

But several of the party's most senior figures, including former presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, said they were sticking with Biden.

"Bad debate nights happen. Trust me, I know. But this election is still a choice between someone who has fought for ordinary folks his entire life and somebody who only cares about himself," former Democratic President Barack Obama wrote on X.

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Left, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader addresses an event in front of the party headquarters in Gulistan yesterday afternoon, marking its 75th founding anniversary. *Right*, demanding immediate, unconditional release of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir speaks at a rally in front of its central office in the city's Nayapaltan area around the same time.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN, AMRAN HOSSAIN

Corruption main threat to economy

Says GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Leader and Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader lambasted the government's handling of the economic crisis during a parliamentary session yesterday on the proposed budget for 2024-25 fiscal year.

He said it won't be possible to resolve the economic downturn due to widespread corruption and criminalisation.

The Jatiyo Party chairman accused the government of facilitating corruption and encouraging tax evasion and money laundering.

He said a wealthy circle has emerged comprising corrupt individuals, bank defaulters, and money launderers.

GM Quader argued that the lack of accountability and governance failures, rather than external factors like the Covid-19 pandemic or the Ukraine conflict, pose greatest threat to Bangladesh's economic stability.

He criticised the mismanagement in the banking sector, pointing at the mounting bad debts.

GM Quader opposed the budget proposals to whiten

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Colonial legacy lives on among the wealthy

Says Serajul Islam Choudhury at autobiographical lecture marking his 89th birthday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Much like during the colonial era, a segment of wealthy individuals in independent and sovereign Bangladesh continues to exhibit the same exploitative characteristics while ruling the country, said Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury yesterday.

He said many people accumulate wealth not through labour but through acts of plundering, such as bank scam, and grabbing. They smuggle the plundered wealth abroad, mirroring the colonial-style exploitation.

Prof Serajul Islam made these remarks while addressing an autobiographical lecture titled "Looking Back", held at Bangladesh Shishu Academy on the occasion of his 89th birthday.

Many people accumulate wealth not through labour but through acts of plundering, such as bank scam, and grabbing. They smuggle the plundered wealth abroad, mirroring the colonial-style exploitation.

In the presence of several hundred attendees, the emeritus professor said, "During the British era, we were a colony. Even within Pakistan, a form of colonialism was emerging. Later, we established an independent and sovereign Bangladesh, but colonialism still persisted."

"The wealthy in Bangladesh are influenced by capitalist ideologies," he added.

Prof Serajul Islam said, "We thought that becoming part of Pakistan would bring about a renaissance, but it didn't happen. When Bangladesh was established, we hoped for social change, but that didn't happen either."

"But still, I remain hopeful. The reason for my hope is that people

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Legal recourse for cybercrimes still a far cry

59pc victims women, 87.5pc dissatisfied with existing justice system, says survey

NILIMA JAHAN

Imagine one day, you wake up and realise fraudsters have gotten information about your NID numbers, purchased SIM cards in your name, and have committed crimes by impersonating you.

Scary, isn't it?

Such cybercrimes have become increasingly common these days, with personal information of many citizens being openly sold at different online platforms. The Daily Star has published multiple reports in the recent past on this topic.

Tania, a 27-year-old doctor, is one such victim.

In November 2023, she discovered 15 SIM cards had been registered using her National Identity Card and fingerprint.

These SIMs were linked to three different mobile operators and were used to take small loans.

After she contacted BTRC, the SIMs were deregistered later, but a subsequent investigation by the regulatory body failed to track the culprit (or culprits) as of May 25, 2024.

Falguni, another victim, fell prey to a similar scam. The fraudster called her brother Javed before his university admission test and claimed he had won a prize.

Javed, convinced by the caller who knew his exact personal details, directed him to Falguni.

Falguni, trusting the caller, revealed her bank card number and OTPs, leading to a loss of Tk 60,000. Despite filing a complaint, Falguni received no resolution and gave up due to concerns about legal complexities.

These are just two cases highlighted in a recent

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

PADMA BRIDGE PROJECT

Corrupt yet let off the hook too easily

Forced into retirement for graft, land surveyor gets his job back with lower salary

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

A government employee has been reinstated to his job after being dismissed for being involved in a fraudulent compensation scheme in the Padma Bridge project.

Mainul Hasan, a former land surveyor of Madaripur, was sent into forced retirement in November last year after the district administration and land ministry's investigation found him guilty of facilitating a scam, for which the government lost Tk 1.64 crore.

However, land ministry Secretary Khalilur Rahman reinstated him on June 9 this year, reducing his punishment from forced retirement by lowering his salary grade for five years.

Earlier in September 2022, a divisional case was filed against him over misconduct and corruption.

During Mainul's posting in Madaripur deputy commissioner's office in 2020, he was responsible for overseeing land acquisition for the Padma Bridge in Shibchar upazila.

Mainul Hasan

He granted Tk 1.64 crore to two individuals for supposedly using 3.37 acres of their land for the project in Sujanagar mouza.

However, the land never belonged to the two in the first place, in fact, those were government land.

The compensation was provided based on forged documents.

Following allegations against Mainul, a three-member investigation committee was formed, led by the deputy director of local government.

The committee confirmed that Mainul issued compensation cheques on September 9 and September 20 of 2020. The land ministry also formed a separate probe committee.

"Allegations of negligence in the misconduct of duties are found true," the probe body concluded.

On November 8, 2022, the ministry issued a notification stating that Mainul would be forced into retirement for his involvement in corruption.

"This type of dishonest activity harms the interests of the government and tarnishes the image of the office. It shows a lack of honesty, impartiality, responsibility, and efficiency in his work," said the notification. It also stated that Mainul "personally benefited from the scheme".

Mainul's response to a show-cause letter was deemed unsatisfactory, according to the notification. However, on March 11, 2023, Mainul appealed to the land ministry.

After the appeal hearing, led by the secretary, the ministry backtracked from its original decision. Although the committee, which heard the appeal, was convinced that Mainul failed to provide satisfactory response in his defense, the forced retirement was suddenly deemed as "excessive punishment".

On June 9, 2024, a new notification was issued, reducing Mainul's punishment to a lower salary grade for five years.

Many senior government officials at the land ministry were baffled by the decision.

Requesting anonymity, an officer of the ministry, said the reduction in punishment does not set a good precedent for junior officers.

Mainul could not be reached for comments.

Contacted, Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said, "Specific allegations against the accused employee [Mainul] were proven and undeniable. The ministry officials, including the secretary who protected this employee, are guilty of supporting corruption."

Despite repeated attempts through texts and phone, the land secretary could not be contacted for comments.

Corruption, capital flight key concerns

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Corruption and capital flight are the two main concerns of the country, said speakers at a press conference yesterday.

Capital flight, in economics, occurs when assets or money rapidly flow out of a country.

EquityBD and other civil society organisations arranged the event at the Economic Reporters' Forum auditorium.

They demanded the formation of a public expenditure review commission to stop graft.

They also said yearly income tax evasion is nearly $25 billion, which is four times the per capita health allocation.

Md Ahsanul Karim, director of COAST Foundation, called for a review commission to combat corruption, an inter-country bank transparency agreement to halt capital flight and black money, mandatory annual asset and bank statement submissions for dual nationals, and cessation of unnecessary public

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 30

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-17
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-57	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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1971 WAR CRIMES

Extradite Mueen, Ashrafuzzaman

Freedom fighters urge govt, protests UK court verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Efforts are underway to challenge the verdicts issued by the International Crimes Tribunal regarding genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War, said Sector Commanders' Forum-Liberation War '71.

The group in a statement yesterday called on the government to take decisive legal and diplomatic actions against a recent British Supreme Court ruling concerning Chowdhury Mueen Uddin, a convicted war criminal living in the UK.

In 2019, Chowdhury Mueen Uddin sued then British Home Secretary Priti Patel for £60,000 in libel charges after she shared a report on Twitter linking him to war crimes during Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971.

Later, the British High Court dismissed the case.

However, on June 20 this year, British Supreme Court took cognizance of the complaint and gave Mueen the opportunity to continue the case.

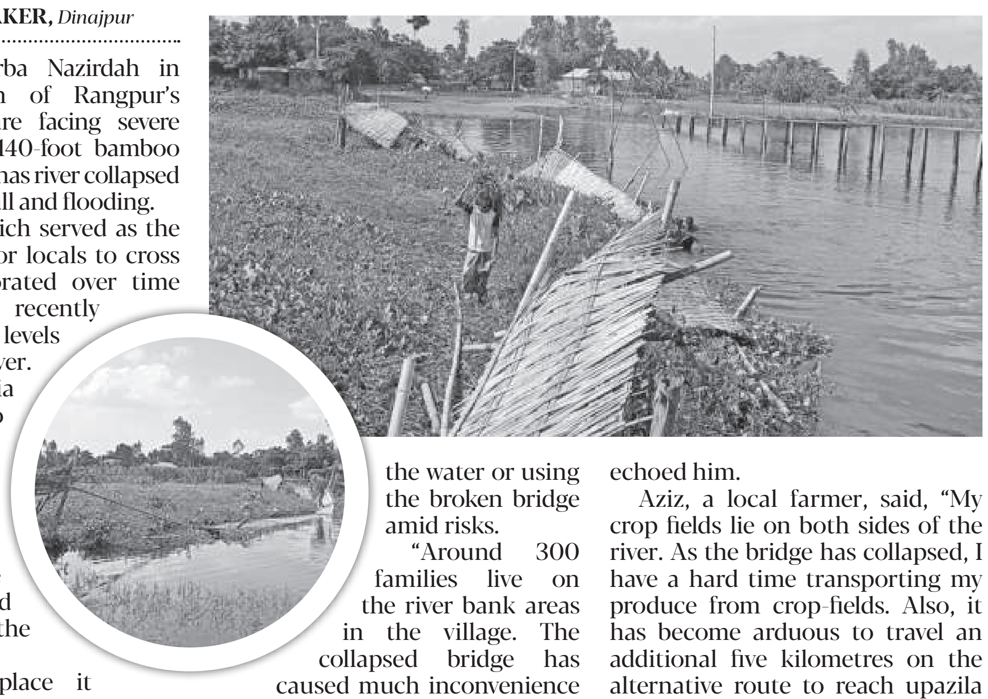
The forum expressed concerns that such rulings could undermine Bangladesh's sovereignty and the integrity of International Crimes Tribunal.

They reiterated demands for the extradition of Mueen and Ashrafuzzaman Khan, both convicted of war crimes. The two have been living abroad evading justice.

Abdul Mabud, joint secretary general of the forum, said Khan resides in the US, while Mueen became a British citizen in 1984.

Collapsed bridge affects 300 families

KONGKON KARMAKER, *Dinajpur*



Residents of Purba Nazirdah in Haragachh union of Rangpur's Kaunia upazila are facing severe hardship after a 140-foot bamboo bridge over the Manas river collapsed due to heavy rainfall and flooding.

The bridge, which served as the sole connection for locals to cross the river, deteriorated over time and collapsed recently amid rising water levels from the Teesta river.

Local Rumel Mia said the bamboo bridge, initially built by the union parishad to facilitate commuting, became unsafe and collapsed multiple times in the past.

Efforts to replace it with a new wooden bridge stalled despite repeated pleas from locals.

Visiting the area recently, this correspondent saw a part of the broken bamboo bridge lying in the middle of the river, while locals were crossing the river either treading the water or using the broken bridge amid risks.

"Around 300 families live on the river bank areas in the village. The collapsed bridge has caused much inconvenience to the people. Children are scared to go to schools using the broken bridge. No one has even come to inspect or take any steps to address the issue yet," said Abdul Momin of the village.

Hamida Begum of the village echoed him.

Aziz, a local farmer, said, "My crop fields lie on both sides of the river. As the bridge has collapsed, I have a hard time transporting my produce from crop-fields. Also, it has become arduous to travel an additional five kilometres on the alternative route to reach upazila headquarters and other areas."

Chairman Raju Ahmed of Haragachh union parishad urged the authorities to build a concrete bridge.

Asked, upazila engineer Asaduzzaman Jemi said a wooden bridge would be constructed soon.

15 houses gutted in Kurigram fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

At least 15 houses of nine families were burnt to ashes in a fire in the Puratan Post Office area of Kurigram town on Friday night.

The fire might have originated from an electric short circuit around 11:30pm, said the fire service.

No casualties were reported as the residents managed to escape.

The firefighters brought the blaze under control in two hours.

The affected families told The Daily Star that they lost everything to the fire and are now staying under the open sky.

Shariful Islam, senior station officer of Kurigram Fire Service, said they rushed to the spot upon receiving information. They had to struggle to douse the fire as there was no water source nearby, he added.

Illegal sand lifting puts school at risk

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bagerhat*

Illegal sand lifting near Dobariya Government Primary School in Kachua upazila of Bagerhat has sparked an outcry among locals.

The activity threatens to weaken the school building's foundation, thereby putting it at risk of collapse or damage.

The sand is being extracted for the construction of a road in Dobariya area, said locals.

"The illegal activity has endangered the lives of the students besides disrupting the school's academic activities," said a parent fearing safety of his children.

While visiting the area to report on the situation yesterday, this correspondent encountered threats from unidentified individuals, highlighting the risks faced by those attempting to bring the issue to light.

Contacted, Rakhi Banerjee, UNO of Kachua upazila, said she informed the upazila engineer of the Local Government Engineering Department in this regard.

Md Sharifuzzaman, executive engineer of LGED in the upazila, said, "We are looking into the matter urgently. Steps will be taken to stop the illegal sand lifting and damage caused to the school's foundation will be assessed."

Contacted, Bagerhat's Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Khalid Hossain said a mobile court has one accused Tk 50,000 in this regard under the Balumahal and Soil Management Act, 2010.

A dredger machine was also removed from the spot during a drive, he added.

Robbery at freedom fighter's house

A CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

A gang of robbers has looted valuables, including jewellery and a licensed rifle, from the house of a freedom fighter in Debhata, Satkhira.

The incident took place at the house of Subhash Chandra Ghosh, 62, at Jagannathpur village early Friday, said the victim.

Police recovered the firearm from the house premises yesterday.

Subhash Chandra, president of the district Puja Udjapan Committee, filed a case against six to seven unnamed people with Debhata Police Station regarding the robbery.

According to the case, a gang looted various items, including 27 tolas of gold ornaments, a licensed gun, two mobile phone sets, Tk 6 lakh in cash, a motorcycle, a bank check book, and a passport at gunpoint.

Subhash said police personnel stayed at their house from Friday morning till late night. He did not understand how the robbers left the stolen gun at the house, he added.

Debhata Police Station OC Mahmud Hossain said they could not arrest anyone as of yesterday.

Colonial legacy lives

FROM PAGE 3

dream, without it humans do not exist."

At the event, individuals including academics, authors, journalists, and politicians expressed gratitude to Prof Serajul Islam for his lifelong contribution to the country.

Speaking at the event, ASM Kamal Uddin praised Serajul Islam for always standing tall without yielding to any situation.

"To truly honour Serajul Islam, we should enlighten ourselves with the wisdom he has imparted," said Kamal, who chaired the programme.

Anjir Liton, director of Shishu Academy, said Serajul Islam epitomises free and intellectual thinking.

Professor Harun or Rashid of Bhashani Parishad said Serajul not only writes about the struggles of the oppressed, he also stands beside them. Harun also credited Serajul for writing on the Palestine issue.

Zonayed Saki from Ganosamhati Andolan said Serajul dedicated his life for the liberation of people. "Even amid deep despair, he [Serajul] ignites hope," Saki added.

Moshrefa Mishu, a garment workers' leader, said, "Looking around today, we see political figures and intellectuals often aligning with corrupt forces. Serajul Islam Choudhury remains a rare beacon of pride."

Saiful Haq, president of Biplobi Workers Party, highlighted, "Beyond classrooms, he has educated countless people, fostering educated, scientific minded and conscious generations imbued with cultural and humanistic values. He leads the intellectual struggle against misrule and communalism, advocating for social ownership."

Mujahidul Islam Selim of the Communist Party of Bangladesh said, "He not only enriched us with knowledge but actively participated in revolutionary activities, bridging theory with practice."

"For any collective action, Serajul Islam Choudhury is the dedicated and unifying leader," he said.

Writer and journalist Abu Saeed Khan, Professor Khaliquzzaman Elias, Khalequzzaman from the Socialist Party of Bangladesh, Masud Rana from the Socialist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist), and Socialist Party of Bangladesh faction leader Shubhrangshu Chakraborty also addressed the audience.

Azfar Hossain moderated the programme.

Two killed, 10 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Two people were killed and 10 injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday.

In Sirajganj, the helper of a truck driver was killed when the vehicle hit a tree beside Hatikumrul-Bonpara highway at Horinchora Bazar.

The truck fell into a roadside ditch as the driver lost control over the steering, said Hatikumrul Highway Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Abdul Wadud.

Md Morsalin Islam, 20, from Baliadangi in Chapainawabganj, died on the spot after he went under the vehicle, said the OC.

The driver of the truck managed to escape, said the police officer.

Highway police salvaged the truck.

In Mymensingh, the driver of a bus was killed and 10 of its passengers were injured after the vehicle hit a sand-laden truck from behind on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at Dhalibari in Bhaluka upazila.

Swapon Hossain, 55, from Rajapur in Jhalakathi, died on the spot, said police.

Barrister Sumon files GD seeking security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Independent lawmaker Barrister Syed Sayedul Haque Sumon yesterday filed a general diary seeking safety, said police.

He filed the GD with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station in Dhaka last evening, Sajib Dey, inspector (investigation), told The Daily Star last night.

Sumon, an outspoken MP from Habiganj-4 constituency, also shared a copy of the GD on his verified Facebook page.

According to the GD, Sumon said he received a phone call from the officer-in-charge of Chunarighat Police Station, which falls under his constituency, around 2:00am on June 27.

The OC claimed that a team of four to five people wanted to kill him.

The OC, without revealing the identity of the team members, asked him to be cautious, leaving him in a situation of insecurity, reads the GD.

Legal recourse for cybercrimes still a far cry

FROM PAGE 3

survey titled "CCAF Cyber Crime Research Report 2024", conducted by the Cyber Crime Awareness Foundation.

The survey interviewed 132 victims of cybercrime from April 2023 to April 2024.

According to the report, nearly 59 percent of the victims are women.

Social media and online account hacking is the most common crime, making up 21.65 percent of cases, followed by online threats at 8.6 percent.

The report also found that 78.78 percent of the victims were aged 18 to 30, which is an increase from 75 percent a year ago.

The survey highlights the dissatisfaction of victims with legal resources available at their disposal. Many, like Falguni, thought they wouldn't get justice from the existing system.

The study found that cybercrimes make up 11.85 percent of total crimes, including personal information spreading, job scams, and online gambling.

Pornography-related crimes increased in 2023, affecting 11.35 percent of victims, with 50 percent of them experiencing cyber bullying.

Nearly 48 percent of victims face social disgrace, 40 percent suffer financial losses, and almost all endure mental anguish.

Only 12 percent sought legal recourse in 23-24, which was 21 percent in a similar CCAF study in 22-23.

CCAF attributed this decline to the lack of trust among victims in legal resources.

Among those who chose the legal path, 87.50 percent said they did not achieve satisfactory results.

The study mentioned that 70 percent of the victims were unaware of the cybercrime act.

The study recommended not clicking or sharing anything without verification, being cautious with digital transactions, and checking security measures before sharing personal information.

It also urged the government to coordinate public-private partnerships for public awareness, protect personal data, enhance law enforcement training, inform citizens about laws, and decentralise the Cyber Police Center for grassroots service.

The study was conducted by Obydullah Al Marjuk, a senior lecturer in the Social Science and Humanities Department at Independent University, Bangladesh, with research assistants from CCAF.

Ishtiaq Ahmed, additional deputy commissioner of Police at the CTTC Unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said most sections of the Cyber Security Act 2013 are bailable, making it difficult to bring offenders to justice.

He also mentioned that delayed complaints from victims hinder legal protection and that child pornography is increasing through social media.

CCAF President Brig Gen Kazi Mustafizur Rahman said increasing individual awareness can reduce cyber crime and the responsibility for awareness must be shared collectively.

Corruption

FROM PAGE 3

black money with minimal taxes, suggesting higher tax rates to deter tax evasion effectively.

He also slammed the power sector for its excess generation capacity. Despite increased production capacity, about 15,000 MW of power remains unused, leading private owners to incur substantial rental or capacity charges in foreign currency.

He questioned the accuracy of the country's reserve figures, expressing skepticism towards official statements from the Bangladesh Bank.

GM Quader concluded by saying the budget fails to address fundamental economic issues.

Corruption

FROM PAGE 3

expenditures instead of subsidy reductions.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, chief moderator of EquityBD, suggested that stopping the $25 billion income tax evasion could double the social safety net for the poor or quadruple per capita health spending.

He advocated for reinstating annual wealth statements for civil servants and imposing capital punishment for corruption.

Invitation to loan artworks of Artist Professor Nasreen Begum for a retrospective exhibition at Bangladesh National Museum

It is with great pleasure that Bangladesh National Museum and Artist Professor Nasreen Begum will jointly organise a month-long (From 1st to 30th November, 2024) retrospective exhibition of Nasreen Begum at Nalinikanta Bhattasali Gallery, Bangladesh National Museum. An edited volume of the artist's lifetime artworks and various writings will be published in an exclusive book. You are requested to loan artworks of Nasreen Begum from your personal or institutional collection for the aforementioned exhibition. If you are agreed to loan the artwork for the exhibition and book, the artist and the curator of the exhibition will take appropriate security measures from the collector to bring and return the artworks as soon as possible after the exhibition. You are kindly requested to contact the undersigned for the loan of artworks.

(Professor Dr. Malay Bala)
Curator of the exhibition
Mobile: +8801716056515,
Email: malaybala@du.ac.bd

(Professor Nasreen Begum)
Artist of the exhibition
Mobile: +8801714294310
Email: shilpi.nasreen@gmail.com

Eastern Bank PLC.
HEAD OFFICE, 100 GULSHAN AVENUE, DHAKA-1212

RE-TENDER NOTICE

Eastern Bank PLC. (EBL) invites sealed bids from bona fide/eligible suppliers for the **Supply, Integration, Implementation, Data Migration, Commissioning, and Post Implementation Maintenance of Document Management System (DMS).**

Interested bidders are requested to collect the RFP document electronically by sending an email from their official email address to **bidit@ebl-bd.com** mentioning lot & item names, name of the company and the authorized contact person, mailing address, telephone & mobile phone numbers on or before **Wednesday, 10 July 2024**. Queries to be mailed by **Sunday, 21 July 2024**.

Bids prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the RFP document must be submitted in two separate envelopes, clearly marking 'Technical' and 'Financial' offers on the envelopes to the Office of the Chairman, Purchase Committee, Head Office, Eastern Bank PLC., 100 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka-1212 on or before **Tuesday, 30 July 2024**.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Shariatpur
www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo. No. 46.02.8600.000.07.001.23-1552 Date: 27-06-24

e-Tender Notice No. 63/2023-2024/Tender (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of

Sl No.	Tender/ Proposal ID	Name of Scheme with Package No.	Last selling date and time of tender document	Last date and time for submission tender
1	999489	DDIRWSP/Shariatpur/Goshairhat/23-24/RD-07 Widening and Strengthening of Nagerpara GC (Daptoribari)-Kasherhat Road (Goshairhat Portion) from Ch.00-3090.00m (Effect Length 3090m), under Upazila Goshairhat, Dist: Shariatpur (Road ID: 386362006). (Salvage Cost: 669877.00)	29-Jul-2024 16:00	30-Jul-2024 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline / hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e- Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to **29-Jun-2024 15:00**.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) and also for e-mail: xen.shariatpur@lged.gov.bd or call to: 02478815310.

S. M. Rafeul Islam
Executive Engineer
Tel: 02478815310
Email: xen.shariatpur@lged.gov.bd

GD- 1051

Farmer killed over land dispute in Sherpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

A farmer was killed in an attack allegedly by his neighbours following a dispute over land in Sadar upazila of Sherpur yesterday.

The deceased is Samedul Haque Kena, 65, from Joginimura Namapara village in the upazila.

Quoting family members and locals, Md Emdadul Haque, officer-in-charge of Sherpur Sadar Police Station, said there has been a longstanding dispute over a piece of land between Samedul and his neighbours Md Harun and Siddique Khalifa.

When Harun and Siddique went to the disputed land to plant banana saplings in the morning, Samedul and his men locked in an altercation with them.

At one stage, the rivals attacked Samedul with sticks, leaving him injured. He was taken to Sherpur General Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Indian national held at Kurigram border

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Border Guard Bangladesh has detained an Indian national at Phulbari border in Kurigram for entering Bangladesh illegally.

The detainee is Babul Mia of Tharaikhana area in Cooch Behar of West Bengal, said Phulbari Police Station Officer-in-Charge Nawabur Rahman.

The 15 BGB Battalion of Gangahat camp in Phulbari upazila under Lalmonirhat handed him over to Phulbari Police Station yesterday afternoon.

BGB and police claimed Babul, a smuggler by profession, was held near sub pillar 8 of main pillar 938 at the border around 11:00pm on Friday.

The OC said a case has been filed against him under the Passport Act.

CTG FOOD TESTING LAB

Sitting idle for a bureaucratic tangle

The chemistry and microbiology labs, filled with facilities, lie abandoned at Modern Food Testing Laboratory in Chattogram. PHOTO: STAR

ARUN BIKASH DEY, *Ctg*

Chattogram's Modern Food Testing Laboratory, a Tk 34.4 crore project funded by the Asian Development Bank, remains inoperable despite construction being completed in December 2015.

The project, initiated in 2013, aimed to ensure food safety in Chattogram by providing a facility to test a wide range of food items including milk, meat, vegetables, and edible oil. While testing began on a trial basis in January 2016, a crucial hurdle has rendered the results useless: the absence of a signing authority.

Though the Ministry of Food granted approval for the lab's operation in November 2016, it mandated maintaining quality, employing trained manpower, and upholding equipment standards. However, without signing authority, the lab cannot declare food items as safe or unsafe.

The project's initial tenure saw food inspectors collect samples for testing. However, the lack of a signing authority meant no official action could be taken based on the results.

Further crippling the lab's potential, project personnel, including microbiologist Priya Saha, haven't been regularised despite being appointed eight years ago. This lack of job security led to many leaving their positions, hindering the lab's ability to function effectively.

Adding to the troubles, the Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) has not yet assumed control of the lab's operations from the private firm Star Link, despite being scheduled to do so after 2021.

Visiting the laboratory in Bibirhat area of port city recently, this correspondent saw no test being done there.

In fact, an eerie silence prevailed in the entire three-storey laboratory building with 31 rooms across an 8,000 sq feet area.

আধুনিক খাদ্য পরীক্ষাগার
চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশন

The laboratory has two sections -- chemistry lab and microbiological lab. Each section has three labs with equipment. The laboratory also has a power sub-station.

"The project began with 24 officials including a director, a senior microbiologist and a senior chemist. The officials were supposed to be regularised as government officials later but it has not been done yet," Priya said.

"As a result, 17 left their job one after another," she added.

Shaheda Akter, another microbiologist, echoed her.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the facility's foundation stone on October 12, 2013. The construction work to set up six modern labs with food testing facilities including 83 machines was completed in December 2015.

Contacted, Sheikh Mohammad Tauhidul Islam, chief executive officer of CCC, said the contractor company of the project was yet to hand over the laboratory to CCC.

"We had three meetings with them to this end, but they are dilly dallying in handing over the laboratory to us, although the project ended in June 2021," he said.

"They are demanding a huge sum of money from us citing their expenditure for maintenance of the lab for the past three years," the CCC CEO also said.

"However, we will take over the laboratory in a few weeks. We have appointed four staffers including a microbiologist, a cleaner and two security guards to run the laboratory for the time being. We have also been paying Tk 35,000 for the monthly electricity bill. Once we take over the lab, we will appoint adequate manpower to run it," he added.

The authority of Star Link, the contractor company, could not be reached for comments.

People suffer for frequent power cuts

One unit shut down for maintenance, Patuakhali gets half the required power

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Residents across Patuakhali district have been suffering due to frequent power outages after one of Payra Thermal Power Plant's two units was shut down on June 26 for maintenance.

Jitendranath Roy, a resident of Baufal upazila, said, "The frequent power cuts have left us amid much suffering and discomfort. Also, the HSC and equivalent examinations are going to start from June 30. The students are facing difficulty to study due to load-shedding."

"The 1,320 MW plant is now able to produce only 660 MW power with one operational unit since June 26. As such, load-shedding has become unavoidable as the power generation is much lower compared to the demand," said Shah Mani Ziko, assistant manager (investigation) of the plant.

An assistant engineer of Patuakhali grid, wishing anonymity, said, "Total demand for electricity is 100 MW in Patuakhali district, but it is getting only 50 MW since Wednesday.

The power generated at Payra plant is also supplied to Barishal, Khulna and Dhaka divisions through the Power Development Board."

"A total 14 MW electricity is required for 32,000 consumers in Patuakhali Municipality, but the supply has been around 10-12 MW since Wednesday. As a result, load-shedding has become unavoidable," said Dean Mohammad Muhim, executive engineer of Patuakhali's West Zone Power Distribution Company Limited.

Shah Mani Ziko added, "The Payra power plant needs at least 45-50 days of maintenance annually to generate power without interruption for the rest of the year. The maintenance works will continue for another four or five days. After that, power generation will resume to full capacity."

Cop closed for beating auto-rickshaw driver

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Natore*

A police official was closed for allegedly assaulting an auto-rickshaw driver in Singra upazila of Natore yesterday.

Salim Reza, sub-inspector of Singra Police Station, was attached to Natore Police Lines after a video in this regard went viral on social media, said Abul Kalam, officer-in-charge of the police station.

Tariqul Islam, superintendent of Natore police, signed the order, said the OC.

Locals said auto-rickshaw driver Harun Ali was returning to his Baisha village home from Damdama around 11:00pm on Thursday.

When he reached in front of Desh Furniture Shop in Upazila Parishad Road area, SI Salim Reza and two others got into the rickshaw and asked him to take them to the Singra bus stand.

As Harun said he wanted to go home rather than take a passenger, Salim got angry and started beating him. OC Kalam also said departmental action will be taken after investigation.

This correspondent could not reach Salim for comments.

A dried up Harihar river in Keshabpur upazila of Jashore. PHOTO: STAR

Siltation clogs 18 sluice gates

Vast areas in Jashore at risk of flooding, waterlogging

MOHSIN MILON, *Benapole*

Siltation has clogged 18 sluice gates on three rivers -- the Harihar, Aparbhadra and Buribhadra -- along a stretch of 30 kilometres in Keshabpur upazila of Jashore.

As such, the areas are at risk of flooding and waterlogging in the monsoon if the sluice gates cannot drain away rainwater, said officials of Bangladesh Water Development Board in Jashore.

Earlier, around 18km stretch of Aparbhadra river completely dried up due to a lack of water flow caused by siltation.

A proposal to excavate the three rivers has been included in the amendment project for the Kapotaksha river and submitted to the ministry concerned as well as BWDB. However, it has not been approved yet and no funding has yet been received, said officials.

As a result, the situation is only worsening over time.

In the 1980s, the BWDB built dams on a number of rivers in the region in the name of polder construction under coastal embankment projects, thereby separating the rivers from the tidal floodplains and canals connected to those.

As a result, siltation started accumulating in the riverbeds as the dams prevented tidal water from entering the rivers and washing away silt. Kapotaksha, Harihar, Aparbhadra and Srihari became the most affected rivers.

Consequently, in 2017, severe floods inundated Keshabpur upazila town and adjoining areas along the rivers.

Later in 2019, BWDB took a Tk 50 crore project to dig Harihar, Buribhadra and Aparbhadra rivers to prevent floods.

The rivers were dug, but their width reduced. Besides, the water levels did not return to expected level, and the flow did not restore to normalcy. As a result, the waterlogging problems returned within two years after the excavation while siltation remained a persistent problem.

At present, the rivers resemble narrow canals on their deathbed.

"We are likely to suffer due to flooding and waterlogging this monsoon and the problems will only worsen in future unless the rivers are excavated promptly, and properly," said Azizur Rahman, a resident of Mangalkot village in the upazila.

Abubakar Siddique, convenor of Keshabpur upazila unit of Bhabadah Water Drainage Committee, said, "The rivers must be dug before the onset of next monsoon to prevent flooding across a vast area in Keshabpur and neighbouring upazilas."

"The existing situation has already affected the region's agriculture adversely," he added.

Contacted, Suman Sikdar, sub-divisional engineer of BWDB in Jashore, said if the project proposal for dredging the rivers is accepted, the work will begin promptly upon receiving funding.

বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্
Bangladesh College of Physicians & Surgeons
BCPS

বিসিপিএস নং নিয়োগ-৫৩৩/২০২৪/২৩২৬০ তারিখঃ ২৯-০৬-২০২৪ খ্রিঃ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্ (বিসিপিএস)-এর নিম্নবর্ণিত পদে চুক্তিভিত্তিক লোক নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের কাছ থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে ঃ-

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম	পদের সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা	বেতনক্রম (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল ২০১৫ মোতাবেক)
১.	সহকারী পরিচালক (মেডিকেল এডুকেশন)	০১	(ক) কোন স্বীকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে চিকিৎসা বিজ্ঞানে এফসিপিএস বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি/এমডি/এমমেড; (খ) কম্পিউটার চালনায় দক্ষতা।	আলোচনা সাপেক্ষে

প্রার্থীদের জন্য পালনীয় শর্তাবলী ও জ্ঞাতব্য বিষয় সমূহ

(১) উল্লিখিত পদে আবেদনকারীগণকে সাদা কাগজে "সচিব, বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্ (বিসিপিএস), ৬৭, শহীদ তাজউদ্দিন আহমেদ সরণী, মহাখালী, ঢাকা-১২১২" বরাবর আবেদন করতে হবে।
(২) আবেদনপত্রে আবেদনকারীর পূর্ণ জীবন বৃত্তান্ত যথা: (ক) প্রার্থীর পূর্ণ নাম বাংলায় ও ইংরেজীতে (Capital Letter), (খ) পিতা/স্বামীর নাম, (গ) মাতার নাম, (ঘ) পদের নাম (ঙ) স্থায়ী ঠিকানা, (চ) বর্তমান ঠিকানা, (ছ) জন্ম তারিখ, (জ) ১৫-০৭-২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখে বয়স (ঝ) ধর্ম, (ঞ) জাতীয়তা, (ট) শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, (ঠ) অভিজ্ঞতার বিবরণ (ড) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের নম্বর (ঢ) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার নম্বর এবং (ণ) মোবাইল/ফোন নম্বর উল্লেখ করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্রে অবশ্যই প্রার্থীর স্বাক্ষর থাকতে হবে এবং প্রত্যেকটি ছবির পেছনে প্রার্থীর নাম থাকা আবশ্যক।
(৩) প্রার্থীগণকে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে (ক) প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতার সকল সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি (খ) প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র (গ) ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ চেয়ারম্যান/পৌরসভার চেয়ারম্যান/ওয়ার্ড কমিশনারের নিকট হতে নাগরিকত্বের সনদপত্র (ঘ) সদ্য তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যায়িত ০৩ (তিন) কপি ছবি এবং (ঙ) জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
(৪) কোন বোর্ড বা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধীন কোন পরীক্ষায় ৩য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি বা সমমানের গ্রেড প্রাপ্ত আবেদনকারীর আবেদন গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়।
(৫) শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা থাকার ক্ষেত্রে সংশ্লিষ্ট পরীক্ষায় অ্যাপিয়ার্ড প্রার্থীগণের আবেদন বিবেচনা করা হবে না।
(৬) চাকুরীতে নিয়োজিত অথবা বিভাগীয় প্রার্থীদেরকে অবশ্যই স্ব স্ব নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্রের কোন অগ্রিম কপি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
(৭) আবেদনকারীকে খামের উপর পদের নাম অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে।
(৮) মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র/কন্যা হিসাবে চাকুরী প্রার্থীদের মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা পিতা/মাতার মুক্তিযোদ্ধা সংক্রান্ত সার্টিফিকেট (যা গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের মুক্তিযোদ্ধা বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়ের সচিব এবং মাননীয় মন্ত্রী/প্রতিমন্ত্রী/উপদেষ্টা কর্তৃক যথাক্রমে স্বাক্ষরিত এবং প্রতি স্বাক্ষরিত/ ১৯৯৭-২০০১ সাল পর্যন্ত বাংলাদেশ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা সংসদের অধীনে তৎকালীন মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী কর্তৃক প্রতি স্বাক্ষরিত)-এর সত্যায়িত কপি আবেদন পত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে।
(৯) "সচিব, বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্"-এর অনুকূলে উক্ত পদের জন্য ১০০০/- টাকার (অফেরৎযোগ্য) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার দরখাস্তের সঙ্গে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
(১০) প্রার্থীর আবেদনপত্র খাম বন্ধ অবস্থায় অবশ্যই রেজিষ্ট্রি ডাকযোগে/কুরিয়ার সার্ভিসে অথবা ব্যক্তিগতভাবে সরাসরি নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তরে আগামী ১৫-০৭-২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখ বেলা ২.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে পৌঁছাতে হবে। উক্ত তারিখ বা সময়ের পরে ডাকযোগে বা অন্য কোন উপায়ে প্রেরিত আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণযোগ্য হবেনা।
(১১) প্রাপ্ত আবেদনপত্রসমূহ প্রাথমিক বাছাইয়ের পর কেবলমাত্র যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে পরীক্ষার জন্য ডাকা হবে। অসত্য/ভুয়া তথ্য সম্বলিত/অসম্পূর্ণ/ ত্রুটিপূর্ণভাবে পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্র কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই বাতিল করা যাবে। আবেদনপত্র যাচাই-বাছাইয়ের ক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।

(অধ্যাপক আবুল বাশার মোঃ জামাল)
সচিব
বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্ (বিসিপিএস)

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THE FUTURE OF MONEY

Central Bank's Digital Currency

Policy Research Institute (PRI) in collaboration with The Daily Star organized a roundtable titled 'Future of Money' on March 31, 2024. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.

The Daily Star
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON
Future of Money
Central Bank's Digital Currency
Date: March 31, 2024
The Daily Star Centre, Dhaka

Dr Ahsan H Mansur,
Executive Director, PRI

Over the past decade and a half, extensive research has been conducted on the topic across the globe by different central banks and researchers. Some countries have even embarked on trial runs. There's a palpable sense of cautiousness, with major central banks and governments waiting to see who will take the lead in launching digital currency at retail level. Several smaller countries have made strides, albeit with mixed success. It's clear that before making any decisions, we must closely examine the experiences of others.

Infrastructure development, particularly in terms of technology upgradation, is imperative. This includes internet-based systems, networking, and cybersecurity. Bangladesh Bank must also strategize for potential future scenarios. The Reserve Bank of India has made significant progress in their research on digital currency, though implementation still remains far off. The silence from the Chinese government adds to the intrigue, especially considering their successful city-level trials.

Inevitably, the digital currency will become global in future. However, the pros and cons are myriad. While its introduction can combat corruption, it also poses political economy risks towards its effective introduction, particularly if corruption is ingrained within bureaucratic structures and political system. Privacy concerns also persist as financial data becomes more accessible. In balancing efficiency with state mechanisms and regulatory hurdles, we must foster innovation while safeguarding individual rights to privacy.

Dr M A Razzaque, *Director, PRI*

The study has been led by PRI in association with The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, with primary missions of enhancing financial literacy and fostering financial inclusion. In this journey, PRI actively engage in policy research and contribute in advocacy. The feasibility assessment of digital currency by central bank mentioned in budget of fiscal year 2022-23 worked as a drive behind commencing of this paper.

Undoubtedly, CBDC (Central Bank's Digital Currency) marks a pivotal innovation, shifting from physical currency to digital wallets. Understanding its dynamics and implications is paramount in today's monetary landscape. Cost savings are significant compared to traditional printing, as digital security measures complicate counterfeiting. Tracking transactions becomes easier, reducing the cost of combating forgery.

CBDC paves the way for a cashless society, enhancing transparency and combating corruption. However, our paper advocates for a balanced approach, promoting coexistence of digital currency and physical cash to capitalize on benefits while gradually transitioning towards a cashless economy.

CBDC differs from cryptocurrencies. While cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum operate privately and face varying legal statuses depending on the country, however CBDC functions similarly to traditional money, holding solid legal backing. Bangladesh, for instance, has explicitly stated its disavowal of Bitcoin and prohibited Bitcoin transactions within its jurisdiction. Cryptocurrency's speculative trading nature leads to high volatility, whereas CBDC, not intended for trading, remains stable. Though subject to periodic fluctuations, akin to monetary policy effects like inflation, CBDC maintains overall stability.

Digital currency manifests in two main forms: Wholesale CBDC, facilitating bank-to-bank transactions with distinct regulations, and Retail CBDC, providing digital currency directly to individuals.

it's important to note that cryptocurrency operates on blockchain technology, which can also serve as the foundation for CBDC. Ensuring a reliable storage system including cloud-based storage or physical storage systems, is crucial for recording every transaction and maintaining data integrity. An accessible interface can be established through web-based platforms, mobile applications, or computer interfaces.

Transactions can be easily traceable in CBDC making the approach transparent albeit at a potential cost of privacy. In contrast, cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, uses complex technology to give a maximum protection to privacy with one of its adverse impacts being facilitating transactions that may be deemed illegal or inappropriate.

There are two principal sources of information on CBDC research and adoption. The Atlantic Council, which is an American think tank in the field of international affairs, reports that three countries have already launched their digital currencies and 36 countries are in the pilot stage, whereas according to CBDC Tracker—a collaborative initiative of Boston Consulting Group, Ernst & Young, Digital Euro Assocation—four central bank digital currencies are already in operation with 46 countries are in the pilot and proof of concept stages. Despite the differences between specific details, both the sources show that there are more than 100 central banks globally that are either researching or in the process of piloting CBDCs.

Notable CBDCs that are in operation include Jamaica's JamDex, Nigeria's eNaira, and the Bahamas' Sand Dollar. On the other hand, Ecuador and the Philippines are examples of countries that have either canceled or backtracked their digital currency projects. The world's largest CBDC pilot is being conducted by China. Its digital yuan (e-CNY), reached 260 million wallets in 26 cities in 17 provinces. In recent years, digital yuan has been experimented in various sectors, from transportation and healthcare to purchasing crude oil. India is also seriously pursuing its CBDC project with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) planning to introduce the ability to conduct offline transactions using its digital rupee (e-Rupee) as part of its CBDC pilot. This functionality aims to enable transactions in areas with limited or no internet connectivity, expanding the digital rupee's accessibility and practicality. The United States appears to have a cautious approach to CBDC.

Some countries are also exploring options for using CBDCs for cross-border transactions. For instance, Project Jura is a collaboration between the central banks of France and Switzerland, along with the Bank of International Settlements (BIS), for the settlement between two wholesale CBDCs. Similarly, the mBridge Project involves the BIS and the central banks of China, Hong Kong, Thailand, and the UAE, aiming to establish a multi-CBDC platform that improves cross-border payments and foreign exchange transactions by using distributed ledger technology for more efficient transactions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

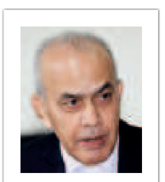
- The costs of combating counterfeiting in traditional money can be drastically reduced with the introduction of digital currency equipped with utmost security.
- Increasing adoptability and knowledge among the public is vital.
- Conduct a meta-analysis before launching CBDC pilot programs to avoid blindly replicating other countries' pilots.
- Increased investment in local manpower, digital literacy, and understanding financial behavior is essential.
- Assess how digital currency can benefit us, aiming for transparency in a cashless society, while considering our social and political context.
- Promote collaboration between civil society and the Bangladesh Bank to address challenges and opportunities in digital currency adoption, fostering informed decision-making and public awareness.
- Using digital currencies for cross-border transactions to address challenges like currency dominance and sanctions, enhancing financial flexibility and resilience for developing countries.
- The importance of public sector involvement in infrastructure development to foster financial inclusion is paramount.
- Bureaucratic barriers in analog practices hinder Bangladesh's transition to digital currency, necessitating comprehensive reforms.
- Navigating a gradual transition rather than a sudden leap towards a cashless society is imperative.

From the experiences of the countries that have adopted CBDCs, it seems that there has been an uptick in digital wallet registrations and usage although the progress towards a cashless economy remains an objective for the future.

CBDCs hold significant promise, particularly for financial inclusion, through instant money transfers to remote regions; faster, cheaper and simplified transactions; strengthened central bank's influence over monetary policy. However, several challenges remain. Digital infrastructure, especially internet access, cybersecurity deficiencies, and digital literacy gaps continue to impede progress. Updating digital infrastructure and policies on data storage and privacy concerns are essential steps. Pilot programmes, such as paying government workers with digital currency, can offer valuable insights for future implementation.There are important lessons for Bangladesh in CBDCs. Firstly, given the widespread global interest in digital currency, it's essential for us not to remain on the sidelines. Secondly, the pace of CBDC adaptation appears to be slow and thus achieving quick gains by introducing a CBDC is not to be expected. Thirdly, transitioning to CBDC doesn't necessitate an immediate shift to a cashless society; instead, gradual progress is more realistic and effective.

Bangladesh Bank must intensify research and exploration into CBDC technology. Identifying innovation opportunities and conducting small-scale experiments can enhance understanding of digital currency potential.

Lastly, the utmost priority lies in strengthening our national capacity. Without advancements in institutions, infrastructure, and regulatory frameworks, digital currency initiatives will falter, and other service systems like DFS and MFS will also struggle to thrive. Focusing on improving overall infrastructure and literacy is imperative for progress and avoiding digital gap led inequality.



Dr Jamaluddin Ahmed,
Board Member, bKash

Transitioning to digital currency mandates a skilled workforce, yet our bureaucratic structures, deeply entrenched in analog practices, pose formidable barriers to this transformation. Unlike many countries actively researching and piloting digital initiatives, Bangladesh has lagged due to its adherence to traditional systems. However, it's essential to recognize that such evolution will take time but should not be unduly prolonged.

While our existing payment systems, including MFS, have served us adequately, their limitations are evident. It's evident that both the operators of such platforms and our regulatory bodies lack sufficient expertise in this domain. Therefore, our primary focus should be on providing comprehensive training to empower them for optimal performance in this evolving landscape.

Sweden, a cashless pioneer, faces central bank digital currency dilemmas. Despite global prominence, it cautiously navigates decisions, offering valuable insights. In democratic settings, safeguarding rights and privacy is paramount.

Seminars needed to clarify confusion on cryptocurrency, digital currency, and MFS distinctions, essential for better understanding and dissemination of knowledge. Regulators, including NBR overseers, need trainings to initiate appropriate approaches. Additionally, urgent modernization required for transitioning NBR to digital system.

Given the printing cost of physical currency, for every BDT 100, it costs BDT 3, with the remaining constituting profit. Thus, if the central bank were to adopt digital currency, what potential issues might arise?

M Sabbir Hossain, *DMD and Chief Operating Officer, Brac Bank*

The emergence of Bitcoin and Facebook's Libra, coupled with Mark Zuckerberg's ambitious plans for Libra, spurred active engagement from central banks and relevant bodies worldwide. While Bitcoin presented promising aspects, concerns about its adverse effects became apparent. It's crucial to maintain a safe distance from potentially harmful cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, making CBDCs a viable solution to effectively address and mitigate such risks.

The lack of infrastructure for conducting pilot projects for CBDCs poses a significant obstacle. Despite this, there's acknowledgment that a completely regimented approach to CBDC implementation may not be suitable for Bangladesh. As mentioned by our deputy governor in Barishal, transitioning to a cashless system could potentially enrich the economy by more than 1.27 percent in GDP growth. However, achieving 100 percent cashlessness remains unrealistic.

Today, we're inaugurating the Astha App, facilitating monthly transactions worth 10,000 crore through 20 lakh transactions. This achievement is remarkable, considering we've transitioned from zero to such substantial digital transactions in just three years. It's imperative to highlight the substantial volume of transactions through MFS, underscoring our progress towards a cashless society.

Aminul Haq, *Director, Chief Executive Officer (Acting) & CFO, Nagad*

Before introducing CBDC in Bangladesh, it's crucial to address the significant reliance on cash transactions. Currently, the prevalence of cash-in and cash-out transactions exceeding 1000 crore in our MFS indicates that we haven't fully transitioned this substantial volume into digital transactions. Establishing an ecosystem based on cashless transactions is imperative before implementing CBDC in Bangladesh. While countries like China and others have embraced cashless transactions, the Philippines' lack of a centralized KYC system presents challenges due to its geographic division. However, Cambodia's successful pilot of CBDC could serve as an example for Bangladesh.

Collaboration between Thailand and Hong Kong on cross-country settlement offers another avenue to address our remittance challenges, especially with a significant number of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia. Notably, Nagad has received a digital banking license, positioning itself to lead in this sector. However, reliance on foreign companies due to a shortage of skilled manpower in Bangladesh underscores the need for investment in local talent to navigate the complexities of the financial system effectively.

Arif Rahman, *Manager, MicroSave Consulting*

The concept of CBDC and cryptocurrency is relatively new in the context of Bangladesh. While digital money was introduced around 10 to 12 years ago, the idea of digital currency dates back to 1983 and has been rapidly gaining traction. My focus has been on studying human behavior and adaptation, particularly in relation to digital money and financial services. If these cryptocurrencies are backed by the central bank, they could find utility in various sectors such as companies, remittances, and international transactions. However, the level of adoption among the general population is a crucial consideration. Despite the significant presence of MFS, many individuals still prefer traditional cash-in and cash-out transactions, valuing the tangibility of physical currency.

Issues such as network reliability and infrastructure pose challenges to the widespread adoption of digital money. Therefore, any proposed system or policy ultimately hinges on how well it is embraced by users. There is immense potential to raise awareness among the public about the evolving nature of financial systems. However, it's equally important to understand and address the behavioral factors that influence users' attitudes and preferences towards digital transactions.

Dr Ashikur Rahman,
Senior Economist, PRI

Like every technological innovation, CBDC can cut both ways. In developing countries, commercial banks are primarily responsible for processing savings into investments. Therefore, if CBDC aims to directly connect individuals with the central bank – who will process savings into investments? The commercial banks are not only instrumental in screening potential investors who can effectively use the deposited savings, but it has been the only dominant mechanism of supporting large private sector investments in Bangladesh. Therefore, it is not clear how we can open such a technological window without hurting commercial banks, which complicates how CBDC will actually influence economic growth.

Furthermore, we have to be careful about the political economy concerns. If misused, CBDC can be used to violate economic freedom of individuals, which can empower authoritarian polities.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Dr Jamaluddin Ahmed, *Board Member, bKash*

After the central bank's transition to digital currency, the roles of MFS and the overall banking system will remain distinct. There is no need for confusion in this matter. The central bank will not engage in lending activities; its function is to support the government in managing the economy as needed. This fundamental role will not change. Commercial banks will continue their operations and will likely become more digitalized, leading to a reduction in transaction costs.

MFS won't become obsolete; their relevance persists. Debit and credit card services may face challenges with service charges compared to MFS. Platforms like bkash, Nagad, and Roket are poised to expand in this evolving landscape.

Dr Ahsan H Mansur, *Executive Director, PRI*

Regardless of whether we shift towards digital currency or not, digitized transactions are inevitable and unquestionably necessary. We must develop our digital infrastructure and strive for 100% digital outreach and a cashless society.

Even with digital currency, many safeguards should be incorporated to ensure the principles and values of democracy. We must address these issues thoughtfully.

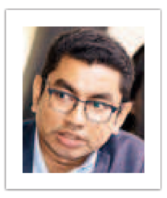
Finally, we need to assess how beneficial the digital currency will be for Bangladesh. If we can achieve a cashless society, we go a long way toward the efficiency gains out of digital currency. We must consider our social and political context when evaluating its potential contributions. I believe the civil society and Bangladesh Bank should collaborate to advance these safeguards and, the efficiency of digital infrastructure further.

If the infrastructure is ready, digital currency can be compatible with any technological advancements. Currently, central banks are at innovation stages, indicating that they would initially implement CBDC within the commercial bank structures. They do not intend to replace commercial banks at this stage. For instance, if Bangladesh Bank plans to disburse 5,000 crore Taka in digital currency, it will do so through the commercial banks.

Arun Dev Nath, *Deputy Editor, The Daily Star*

The possibility of cross-border transactions using digital currency is crucial to notice. The way the dollar has dominated against other developing countries' currencies raises hope. This could be a compelling argument for us to present to the government and the central bank, as it seems like an area where they may see the need for action.

For instance, consider a recent example where Bangladesh struggled to pay Russia at least 400 US dollars due to sanctions. In such cases, exploring options like using yuan or digital currencies from specific digital banks for transactions could be promising. However, this is just speculation, and there's still a long way to go.



Tanjim Ferdous, *In-charge of NGO and Foreign Missions, Business Development Team, The Daily Star & Moderator of the session*

As we stand on the brink of a digital revolution, the inevitability of digital currency becoming a global phenomenon is undeniable. This shift promises to combat corruption and streamline transactions, yet it also introduces a complex array of challenges. Today, we have delved into a comprehensive discussion of both the positive and negative aspects of this issue. It is crucial that we continue this dialogue, as we can no longer ignore the reality of the digital transformation within our currency system. Together, we must navigate this new landscape, addressing both its opportunities and its risks.

LEBANON BORDER

Iran warns Israel of 'obliterating' war

AFP, *Tehran*

Iran yesterday warned that "all Resistance Fronts", a grouping of Iran and its regional allies, would confront Israel if it attacks Lebanon.

The comment from Iran's mission to New York comes with fears of a wider regional war involving Israel and Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah movement. The two sides have engaged in near-daily exchanges of fire since the offensive on Gaza began.

In a post on social media platform X, the Iranian mission said it "deems as psychological warfare the Zionist regime's propaganda about intending to attack Lebanon".

But, it added, "should it embark on full-scale military aggression, an obliterating war will ensue. All options, incl. the full involvement of all Resistance Fronts, are on the table."

US military destroys seven drones, vehicle in Yemen

AFP, *Washington*

American forces destroyed seven drones and a control station vehicle in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen over 24 hours, the US military said Friday.

The strikes were carried out because the drones and the vehicle "presented an imminent threat to US coalition forces, and merchant vessels in the region," the US Central Command said in a statement on social media platform X.

The Iran-backed Houthis have been targeting vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since November 2023.

On Friday, Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree claimed responsibility for attacks on four vessels, including a "direct hit" on the Delonix tanker in the Red Sea after an operation involving a number of ballistic missiles.

Palestinians run for cover during an Israeli drone attack in western Rafah yesterday. Witnesses in the southern Gaza City reported dead and wounded after a new incursion by Israeli troops.
PHOTO: AFP

Thousands displaced as Israel pummels north Gaza

AFP, *Palestinian Territories*

Explosions, air strikes and gunfire rattled northern Gaza yesterday, the third day of an Israeli military operation that has uprooted tens of thousands of Palestinians and compounded what the UN called "unbearable" living conditions in the territory.

An AFP correspondent reported ongoing explosions from the Shujaiya area near Gaza City, with a resident saying bodies were visible on the streets.

Israel's military yesterday said its operations were continuing in Shujaiya where fighting "above and below the ground" left a "large number" of Hamas fighters dead.

A resurgence of fighting in the area comes months after Israel had declared the command structure of Hamas dismantled in northern Gaza.

Last Sunday Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the "intense phase" of the offensive was winding down after almost nine months, but experts see a potentially prolonged next phase.

Israel's offensive has killed at least 37,834 people, also mostly civilians, according to data from the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza. It reported at least 69 deaths over the previous 48 hours.

- Israeli forces continue pounding Shujaiya area
- Death toll in enclave rises to 37,834

Mohammed Harara, 30, said he and his family, young and old, felt as though they would become part of that toll.

He said they fled from their home in Shujaiya with nothing, "due to the bombardment by Israeli planes, tanks and drones" that they barely survived.

"We couldn't carry anything from the house. We left the food, flour, canned goods, mattresses, and blankets," Harara said.

Israel's military on Friday said it was conducting "targeted raids" backed by air strikes against Hamas in the Shujaiya area.

The United Nations humanitarian agency OCHA estimated that "about 60,000 to 80,000 people were displaced" from the area this week.

AFPTV images yesterday showed men moving belongings on a donkey cart. Some people were pushed in wheelchairs. Children walked with backpacks past piles of dusty debris.

"I saw a tank in front of the Shuhada mosque firing" at targets, said Abdelkareem al-Mamluk. "There were martyrs in the street."

Elsewhere in the coastal territory, the civil defence agency yesterday said four bodies were pulled from an apartment after an Israeli strike in the central region.

Further south, in the Rafah area, witnesses reported dead and wounded after a new incursion by Israeli troops.

Far right scents power as France braces for polls

AFP, *Paris*

A divided France braced for high-stakes parliamentary elections that could see the anti-immigrant and eurosceptic party of Marine Le Pen sweep to power in a historic first.

The candidates ended their frantic three-week campaigns at midnight Friday, with political activity banned until the first round of voting today.

Yesterday, voting began in France's overseas territories that span the globe, with residents of the tiny archipelago of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, located off the coast of Canada, casting their ballots from 1000 GMT.

They will be followed by voters in France's islands in the Caribbean and the South American territory of French Guiana. Voting will later start in territories in the Pacific and then in the Indian Ocean before it gets underway on the mainland today.

Most polls show that Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN) is on course to win the largest number of seats in the 577-member National Assembly, parliament's lower house, although it remains unclear if the party will secure an outright majority.

UK GENERAL ELECTION

Sunak slams racist slur by Farage party campaigner

REUTERS, *Stockton-on-Tees*

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said on Friday evening he was hurt and angry that a supporter of Nigel Farage's right-wing Reform UK party had been recorded making a racial slur about him, saying it was too important for him not to speak out.

Britain's first ethnic-minority prime minister, Sunak was responding to comments broadcast by Channel 4 News, by a man named as Andrew Parker calling Sunak a "***king Paki" - a British racial slur for people of South Asian descent.

Sunak, currently campaigning for a July 4 national election that his Conservative Party is tipped to lose after 14 years in power, was born in the southern English port city of Southampton to Hindu parents of Punjabi Indian descent.

"My two daughters have to see and hear Reform people who campaign for Nigel Farage calling me an effing Paki. It hurts and it makes me angry, and I think he has some questions to answer," Sunak told reporters. "I don't repeat those words lightly, I do so deliberately because this is too important not to call out clearly for what it is," he added.

ACC probe into Benazir

FROM PAGE 12

apply to the court for an executive magistrate to inspect Benazir's four flats in Gulshan. The unit intends to compile an inventory of the contents inside these flats, which are reportedly part of Benazir's vast wealth. The ACC will then seek the court's guidance on managing these assets.

The former IGP's family resided in these four flats, which are currently locked as the family is believed to be abroad.

As part of the investigation, the ACC summoned Benazir on June 6, and his wife and daughters on June 9 for questioning, but they did not appear. However, no travel bans have been issued against them by the ACC.

They were again summoned on June 23 and 24. Instead of appearing, they submitted the written statement through their lawyer on June 20. According to various sources, the family remains abroad.

Along with allegations of corruption and substantial illegal wealth accumulation, Benazir is also accused of concealing his police identity in his passport. Despite holding high positions within the police force, he obtained a passport as a private employee, violating government employment and passport regulations.

This was discovered during a renewal attempt, which led the passport office to halt the process. At the time, Benazir was the director general of the Rapid Action Battalion, and managed to resolve the issue using his influence.

The ACC has found seven passports belonging to Benazir and his family members.

On June 25, the commission interrogated eight officials from the passport office regarding Benazir's passport forgery.

On March 31, allegations of illegal wealth acquisition by Benazir and his family published in a national daily prompted the ACC to launch an investigation after verifying the claims.

It began the probe, led by Deputy Director Hafizul Islam, on April 22. The team also includes a three-member special investigation team from the ACC headquarters.

Faisal bought savings certificate

FROM PAGE 12

post of assistant tax commissioner, first bought a savings certificate worth Tk 30 lakh in his name on November 12, 2020.

Four days later, a savings certificate worth Tk 5 lakh was bought in his wife Afsana Jesmin's name.

On January 10, 2021, two savings certificates worth Tk 10 lakh and Tk 20 lakh respectively were brought in his father-in-law Ahmed Ali's name.

Three weeks later, another savings certificate worth Tk 30 lakh was purchased in the name of Faisal's relative, Khondaker Hafizur Rahman. Ten days later, he bought another saving certificate worth Tk 10 lakh in Rahman's name.

On February 2, 2021, Faisal bought another savings certificate worth Tk 30 lakh in the name of his brother Quazi Khalid Hasan.

On December 26, he bought another savings certificate worth Tk 29 lakh in his brother-in-law Aftab Ali's name.

The Dhaka court directed the authorities concerned to freeze 87 bank accounts of Faisal, his wife and relatives.

It also asked them to ensure that the properties cannot be transferred to another part by Faisal and his family and that the money cannot be laundered.

The ACC informed the court that Faisal opened many bank accounts in his relatives' names to hide his illicit earnings. Among these, the ACC found specific transaction details for 87 bank accounts.

According to ACC documents, Faisal and his 11 relatives conducted transactions worth crores through 87 accounts across 19 banks and 1 non-bank financial institution.

The largest volume of transactions amounting to Tk 11.57 crore was found in the account of his father-in-law, a retired bank officer. Ali has eight bank accounts.

Faisal's mother-in-law Momtaz Begum, a housewife, has ten bank accounts and transactions amounting to Tk 7 crore were spotted in these accounts.

Faisal has six accounts, which had transactions amounting to Tk 5.21 crore. His wife, who is also a housewife, has five bank accounts where transactions worth Tk 2.25 crore took place.

The ACC also found Faisal and his wife had bought a five-katha plot from the Jolshiri Housing Project in Khilgaon, while his wife bought another five-katha plot for Tk 75 lakh from East-West Development. His father-in-law purchased a flat for Tk 1 crore from Rupayan Housing Estate in the city's Ramna area.

Gaza civilians

FROM PAGE 12

camps to landfill sites.

Now, appeals to the Israeli authorities for access to the landfill sites were frequently denied, she said. And lacking fuel meant even when access was granted, trucks could not go in to clear out the mess.

Wateridge said food insecurity in the territory was having a visible effect on the population. "When I see my colleagues, my friends here, they're visibly unrecognisable because having such unsustained access to food for so long, you start to age, you look unhealthy, your skin changes colour," she said.

Thursday saw the first medical evacuations from Gaza into neighbouring Egypt since the Rafah border crossing was closed in early May, when Israeli forces took over the Palestinian side.

The World Health Organization says 10,000 patients need evacuating from Gaza for treatment.

Wateridge said one of her own UNRWA colleagues, Abdullah, had to wait for two months before being evacuated in April. He was injured in a strike and had his legs amputated in late February.

Since then, he had spent weeks in the devastated Al Shifa hospital -- once Gaza's largest medical complex -- when it was under siege.

7 held after woman raped

FROM PAGE 12

9:30pm, a group of six people, led by a man named Abul Kashem Suman, abducted them.

They took the two to a secluded area and demanded a ransom of Tk 70,000 from the husband. When he left to fetch the money, he contacted the National Emergency Service "999".

AC Muttajul said police immediately went to the area after receiving the information. The kidnappers kept changing their location, realising the police were after them.

Police finally rescued the victim around 4:00am but the kidnappers fled.

After talking to the woman, the police learned that she had been raped.

Quoting the woman, the AC said four of the accused raped her.

Law enforcers conducted raids at various locations and arrested seven individuals yesterday, including the main accused, Suman.

During primary interrogation, Suman claimed that the woman was previously known to him.

The AC said the arrestees would be produced before a Dhaka court today with a remand petition.

Black money holders

FROM PAGE 12

road to kleptocracy," Iftekharuzzaman added.

The provision is unethical and insulting to honest taxpayers, said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh.

"I don't know who will benefit from such a move. But certainly, they are powerful and they are people in high positions. The interest of the country has certainly not been considered here."

Vinicius comes alive for Brazil

FROM PAGE 12

LaLiga-Champions League double.

"Today I played a game that is compatible to the level of the player I am," Vinicius told reporters.

"I always say that I never play for myself, I play for the team, for Brazil, for my country. I always try to do the best things, but it's not always possible.

"Today I played a great match, I know I can improve a lot and I will do to help Brazil. We want to put Brazil in the place we deserve," he said.

After their disappointing opener, Brazil were initially struggling against another defensive opponent and almost lost their composure when Lucas Paqueta badly missed a penalty halfway through the first half.

But instead, they were rescued by Vinicius, who took charge and was all over the field, striking twice and creating another chance that allowed Savinho to score, helping Brazil to go to the break with a comfortable 3-0 lead.

That was more than enough for a Brazil that were playing under huge pressure with the hopes of 215 million compatriots on their shoulders.

Dorival was pleased with Vinicius's exploits and said the best of Brazil is yet to come.

"Today he played a very important role," Dorival told reporters, speaking with the help of a translator.

"He played an almost perfect match, he created very good situations and opportunities. He was dynamic, very effective and straightforward and direct.

"He played well with other players and teamed up nicely, he has great capacity.

"These are different teams that are undergoing different moments but I have no doubts that Brazil will perform at the highest level, and I expect that it will be better than these two first matches."

Panama court acquits 28 in 'Panama Papers' trial

AFP, *Panama City*

A Panamanian court on Friday acquitted 28 people charged with money laundering in connection with the now-defunct law firm Mossack Fonseca, the epicenter of the "Panama Papers" international tax evasion scandal.

Among those acquitted were the firm's founders, Jurgen Mossack and Ramon Fonseca, the latter of whom died in May in a Panamanian hospital.

During the trial, which was held in Panama City in April, the prosecution asked for 12 years in prison for the duo, the maximum sentence for money laundering.

However, Judge Baloisa Marquinez acquitted the pair and 26 others after finding that evidence taken from the law firm's servers had not been gathered in line with due process, raising doubts about its "authenticity and integrity," a court statement said.

The judge also ruled that "the rest of the evidence was not sufficient and conclusive to determine the criminal responsibility of the defendants," the court statement said.

Leaked documents from Mossack Fonseca in 2016 revealed how many of the world's wealthy stashed assets in offshore companies, triggering scores of investigations around the globe.

Those implicated included former British premier David Cameron, Russian President Vladimir Putin, football star Lionel Messi, Argentina's then-president Mauricio Macri and Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodovar, to name but a few.

Panamanian prosecutors had alleged that Mossack and Fonseca helped create opaque companies in which executives of the German multinational Siemens deposited millions of euros outside the company's official accounts.

They were also charged with helping divert money from a massive fraud in Argentina.

"Justice has been done, we are extremely satisfied with the ruling handed down by the judge," Guillermina McDonald, lawyer for Mossack and other defendants, told AFP.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Zero tolerance, but plenty of clearance?

The corrupt should have no place in public service

It is frustrating that the government's "zero tolerance" policy against corruption continues to be a slogan without substance even as it plagues the whole nation. The recent disclosures of alleged corruption involving two top officials of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), following high-profile cases involving a former IGP and an army chief, have once again underscored how widespread corruption has become. The government claims there are stringent anti-corruption measures in place, and that actions are taken whenever an incident is reported. The truth couldn't be more different, however. While we have laws criminalising bribery, money laundering, or use of public resources for private gain, in reality, those are seldom used. If anything, anti-graft laws and regulations targeting government employees have been rather relaxed, lightening penalties for corruption.

A report by *The Daily Star* tracks some of the changes made in relevant laws over the years. For example, in 2018, an amendment to the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules (1985) introduced "reprimand" as a penalty for proven corruption. Other penalties include forced retirement, removal from the job, suspension, and demotion. But when public officials abuse their authority to commit crimes including corruption, they lose their moral right to be in service. In any other sector other than public, the punishment for that would be termination. So, penalties like a reprimand, or salary reduction, or "closing", or even demotion do feel like a slap on the wrist, and this is what has been happening in the public sector.

In April, for instance, Promatha Ranjan Ghatak, now an assistant secretary, was found guilty of embezzling Tk 7.35 crore while he served as a land acquisition officer in Madaripur, but was only demoted rather than dismissed. Around the same time, Bir Amir Hamza, an assistant commissioner (land) of Bogura Sadar Upazila, was sentenced to a reduced salary for a year after being found guilty of forgery. The leniency shown in their cases has understandably raised eyebrows. Experts believe the government provided impunity to public servants by enacting the Government Services Act, 2018, which replaced the Public Servants (Dismissal on Conviction) Ordinance, 1985. That ordinance had harsher provisions including dismissal for any employee punished for criminal offences. As per the 2018 act, however, an official can be in service even after being sentenced to up to 12 months in prison. The act also requires the ACC to seek permission before arresting any official.

All such lenient, protective and even discriminatory provisions send a dangerous message: that corruption by public officials, even when proven, will be met with minimal consequences. Against this backdrop, when ruling party MPs decry it, as some of them did in parliament recently, but stop short of using their mandate to toughen up related laws, it comes across as hollow and insincere. To really check corruption, the government must not only get rid of all questionable provisions but also ensure strict compliance with existing rules and regulations.

Painful struggles of coastal women

Govt must address the crisis of drinkable water in southwest

It is disheartening that at a time when Bangladesh is boasting massive infrastructural development, women in remote areas in southwest still have to bear the burden of walking for miles and carrying back heavy pitchers of water for their families. People in these villages lack access to clean drinking water, and are often forced to drink salty water leading to serious health problems. A report by our Khulna correspondent describes the harsh reality of women who have been hit particularly hard by climate change and the proliferation of shrimp business that has resulted in the salinity of all nearby water sources.

According to the report, over 40 lakh people across the southern coast are facing a freshwater crisis with the women being the biggest sufferers, as they are the ones who must take the backbreaking walk to collect clean water for their families. Climate change has also led to lower rainfall, so harvesting rainwater is becoming difficult. Often people are forced to drink saline water and end up having hypertension and kidney diseases. Again, women are more affected by this, many developing reproductive health problems.

Salinity due to overzealous shrimp cultivation has wreaked havoc on the environment for decades. More and more land is being affected by salinity, making them barren and unfit for food cultivation. Yet precious little has been done to reduce the number of shrimp enclosures. The interests of local influentials have always taken precedence over those of the poor people in these areas. Climate change, meanwhile, has forced many paddy-field workers to seek employment in urban areas, leaving their female family members to take on all the responsibilities of the households, making their lives even more burdensome.

Urgent action is needed to address this situation. The government must immediately invest in building proper water infrastructure so that people can access clean water within the villages. It must also reduce salinity of the soil and water by drastically reducing the number of shrimp enclosures. Shrimp traders who have built unauthorised sluice gates in Khulna, thereby weakening river embankments, should be punished. The authorities must also support the women in these areas and end their daily misery of walking for miles under the scorching sun to bring back heavy pitchers of water.

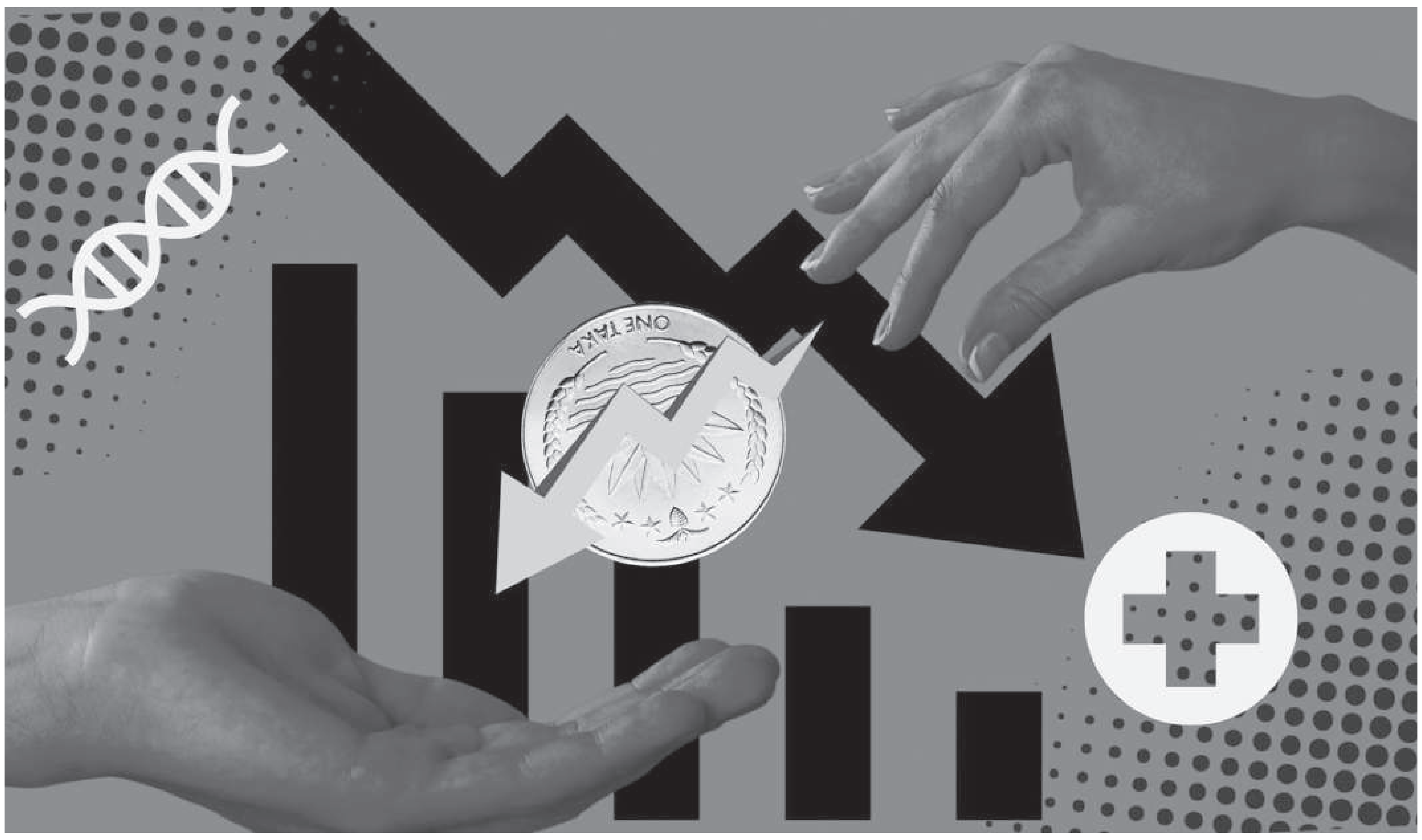
THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Santal Rebellion

On this day in 1885, the Santal leaders Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu organised thousands of Santals to rebel against the East India Company. They protested against the oppressive colonial rule, and specifically the exploitative revenue system, as imposed by the zamindars, police, and the legal apparatus set by the British East India Company.

How healthy is the health budget?

UHC Forum is a coalition of professionals who aim to strategically push for universal health coverage (UHC)—an SDG4 priority. It recently organised a webinar on how well this year's budget relates to key health sector challenges. Five experts share their views on the matter with **The Daily Star.**



VISUAL: **STAR**

Dr Rumana Huque *is professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka.*

The proposed health sector budget of 2024-25 emphasises on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and the goals of the Perspective Plan by 2041. The proposed allocation for health is Tk 41,407 crore, which was Tk 38,051 crore in FY2023-24. Though this represents an increase of 8.8 percent in absolute terms, in real terms it is a decrease if inflation is considered. With small variations over the past decade, the health sector budget has remained stagnant at around five percent of the national budget. This is far below the international standard, which suggests allocating 15 percent of the government budget to health. Experts suggest that every government should commit to spending at least five percent of their GDP on health and move progressively towards this target. The 8FYP (eighth five year plan) committed to allocate two percent of the GDP towards the health sector by 2025. In contrast, the health budget has remained around 0.7 percent of GDP. India's current public healthcare spending is around 1.6-1.8 percent of GDP, and they are aiming to increase the public healthcare spending to 2.5 percent by 2025.

It is also suggested that the government should ensure health expenditure of at least $88 per person per year. The World Bank data suggests that the per capita health expenditure is $74 in India and $65 in Nepal, but only $58 in Bangladesh. Furthermore, a large portion of this health expenditure is paid by the people themselves: out-of-pocket (OOP) health expenditure as a proportion of current health expenditure is 73 percent in Bangladesh compared to 50 percent in India and 51.26 percent in Nepal and 17.05 percent globally.

The allocation of Tk 100 crore for "Integrated Health-Science Research and Development Fund" is a good initiative, but the key issue here is its efficient utilisation. The import duty on dialysis filters and dialysis circuits has been reduced from 10 percent to one percent on import, but 10 percent customs duty on import of medical equipment and supplies by referral hospitals has been imposed. We need to avoid creating additional burdens on people seeking health care.

***Dr Syed Abdul Hamid** is professor, Institute of Health Economics, University of Dhaka.*

There are two important lenses through which to assess this year's budget. The first is an equity lens. Two of the health sector programmes explicitly addressed to poorer citizens—the Shasthyo Shurokhsha Karmasuchi (SSK) and the maternal voucher scheme—have seen no horizontal or vertical expansion in allocation.

The second lens to assess the budget through is an efficiency lens. The proposed budget does not provide any noteworthy plan to enhance the functionality and efficiency of public health facilities. It does not propose measures to fill the current workforce vacancies, to create new positions necessary for dealing with emerging and re-emerging diseases, or enhance the supply chain of essential medicines.

There is a clear need for dedicated modern storage facilities, an updated dispensing mechanism, and improved diagnostic facilities, all of which are not addressed in the current budget. There is a notable absence of initiatives to strengthen primary healthcare in both rural and urban areas. Furthermore, there is no indication of optimising the existing budget by addressing the well-known governance constraints, whether at ministry/directorate level or at facility-level. Genuine political and administrative support is required from the ministry and directorate levels to ensure efficient use of the allocated funds.

***AMM Nasiruddin** is former Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.*

An important concern with the health sector budget is incomplete utilisation of allocated funds. Due to this, a substantial amount must be surrendered to the Ministry of Finance at the end of the fiscal year despite the glaring needs of the sector.

There are several reasons for the low utilisation of the health budget. One is the gap in training of health facility managers on government financial management and rules relating to government procurement. Such shortcomings in many cases hinder and cause delays in timely budget utilisation.

A second reason is the over-centralisation of decision-making related to budget utilisation. Implementing authorities have little or no authority for adjustment of line items even when warranted by circumstances. Such adjustments require approval of higher authorities, and the process is both complex and time consuming. Delay in fund release, rigid spending rules, over-spending without appropriation, payment of arrear bills causing budget shortfall, excessive financial management requirements, fear of audit objections, absence of a robust monitoring, and accountability mechanism, etc. contribute to low rate of budget utilisation in the health sector. During the budget finalisation at the end of the month, an explicit recognition of this entrenched problem of low utilisation of the health budget and its well-known underlying reasons will be a very welcome first step.

***Dr Aminul Hasan** is quality care expert and former director, Directorate General of Health Services.*

Despite a nominal increase, this year's budget, as indeed the budgets of previous years too, remain glaringly inadequate given the population size and healthcare demands. The priority health sector requirements are in primary healthcare, maternal and child health (MCH), and non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

The most glaring gap in primary healthcare is in the urban areas which lack meaningful budgetary attention. MCH has seen some increase in allocation, but this too is glaringly inadequate to meet the needs of antenatal and postnatal care, immunisation programmes, and nutrition support, especially in rural areas. NCDs, the growing health sector challenge, is yet to get the budgetary attention it deserves. Minimal allocation for this growing problem is leading to inadequate screening, diagnosis, and treatment facilities, with many patients unable to afford necessary treatments. Preventive measures, patient education, and chronic disease management suffer due to resource scarcity. Strengthening primary healthcare requires investment in infrastructure and capacity building. Enhancing maternal and child health services involves developing comprehensive programmes and community engagement. Addressing NCDs necessitates prioritising preventive health and promoting integrated care models.

***Hossain Zillur Rahman** is executive chairman, Power and and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), and convener, UHC Forum.*

This year's budget has a block allocation of Tk 2,000 crore for health emergencies. This is a welcome step, but how confident should we feel that this allocation will be efficiently utilised? For example, the dengue menace this year is projected to be a possible health emergency. Meaningfully dealing with the problem requires close coordination between the ministries of health and local government. Unfortunately, coordination between these two critical ministries is the exception rather than the norm.

Without such coordination, funds will remain under-utilised and the results will be poor. UHC Forum intends to identify and work on meaningful areas and spaces in which this necessary coordination can be fostered. Health literacy among the general population is also a highly under-appreciated agenda that requires both budgetary and programmatic attention. Neither our attitudes nor our health system is geared towards early identification of health problems. Early screening for birth defects and provision of correctible surgery can reverse the destinies of many unfortunate children who grow up with disabilities.

Outreach programmes which work as reverse referral, taking specialist care to the grassroots, can benefit immensely from budgetary attention. This year's budget is most likely a closed chapter. The conversation must start in earnest so that next year's health budget sits more meaningfully nearer to people's expectations and needs.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
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Subscription:
01711623906

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VISUAL: **STAR**

Who benefits from the white elephants in the power sector?

Ghulam Muhammed Quader
is an MP and leader of the opposition, Bangladesh Parliament.

GHULAM MUHAMMED QUADER

Load shedding or power cuts are escalating across the country. Rural areas are facing more frequent outages than urban centres. Industrial areas are also suffering due to shortage of power supply.

The daily electricity requirement in Bangladesh ranges from 13,000 megawatts (MW) to a maximum of 17,000MW. Generally, the country produces between 13,000MW-15,000MW based on the need. Presently, the total power generation capacity of the country, as per government report, is 27,515MW.

Interestingly, on April 29, the country suffered a power shortage of over 3,000MW when the demand reached 17,000MW. Throughout the last week of April, escalating temperatures led to a gradual increase in demand for electricity. The supply could have been adjusted to meet this demand. But we saw a continuous rise in load shedding due to supply shortage between April 23 to April 29.

To address the electricity and gas crisis, the "Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provisions) Act, 2010" was enacted for an initial period of two years. The tenure was subsequently extended in 2012 by two years, in 2014 by four years, in 2018 by three years, and most recently in 2021 by five years. With four extensions, the validity of the law has been extended up to 2026.

This legislation effectively shields almost all aspects of the energy sector from legal scrutiny. The law allows purchase of rental power plants, importation of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), and construction or procurement of all sorts of infrastructure in connection with the operation and distribution of gas-electricity without following the usual procedures. Government officials involved in any sort of activities in connection with enhancement of electricity—purchase, production, transmission, distribution, and electricity related fuel transactions—have been allowed legal impunity under the provisions of this law.

The aim and objective of this law was to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply nationwide at reasonable prices. But what the impunity law has done is empower the authorities with limitless laterality.

Despite the existence of power plants capable of producing at least 10,000MW more than the existing maximum demand, load shedding is being imposed if there is a slight rise in demand from what is normal. This additional production capacity is either not being utilised or is for some reason not usable.

Research shows that a significant portion of such privately-owned plants has never produced electricity or has produced minimal amounts, such as one or two percent of their capacity, in some cases.

During 2018-22, some plants did not produce any electricity, but the government bore all their operational expenses.

Until the fiscal year 2021-22, the country had 151 power plants. Among these, 42 government-owned and 26 private power plants operated at 10 percent or less of their production capacity over the past five fiscal years. Despite this low production, they have charged the government capacity fees based on their full capacity production.

> **In short, power generation capacity is being increased despite insufficient demand. As a result, many of these plants remain idle without producing electricity. Since there is no production, there is no opportunity to earn revenue by selling electricity produced by these plants. However, according to the contracts, large amounts of money still need to be paid on account of capacity charges.**

Presently, Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) is incurring huge financial losses as it is selling electricity at a much lower cost than the cost of production.

To cover the deficit, a provision for subsidy is kept in the national budget. An amount of Tk 39,406 crore was earmarked from the public exchequer for the fiscal year 2023-24 on that account.

However, it has been observed that during this period, an estimated Tk 32,000 crore was paid as capacity charges for unused power stations. This amount constitutes approximately 81 percent of the total subsidy.

In other words, a major portion (81 percent) of the amount provided as subsidy to mitigate BPDB's losses goes to pay capacity charges or rentals of private power plants. This indicates that almost the entire amount of BPDB's losses stem from payments made to privately rented power plants against capacity charges.

From 2009 to the fiscal year 2023-24, Tk 1,37,000 crore has been paid for capacity charges or rentals without utilising the production capacity.

Two large gas-powered power plants have recently begun production in Meghnaghat. These plants, operated by Summit and Unique Group, have a combined capacity of 1,167MW. Additionally, a 718MW power plant by Reliance in the same area is ready for production.

With the inclusion of these plants, BPDB's total production capacity will significantly increase. Due to the lack of demand, these plants or some other plants in lieu of them will remain unused, leading to additional capacity charge payments. Consequently, the total expense for capacity charges will rise further.

In short, power generation capacity is being increased despite insufficient demand. As a result, many of these plants remain idle without producing electricity. Since there is no production, there is no opportunity to earn revenue by selling electricity produced by these plants. However, according to the contracts, large amounts of money still need to be paid on account of capacity charges.

Although the burden of subsidies is now being shifted onto the customers through accrued electricity prices, most of the additional revenue is being used to pay rent to these privately-owned power plants.

So, the capacity charge is the main reason for the increase in electricity prices. If such power plants were absent or fewer in number, electricity prices would not have to be increased, or increased so much.

Since 2010, the electricity price has been raised 13 times, rising from an average of Tk 3.73 per unit to Tk 8.70. According to the conditions set by the IMF, this trend of increase is expected to chronically continue. Consequently, it is difficult to assert that electricity is or will be supplied at a reasonable price.

It may be mentioned here that renting private power plants, having provision for payment of rent or capacity charge are not the problems. The main problem lies in creating excess production capacity in relation to demand, and then keeping them idle and paying capacity charges or rent. Any money paid to such power plants enriches the deficit unilaterally. In short, these power plants have now become white elephants.

And it is difficult to understand why a power generation capacity exceeding 27,000MW was created at a time when our electricity demand typically ranges from 13,000MW to a maximum of 17,000MW.

Moreover, it appears that this capacity expansion trend persists, incurring significant costs and escalating both domestic and foreign debt. Notably, 19.46 percent of foreign loans are allocated to the power sector. Yet, the anticipated economic growth necessary to justify the increase in electricity usage remains elusive.

Private power plants are domestically owned, but they are being paid in foreign currency. According to our banking law, no bank can lend to any company more than 25 percent of its capital. This limit is not enforced in the power sector for the private power plant owners. It is difficult to find any logic for these extraordinary facilities to be provided to them.

Despite giving various types of benefits across the board in the power sector, uninterrupted electricity supply is not being ensured. Far from getting electricity at a fair price, white elephant-like power plants have been created and the ever-increasing high cost of maintaining them has been thrust upon the shoulders of the people.

Fallout from Starmer's controversial comment about Bangladesh

Mahadev Ghosh
is an independent researcher based in the UK.

MAHADEV GHOSH

UK's Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer has faced significant backlash after his recent comment where he singled out Bangladesh as a country from where people coming in should be sent back. He made the comment during an interview with *The Sun* when he was asked about small boat crossings in the English Channel and how a Labour government would address the issue. When pressed by Harry Cole, *The Sun's* political editor, as to which countries the migrants could be returned to, Starmer responded, "At the moment people coming from countries like Bangladesh are not being removed, because they're not being processed." This statement was alarming for several reasons—including because it was contextually incorrect.

In regards to small boat crossings across the English Channel, Bangladesh's contribution is far from significant. According to the University of Oxford's Migration Observatory, Bangladesh did not even rank in the top 10. Furthermore, the UK government's Home Office data shows that only 13 Bangladeshis applied for asylum after crossing the Channel using small boats between 2018 and 2024, compared to a total of 126,609 crossings. This means that Bangladesh accounted for a negligible number of crossings—eight out of 31,079 so far this year. Labour has already marginalised voters, especially those of Bangladeshi heritage, due to its stance on Israel's war in Gaza. And his comments have even led to backlash from within his own party.

Labour MP for Poplar and Limehouse, Apsana Begum, accused Starmer of "dog whistle racism against Bangladeshis." Moreover, Councillor Sabina Akhtar resigned over Starmer's comments, adding that she felt Labour had taken the Bangladeshi community's vote "for granted to please a small group of people." This reflected the wider effects of his comments, as it seemed to downplay the Bangladeshi community's contribution to the UK's culture and economy. Over half a million British-Bangladeshis live in the UK and operate 10,000 restaurants, forming a vital part of the £4.5 billion British curry sector. Additionally, British-Bangladeshis work in the NHS and in the armed forces—contributions the community felt were being undervalued, especially given their history of being victims of racist attacks.

However, this is not to say that Bangladesh is in no way contributing to the UK's immigration and asylum woes. Last year, a large number of Bangladeshis were accused of abusing the visa system. Nearly 11,000 Bangladeshi nationals entered the UK on visas and then applied for asylum within 12 months, using student, worker, and visitor visas. This led to Bangladesh and the UK signing an agreement last month to expedite the removal of Bangladeshi migrants who have no right to stay in the country. Nevertheless, even in terms of asylum seekers, both India and Pakistan were ahead of Bangladesh, with Afghanistan and Iran at the top. This makes Starmer's singling out Bangladesh inappropriate, even if the question extended beyond small boat Channel crossings.

Labour has often been accused of not having any real plans to solve the issue of small boat crossings, and Starmer's comment does not help counter such accusations. This criticism extends beyond immigration, as Starmer has lacked cohesive plans on foreign policy, climate, or the economy. He has largely relied on platitudes, with Labour expected to win due to anti-Tory sentiments rather than pro-Labour ones. With immigration expected to be a major issue this election, every party has more or less agreed on the need to control the flow of immigrants, although each party has proposed different approaches to solving the crisis.

The Conservatives have stood firmly behind their Rwanda plan, with the right-wing party Reform UK pledging a complete freeze on immigration, in addition to deportation of people crossing the Channel in small boats. Labour plans to dismantle the Rwanda scheme and establish a "Border Security Command," relying on bilateral agreements to deport illegal immigrants. This reflects a wider consensus amongst voters that immigration numbers must come down, with 52 percent of the public saying it must be reduced. This means that Starmer's Labour will have to depart from the empathetic approach and defence of migration characteristic of the party during the Corbyn-era. However, political expediency should never justify scapegoating a historically marginalised community that is not only an integral part of your voter base but also of the country as a whole.

To Starmer's credit, he has apologised for his "clumsy" comments and acknowledged the "massive contribution" made by Bangladeshis to the UK. He further emphasised that mutual cooperation between the UK and the Bangladeshi community could lead to "great benefit" for both, which was the main reason for his remark.

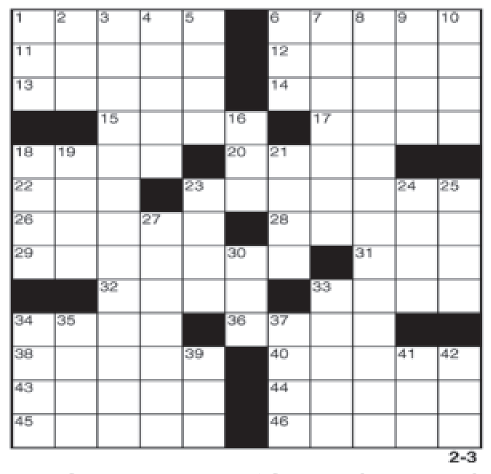
UK Labour Party leader Keir Starmer.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
\1 Indiana player
6 Make lumber out of
11 Texas landmark
12 Sung drama
13 Meek
14 Salad servers
15 "Frozen" queen
17 Dele undoer
18 Feel sorry for
20 Damon of "The Martian"
22 Hubbub
23 Family of five, say
26 Rose part
28 Paris subway
29 Depth charges, in naval slang
31 Egg layer
32 Sicilian peak
33 Accomplishment
34 Remove
36 Work the fields
38 Steer clear of
40 Many Mideast natives
43 Audacity
44 Dome home
45 Putting site
46 Kick back

DOWN
1 Contrived
2 Oscar winner Mahershala
3 Made oneself prominent
4 Writer Bronte
5 Reactor parts
6 Lush
7 John or Paul
8 Made every possible effort
9 Spur on
10 Days gone by
16 Dr.'s org.
18 One of a bear trio
19 Midmonth day
21 Prepares for war
23 Large family
24 Open space
25 Warning word
27 When Macbeth dies
30 Afternoon break
33 Smith's place
34 "Shucks!"
35 Finished
37 Animal home
39 Animal home
41 Squeezing snake
42 Boston team, for short



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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to
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CRITICAL WARNING

The dangerous link between obesity and dengue hospitalisation in children

Dengue, a mosquito-borne viral infection, can range from mild flu-like symptoms to severe, life-threatening conditions. While obesity is already known to worsen the severity of dengue in hospitalised patients, its role in increasing the likelihood of hospitalisation has not been thoroughly explored. With the global rise in obesity rates, understanding this potential link is vital for effective disease control and prevention strategies.

A team of researchers set out to investigate whether obesity is associated with an increased risk of hospitalisation for dengue in children. The study focused on a large cohort of Sri Lankan children, forming part of an island-wide dengue sero-surveillance project and was published in the PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases journal.

The study involved 4,782 children aged 10 to 18, selected from nine districts in Sri Lanka. The results showed that, while dengue infection rates were similar across different BMI percentiles, there was a significant difference in hospitalisation rates. Among children with a BMI percentile over 97 (considered obese), 18.2% who were seropositive for dengue had been hospitalized. In comparison, only 9.48% of seropositive children with a lower BMI percentile (less than 97) had been hospitalised. Children with a BMI percentile over 97 had more than twice the risk of hospitalisation compared to their peers with lower BMI percentiles.

Obesity is known to increase the risk of severe disease from many infections. If rising obesity rates lead to higher dengue hospitalisation rates, obesity could significantly contribute to the increasing hospitalisations seen in many dengue-endemic countries. Additionally, understanding how obesity and diabetes worsen dengue could lead to the development of specific biomarkers and treatments for at-risk populations.

GLOBAL HEALTH ALERT

1.8 billion adults risk disease from physical inactivity

STAR HEALTH DESK

New data show that nearly one-third (31%) of adults worldwide, approximately 1.8 billion people, did not meet the recommended levels of physical activity in 2022. The findings point to a worrying trend of physical inactivity among adults, which has increased by about 5 percentage points between 2010 and 2022.

If the trend continues, levels of inactivity are projected to further rise to 35% by 2030, and the world is currently off track from meeting the global target to reduce physical inactivity by 2030. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that adults have 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity, or equivalent, per week. Physical inactivity puts adults at greater risk of cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks and strokes, type 2 diabetes, dementia, and cancers such as breast and colon.

The study was undertaken by researchers from WHO together with academic colleagues and published in the Lancet Global Health journal.

"These new findings highlight a lost opportunity to reduce cancer and heart disease and improve mental health and well-being through increased physical activity," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "We must renew our commitment to increasing levels of physical activity and prioritising bold action, including strengthened policies and increased funding, to reverse this worrying trend."

The highest rates of physical inactivity were observed in the high-income Asia Pacific region (48%) and South Asia (45%), with levels of inactivity in other regions ranging from 28% in high-income Western countries to 14% in Oceania.

Of concern, disparities remain between gender and age. Physical inactivity is still more common among women globally compared with men, with inactivity rates of 34% compared to 29%. In some countries, this difference is as much as 20 percentage points. Additionally, people over 60 are less active than other adults, underscoring the importance of promoting physical activity for older adults.

Despite the worrying results, there are some signs of improvement in some countries. The study showed that almost half of the world's countries have made some improvements over the past decade, and 22 countries were identified as likely to reach the global target of reducing inactivity by 15% by 2030 if their trend continues at the same pace.

In light of these findings, WHO is calling on countries to strengthen their policy implementation to promote and enable physical activity through grassroots and community sport and active recreation and transport (walking, cycling, and use of public transport), among other measures.

"These new findings highlight a lost opportunity to reduce cancer and heart disease and improve mental health and well-being through increased physical activity," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "We must renew our commitment to increasing levels of physical activity and prioritising bold action, including strengthened policies and increased funding, to reverse this worrying trend."

"Promoting physical activity goes beyond promoting individual lifestyle choices; it will require a whole-of-society approach and creating environments that make it easier and safer for everyone to be more active in ways they enjoy to reap the many health benefits of regular physical activity," said Dr Fiona Bull, Head of the WHO Unit for Physical Activity.

Collective efforts based on partnerships between government and nongovernmental stakeholders and increased investments in innovative approaches will be needed to reach the least active people and reduce inequalities in access to measures promoting and improving physical activity.

HAVE A NICE DAY

Embracing Meliorism: Hope amidst uncertainty

DR RUBAIUL MURSHED

In the late nineteenth century, George Eliot believed she had coined the term 'meliorist' when she wrote, "I do not know that I ever heard anybody use the word 'meliorist' except myself." Her contemporaries credited her with coining both 'meliorist' and 'meliorism,' and one of her letters contains an early documented use of 'meliorism.' George Eliot is the pen name of Mary Ann Evans, a writer praised for the realism of her work and her accurate depiction of lower and rural-class England.

Meliorism describes positions in moral philosophy that favour improving or making more tolerable the conditions that cause suffering, even if those conditions have long existed. This could involve advocating for cures for common diseases or supporting the development of serious anti-aging therapies. The term is also used by ethicists, who specialise in the study of right and wrong actions in human decisions.

Meliorism simply means 'better.' It opposes pessimism, which generally means 'worst,' and optimism, which means 'best.' Meliorism is the idea that progress is real and that humans can intervene in natural processes to improve the world. Social meliorism posits that education can improve society by increasing individual intelligence, regardless of background.

Today, in an age of internet-educated researchers and policymakers, can studies of human psychology help with choosing the right precautionary methods on an individual or national level? Beyond war, conflicts, and economic dimensions, this unpredictable chaos also has a mental and spiritual dimension. People are afraid, frustrated, and distressed in the face of this unprecedented wave of international political events. Here, scholars can offer some guidance with their research on the concepts of meliorism and 'moralogy' (kindness, forgiveness, and other moral values) and how to approach life more meaningfully.

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Accessible education for children with special needs

RABEYA FERDOUS

Education is one of the most crucial basic rights for all children. Children with special needs also have an equal right to educate themselves. Education may impact their everyday lifestyle. It may also improve personal development and increase people's independence in their daily lives.

Education is most challenging for children with special needs. There are a number of disabled children who have physical and psychological problems. Some children with special needs get the chance to enroll in school. Severely disabled children have difficulty attending school.

According to Bangladesh Education Statistics Report 2018, there were approximately 46,000 children with disabilities enrolled in government primary schools.

There are numerous challenges faced by students with special needs. There are listed below:

1. Students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or cerebral palsy (CP) may write or read slower than other normal students. For that reason, they and their parents feel dissatisfied with their school performance. They need more time and extra care to cope with this situation.

2. Student with special needs feels distracted in a disorganised classroom. They are not attentive to the teachers. So, the classroom should be well decorated. This can help to increase their performance.

3. Some students with special needs face difficulty making friendships. Normal students do not want to make friends with students from special schools. They try to isolate and give different types of stigma. In this situation, their teacher may socialise with new peers and learn from one another's unique strengths and knowledge. This type of peer monitoring may help students develop social skills, independence, and problem-solving skills.

4. Inaccessible classrooms may hamper the education of students with special needs. The maximum classroom has stairs to enter the classroom. In this situation, we need to talk with the authorities about building a ramp. Additionally, accessible doors need to be ensured for wheelchair-user students.

5. Some teachers lack knowledge about the learning procedures of students with special needs. They need extra care, modification, and an individual education plan (IEP) as a course module. So, teachers should be trained to handle these challenging issues.

Education facilities and participation is one of the basic rights for children with special needs. To fulfill this basic right, the government focuses on accessibility in education. Accessibility means removing barriers that hamper a child's education. Disabled children need to make their environment accessible.

According to the National Education Policy 2010, the government follows the following strategies for physically challenged students:

1. The lavatory facilities and the scope of smooth movement will be adequately designed and created with special attention in order to fulfill the special needs of the physically challenged.

2. Special and preferential attention will be given to their needs.

3. At least one trainer will be recruited in each of the PTIs to meet the special teaching methods and needs of various types of challenged learners.

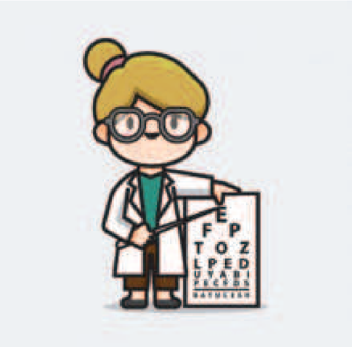
If proper education is achieved, then other rights such as job accessibility, participation at the economic and national level, or any other right granted by the government are likely to be easily obtained.

The writer is an occupational therapist at the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospitals (NINS & H).
Email: rabeya1988@gmail.com

Lipid-lowering drug slows progression of diabetic retinopathy

Fenofibrate is an FDA-approved medication for treating severe high triglycerides. Although it has not been shown to provide extra heart health benefits when added to statins, some studies suggest it might help reduce the need for laser treatment in diabetic retinopathy (a diabetes-related eye condition).

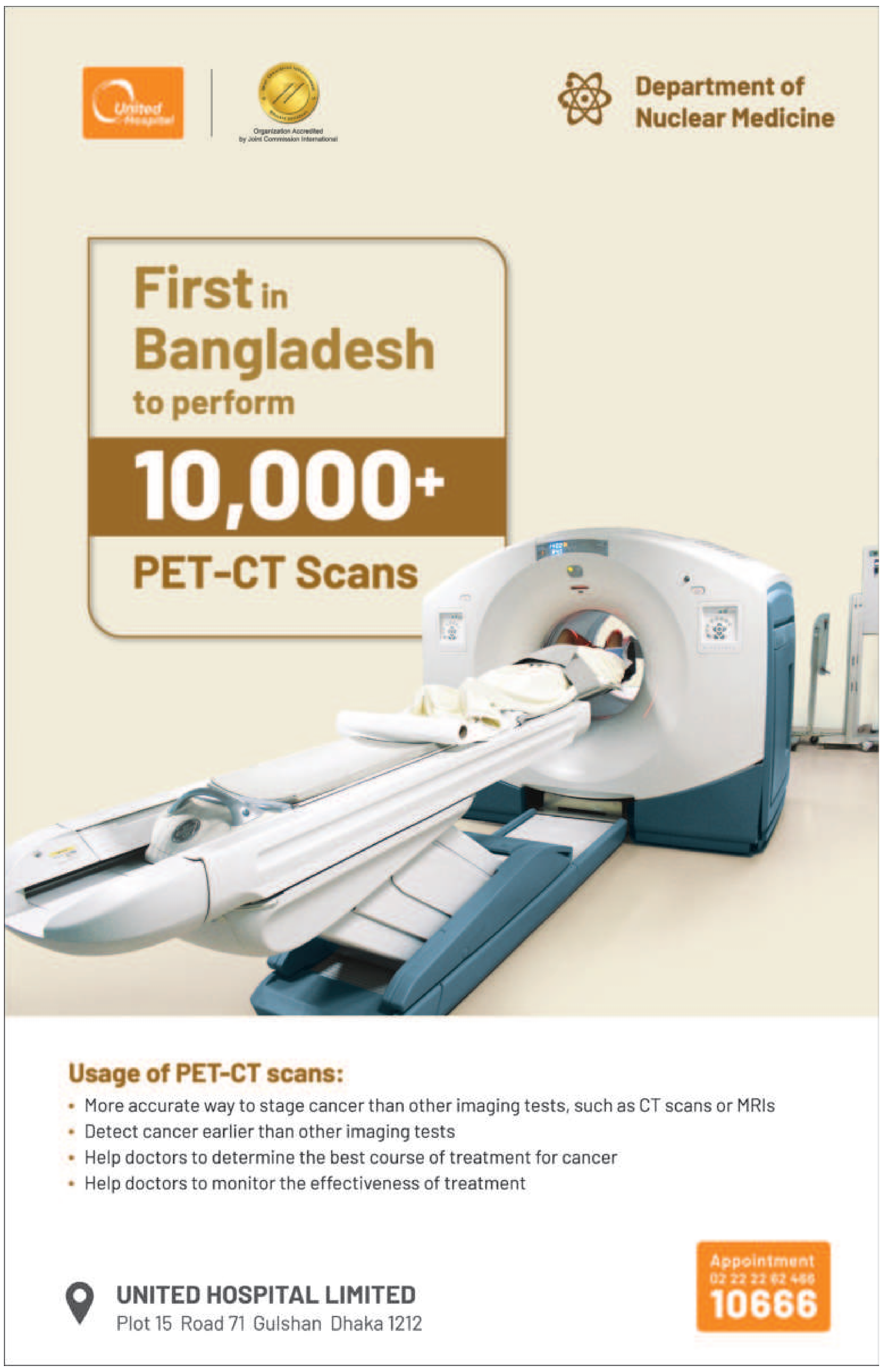
To investigate this, researchers studied 1,150 Scottish patients with early diabetic retinopathy or maculopathy, giving them either fenofibrate or a placebo. People with severe kidney issues were excluded, and fenofibrate doses were adjusted based on kidney function. This research was published in The New England Journal of Medicine.



The main goal was to see if fenofibrate could slow down the progression of retinopathy or reduce the need for eye treatments like laser surgery. Over four years, fewer people taking fenofibrate needed these treatments compared to those on the placebo (23% vs. 29%). However, there was no difference in visual clarity or daily visual function between the two groups.

Fenofibrate was associated with a lower average kidney function (by 8 mL/minute/1.73 m²) during the trial, indicating a need for caution in patients with poor kidney health.

In summary, fenofibrate seems to slow diabetic retinopathy progression, with one in 15 patients benefiting over four years. However, its role in treating this condition is still uncertain, and it has not been FDA-approved for this purpose yet. Additionally, fenofibrate can temporarily increase serum creatinine, requiring careful use in those with very low kidney function.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CITY EDITION

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What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Euros
England vs Slovakia
Live from 10:00 pm
Spain vs Georgia
Live from 1:00 am
(Monday)

T SPORTS AND SONY SPORTS 2
Copa America
Mexico vs Ecuador
Live from 6:00 am (Monday)
Jamaica vs Venezuela
Live from 6:00 am (Monday)

SCORES IN BRIEF

India: 176 for seven in 20 overs (Kohli 76, Patel 47, Dube 27; Maharaj 3-23, Nortje 2-26)
South Africa: 169 for eight in 20 overs (Klaasen 52, De Kock 39; Bumrah 2-18, Arshdeep 2-20, Hardik 3-20)
Result: India won by seven runs
Player-of-the-match:
Virat Kohli
Player-of-the-tournament:
Jasprit Bumrah

PHOTO: ICC/AFP

INDIA END DECADE OF HEARTBREAK

SPORTS REPORTER

Rohit Sharma, the captain who led India from the front with his fearless batting, fell to the ground with a look of relief washing over his face, the confident but sometimes brash Hardik Pandya shed tears of joy while at the dressing room, coach Rahul Dravid, known for his calm demeanour, roared in triumph.

These were the scenes at the Kensington Oval in Barbados on Saturday after India overcame a decade of heartbreak with a win over South Africa in the final of the ICC T20 World Cup 2024.

The win, one they snatched from the jaws of defeat with Proteas at one point needing just 30 off 30 balls, made them the tournament's first-ever undefeated champions and also put them on par with England and West Indies as the only other two-time winners of the competition.

This T20 World Cup was about absolution for Rohit and his side after the heartbreak in the ODI World Cup final last year in Ahmedabad at the hands of Australia, which was their fifth defeat in a final of an ICC event since 2014.

Rohit revealed that many years of preparation went into this year's triumph and commended his team for coming through in such a grand manner under pressure.

"Hard to sum up what we've been through in last three-four years. A lot behind the scenes, not what we did today [yesterday], it's what we did before," Rohit said after the match.

"A lot of high-pressure games, and we have been on the wrong side of it. Guys understand when the pressure is on what needs to be done, today [yesterday] was perfect example, stuck together with backs to the wall," he added.

There were several heroes in India's win over the Proteas, but the man who stole the spotlight and was named the player of the final was the indomitable Virat Kohli, whose 76 off 59 balls took India to a total they could defend.

After the match, however, Kohli announced that this was his last T20I, "God is great, and I got the job done for the team on the day it mattered. Now or never, last T20 for India, wanted to make the most of it. Wanted to lift the cup."

With the win, Kohli, one of the greatest batters of this or any generation, will get to walk off into the sunset in the shortest format with the biggest prize in hand.

India great Virat Kohli said he had played his last T20I after starring in India's thrilling seven-run win over South Africa in the T20 World Cup final in Barbados on Saturday. The star batsman put a run of low scores behind him to make 76 as he was named player of the match, with the 35-year-old Kohli saying afterwards: "This was my last T20 World Cup, and this is what we wanted to achieve. One day you feel you can't get a run, then things happen. God is great, and I got the job done for the team on the day it mattered. Now or never (that was my) last T20 for India, wanted to make the most of it. Wanted to lift the cup, wanted to respect the situation rather than force it." The prolific right-hander retires from the format with 4,188 runs from 125 T20I with a strike rate of 137.

Holders Italy sent packing

AFP, *Berlin*

Switzerland dumped reigning champions Italy out of Euro 2024 with a stunning 2-0 victory on Saturday to reach the quarterfinals for the second time in their history.

Murat Yakin's supremely well-drilled side outplayed the flat two-time winners in the last 16 clash in Berlin and will face England or Slovakia in the next round.

Ruben Vargas teed up Remo Freuler for Switzerland's 37th-minute opener before curling home superbly himself right at the start of the second half to deservedly double their lead.

A new-look Italy, short on star power and without many of the key figures that led them to Euro 2020 glory, offered little in response to Switzerland's energetic display.

"It hurts, it really hurts," said Italy's captain and goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Former Arsenal midfielder Granit Xhaka, arriving at the Euros after a stunning season with German champions Bayer Leverkusen, pulled the strings as the Swiss rarely looked like letting the lead slip away.

Italy coach Luciano Spalletti dropped Jorginho after his worrying group stage performances, bringing in Nicolo Fagioli in defensive midfield among a hefty six changes which failed to bring the Azzurri to life.

Italy scraped through the first phase thanks to Mattia Zaccagni's last-gasp strike in the 1-1 draw with Croatia and Spalletti said his team had no alternative but to improve in the knock-out rounds.

However, it was Switzerland who grew in confidence and pulled off their best display yet, making a bright start at the Olympiastadion in a sweltering Berlin, where a far more impressive Italy won the 2006 World Cup.

Spalletti hooked Stephan El Shaarawy at half-time for Zaccagni, but Italy gave the ball away from the kick-off and Switzerland doubled their lead just 27 seconds into the second period.

Augsburg midfielder Vargas, who started in place of the suspended Silvan Widmer but on the left of the attack, broke into the area and arced a superb curling shot over Gianluigi Donnarumma.

The closest Italy came to scoring in the first hour was when Swiss defender Fabian Schar misjudged a header and hit the frame of his own goal.

Substitute Mateo Retegui produced Italy's first shot on target as the clock ticked down and the near-invisible Gianluca Scamacca hit the post from close range, but the defending champions could never really threaten their opponent as they saw their run end rather meekly.

Non-conformist blockbuster conserves charm

KHALID HOSSAIN

Bob Woolmer, the late South African coach renowned for his cricketing insights and innovation, once said, "Football is a game of space, whereas cricket is a game of time," in his book 'The Art and Science of Cricket', shedding light on the trials and tribulations a cricketer goes through on the battlefield.

Woolmer's book, a decade in the making and published in 2009, emerged at a time when the shortest format of the game -- Twenty20, designed to draw a wider range of audiences for the sake of making cricket a global sport -- had already found its footing and threatened the status quo of its elder siblings -- Tests and the 50-over format -- in terms of mass appeal.

Much like how fast food has surpassed fine dining in popularity in this millennium, the intimidating T20 cricket proved to be an unstoppable force as the cash-rich franchise leagues reshaped the sports' landscape, leading the game's global governing body ICC to hold the T20 World Cup in every two years.

Eventually, when it came to the 20-over format, cricket matches became less and less about the element of time and more about the initial conditions: the nature of surfaces, playing conditions, which had become predominantly batting-friendly, and about the number of power-hitters a team possess.

However, the ninth edition of the T20 World Cup, an expanded version featuring 20 teams from the last edition's 16, disproved the existing consensus and went on to preserve the timeless charm of the game.

At the same time, the 2024 instalment churned out almost everything that makes it an undeniable blockbuster, meeting the ever-increasing demands of modern times.

From even contests between the leather and willow, negating extrapolations made from recent performances in major franchise leagues, to perennial underachievers and minnows having their moment in the sun, the marquee event held in West Indies and the USA has ticked all the boxes for a truly memorable global tournament.

The associate teams disproved the notion of being pushovers, as former champions Pakistan and England found out.

Pakistan fell prey to the USA in one of the greatest upsets in the history of the tournament, setting the ominous tone of the last edition's finalists' eventual exit. On the other hand, England were forced to edge past a driven Scotland in the group stage based on net run rate.

And even Nepal, devoid of any expectation, almost pulled off the highly improbable, losing to South Africa and Bangladesh by a whisker, whereas teams like Namibia and Oman made their mark by locking horns in a Super Over thriller, one of the seven final-over nail-biters witnessed in the group stage.

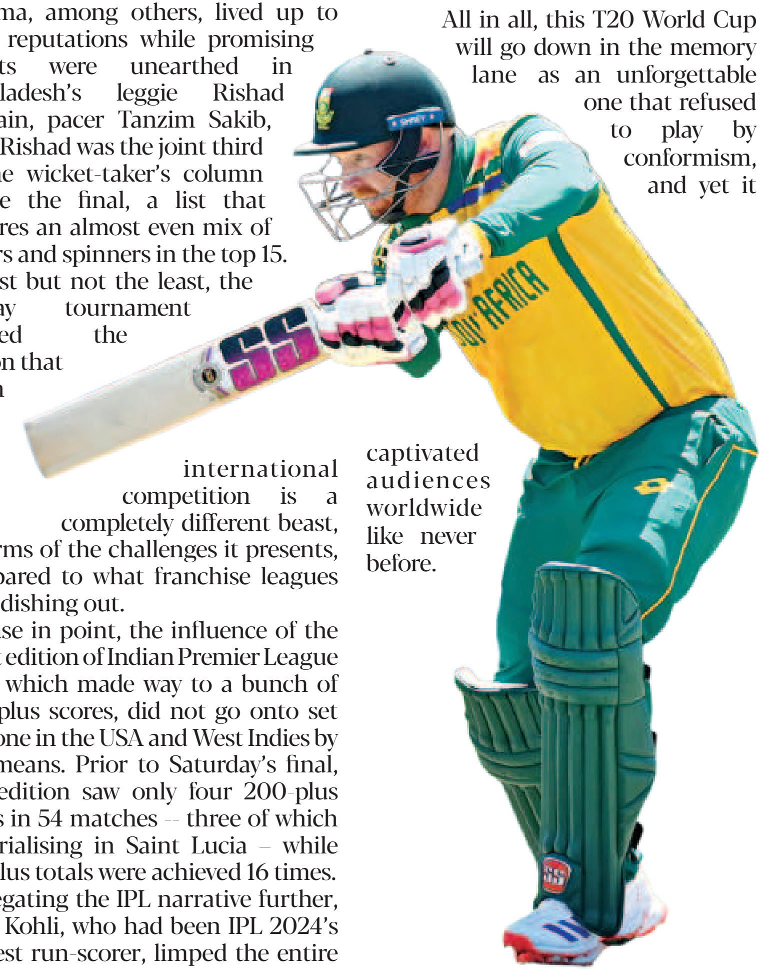
USA, meanwhile, en route to amping up cricket's fan-following in the country, remained hungry for more as they cemented further history by entering the second round -- the Super Eights -- in their maiden appearance, setting the narrative for one of the fairytale triumphs of the mega event.

Even though fellow hosts West Indies could not make the cut to the semifinals, they would be pleased to give their fans the impression that the two-time champions are on the right track, especially following a string of debacles in the preceding white-ball World Cups.

The team that accompanied the West Indies in the Super Eights were Afghanistan, who created their own fairytale chapter. Defying odds, Afghans first scripted New Zealand's exit and then set the Super Eights alight by taking down the mighty Australia before holding their nerves against Bangladesh in two World Cup classics.

Afghanistan's triumphant run was eventually cut short by South Africa, who shrugged off the tag of 'Chokers' to land a coveted place in the final -- a first for the Proteas after being on the receiving end of seven excruciating exits in the last-four stage.

As far as individual glories are concerned, elite superstars like Australia's swashbuckling opener Travis Head, India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and opener Rohit Sharma, among others, lived up to their reputations while promising talents were unearthed in Bangladesh's leggie Rishad Hossain, pacer Tanzim Sakib, et al. Rishad was the joint third in the wicket-taker's column before the final, a list that features an almost even mix of pacers and spinners in the top 15.



Last but not the least, the 29-day tournament verified the notion that an international competition is a completely different beast, in terms of the challenges it presents, compared to what franchise leagues keep dishing out.

Case in point, the influence of the latest edition of Indian Premier League (IPL), which made way to a bunch of 200-plus scores, did not go onto set the tone in the USA and West Indies by any means. Prior to Saturday's final, this edition saw only four 200-plus totals in 54 matches -- three of which materialising in Saint Lucia -- while 175-plus totals were achieved 16 times.

Negating the IPL narrative further, Virat Kohli, who had been IPL 2024's highest run-scorer, limped the entire tournament up until he got his bearings right in the final, while a struggling Hardik Pandya rekindled his form in every department. Like Pandya, his IPL teammates in Suryakumar Yadav, Rohit and Bumrah from bottom dwellers Mumbai Indians, who ended the campaign at rock bottom, were unfazed in national colours.

All in all, this T20 World Cup will go down in the memory lane as an unforgettable one that refused to play by conformism, and yet it captivated audiences worldwide like never before.

- Expanded World Cup lives up to billing
- Minnows and hosts get boost
- Perennial underachievers flip script
- Thrillers in abundance
- Superstars shine, promising talents leave trace
- Pacers and spinners grab spotlight in tandem
- IPL expectations did not match

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7 held after woman raped in Dhaka's Khilkhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was raped in the capital's Khilkhet area on Friday night while she was visiting the area with her husband, said police.

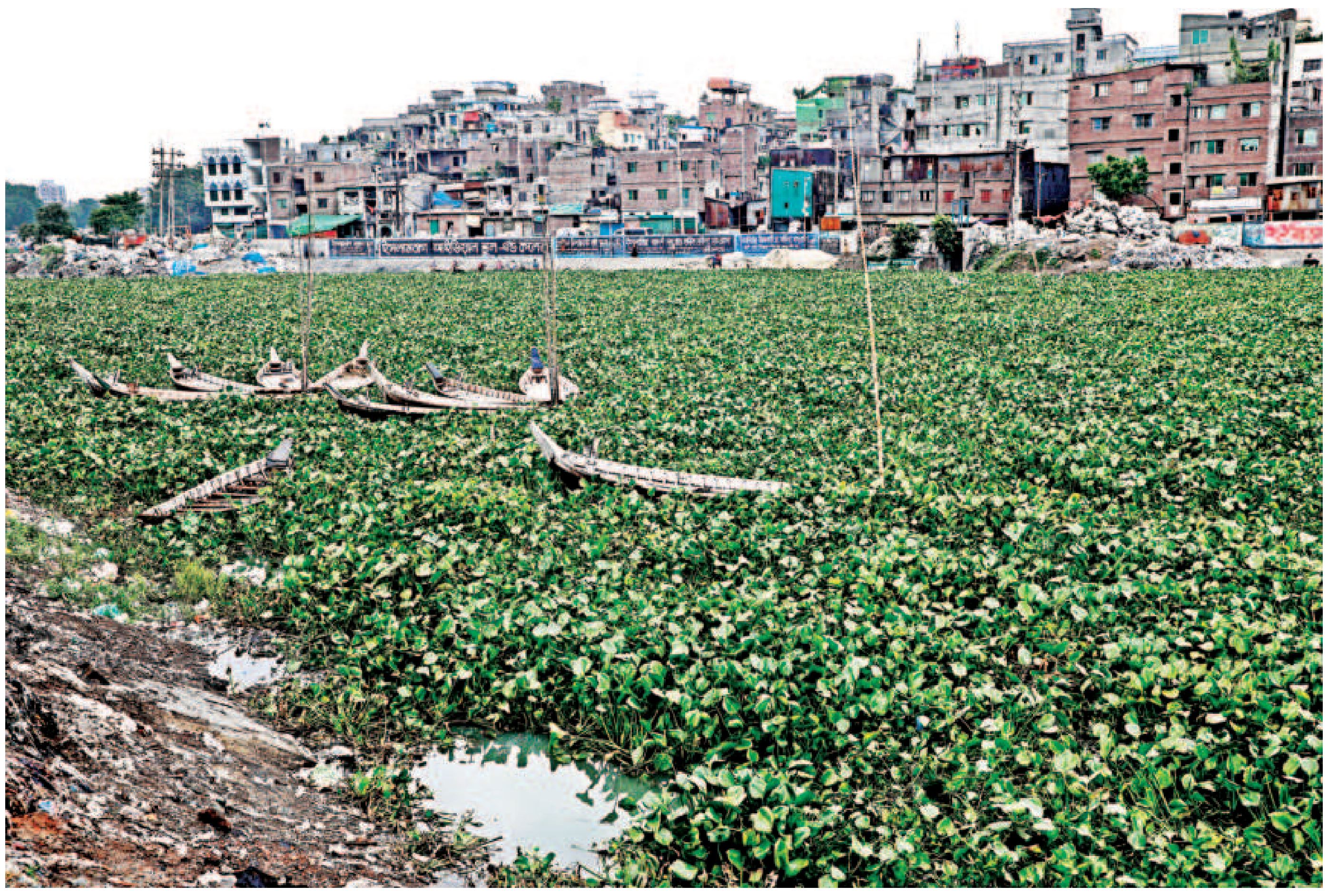
The victim, 37, filed a case against six people under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act with Khilkhet Police Station yesterday, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner (Cantonment Zone) Sheikh Muttajul Islam told The Daily Star.

Khilkhet police have arrested seven people, including three juveniles, over the incident.

The arrestees include Abul Kashem Suman, 39, Mehedi Hasan Hridoy, 22, Mir Azizul Islam Tutul, 23, and Robin Hossain Dewan, 28.

Citing the case statement, the AC said the woman and her husband went to a relative's house in the Kawla Bazar area. From there, she went walking with her husband towards Khilkhet around 8:30pm. When they reached Bonorupa area around

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4



Navigation has become almost impossible in this old channel of the Buriganga as water hyacinths cover the river in Muslimbagh of the capital's Kamrangirchar. The area has turned into an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes also. The photo was taken on Friday. PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Faisal bought savings certificate worth Tk 2.55cr

DIPAN NANDY

Controversial taxman Quazi Abu Mahmud Faisal had purchased family savings certificates worth Tk 1.45 crore for himself and his relatives in three months, according to the Anti-Corruption Commission.

On June 27, a Dhaka court ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate all moveable and immovable properties of Faisal, a first secretary (taxes legal & enforcement) of the National Board of Revenue.

Faisal has accumulated about Tk 1,000 crore by taking bribes for transferring income tax officials, intimidating taxpayers and resorting to other irregularities, according to documents submitted by the ACC to the court on Thursday after its preliminary investigation.

ACC decided to investigate Faisal last year after allegations of misuse of power and accumulating significant wealth through bribery.

Among the documents were proof of Faisal's purchase of savings certificates worth Tk 2.55 crore between June 2019 and November 2023 in his and his family's names. Of them, family savings certificates (Paribarik Sanchayapatra) worth Tk 1.45 crore were bought between November 12, 2020 and February 10, 2021.

Faisal, who joined the NBR in 2005 as a BCS cadre in the

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

Black money holders get amnesty

Criticism of think-tanks, lawmakers ignored

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Parliament yesterday approved a provision that will allow black money holders to legalise their undisclosed wealth without any scrutiny by paying a 15 percent tax, disregarding widespread condemnation from various quarters.

The provision will take effect in the upcoming fiscal year that begins on July 1.

Think-tanks, watchdogs, chambers and several lawmakers criticised the provision, terming it unethical, unjust and unacceptable.

"This represents sheer insensitiveness of the members of parliament to growing public concerns about widening floodgates for corruption, illegality and corruption, which this provision facilitates," said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

The move also undermines Article 20(2) of the constitution that makes black money clearly illegal, he said.

It is also discriminatory against honest income earners, who have to pay up to 30 percent tax while black money holders are being rewarded instead of being subjected to accountability and getting the provision to pay only 15 percent, he said.

"In effect, the government is inviting people at large to be corrupt, immoral and dishonest to earn black money throughout the year with the guarantee that they will be rewarded and given impunity for earning any amount of income disproportionate to the legal source. Unfortunately, the state is being pushed further down the

SEE PAGE 7 COL 6

Gaza civilians living in unbearable conditions

Warns UNRWA as huge mounds of rotting trash pile up across the Palestinian enclave

AFP, *Geneva*

Gazan civilians are forced to live in bombed-out buildings or camp next to giant piles of trash, a United Nations spokeswoman said Friday, denouncing the "unbearable" conditions in the besieged territory.

Louise Wateridge from UNRWA, the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees, described the "extremely dire" living conditions in the Gaza Strip.

"It's really unbearable," she told reporters in Geneva, via video-link from central Gaza.

Wateridge, who returned Wednesday after four weeks outside the territory, said that even in that time the situation had "significantly deteriorated".

"Today, it has to be the worst it's ever been. I don't doubt that tomorrow again will be the worst it's ever been," she said.

Nearly nine months into the offensive, Wateridge said the Gaza Strip had been "destroyed". She said she had been "shocked" on returning to Khan Yunis in central Gaza.

"The buildings are skeletons, if at all. Everything is rubble," she said. "And yet people are living there again.

"There's no water there, there's no sanitation, there's no food. And now, people are living back in these buildings that are empty shells," with sheets covering the gaps left by blown-out walls.

With no bathrooms, "people are relieving themselves anywhere they can".

Wateridge said the struggle to bring fuel into Gaza and distribute it safely was having a knock-on impact on the ability to deliver aid.

"Without the fuel, the humanitarian response really grinds to a halt," she said.

Wateridge was speaking from a guesthouse as there was no fuel to go out and undertake missions.

About 150 metres away, she said, a pile of around 100,000 tonnes of waste was building up, with makeshift tents pitched all around it.

"The population is living among it," she said. "With the temperatures rising, it's really adding misery to the living conditions."

Wateridge said that before the offensive, sanitation units would clear all the trash from refugee

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

ACC probe into Benazir, family's wealth at final stage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has completed a thorough analysis of documents and field-level investigations regarding former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed, as its two-month-long inquiry reaches its final stages.

The anti-graft body did not accept Benazir's written claims that his assets were acquired legally.

The ACC team is now preparing a comprehensive report to submit to the commission. The report may recommend filing charges against Benazir Ahmed, his wife Jissan Mirza, and his two daughters, Farheen Rishta Binte Benazir and Tahsin Raisa Binte Benazir.

There is, however, some uncertainty within the commission regarding whether to request a detailed wealth statement from Benazir. Depending on the directives received, the ACC team might either issue a notice for asset details or directly recommend filing charges.

An ACC high official, seeking anonymity, told The Daily Star, "Benazir and his family have claimed in written statements that their wealth was legally acquired. But their explanations don't add up and thus unacceptable. The ACC team will soon submit their report to the commission based on the analysis of the collected data."

Benazir and his family's written statement was submitted to the ACC chairman on June 20,said ACC Secretary Khorsheda Yasmin.

"Hopefully, we will be able to file the report with the court as per our schedule."

However, ACC's asset management unit plans to

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

Vinicius comes alive for Brazil

REUTERS

Vinicius Jr unleashed his inner beast in a little over 45 minutes of pure Brazilian football mayhem to guide the five-time World Cup champions to their first 2024 Copa America win against Paraguay on Friday.

The 23-year-old electric winger scored twice and delivered a much-needed statement performance that Brazilian fans have long been waiting for. The Real Madrid rising star may be one of the best players in the world but until now that fiery spark has not been seen in his national team performances.

Even in Brazil's Copa America opener this year - a goalless draw against Costa Rica - Vinicius ended up being substituted halfway through the second half after not managing a single scoring attempt. After that, Brazil manager Dorival Jr changed tack and that decision paid back in a major way.

Instead of being deployed as more of an orthodox winger wide on the left against Costa Rica, Dorival gave Vinicius the freedom to roam across the front line on Friday against Paraguay and fans were shown why he is a strong contender to win the Ballon d'Or after guiding Real to a

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

Brazil forward Vinicius Junior celebrates scoring his team's third goal against Paraguay in their Copa America Group D match at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas yesterday. The Read Madrid star scored twice as the six-time champions eased some pressure following a goalless draw against Costa Rica in their first match of the 16-nation tournament. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Radioactive rhino horns to curb poaching in S Africa

AFP, *Mokopane*

South African scientists have injected radioactive material into live rhino horns to make them easier to detect at border posts in a pioneering project aimed at curbing poaching.

The country is home to a large majority of the world's rhinos and as such is a hotspot for poaching driven by demand from Asia, where horns are used in traditional medicine for their supposed therapeutic effect.

At the Limpopo rhino orphanage in the Waterberg area, in the country's northeast, a few of the thick-skinned herbivores grazed in the low savannah.

James Larkin, director of the University of the Witwatersrand's radiation and health physics unit who spearheaded the initiative, told AFP on Tuesday he had put "two tiny little radioactive chips in the horn" as he administered the radioisotopes on one of the large animals' horns.

The radioactive material would "render the horn useless... essentially poisonous for human consumption" added Nithaya Chetty, professor and dean of science at the same university.